



The Leprosy
Mission
Australia

KEEPING IN TOUCH

KIT01

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Together, we are Overturning the Stigma of Leprosy in India!

Neelam is a shy girl living in a remote village in India, not far from a Leprosy Mission hospital. Her brother Mohan told us her story...

Their dad passed away. Mohan (who is in his early twenties) looks after his mother and five siblings, as well as a young family of his own.

He told us that when Neelam had a fever they took her to a local healer. Then she started getting pains in her arm. They thought that the local healer must have given her this trouble, but local doctors did not recognise the signs of leprosy either.

Fortunately, her grandfather recognised the signs of the clawed hand. He had leprosy many years ago. So they took Neelam to The Leprosy Mission hospital. She received reconstructive surgery there and returned home.

Unfortunately Neelam experienced much rejection in her village. Fellow students teased her and even the teacher asked her lots of questions about her hand. Village children wouldn't play with her and called her a 'leper'.

NB: TLMA CONDEMNS THE USE OF THE DEROGATORY TERM 'LEPER'.

Her community benefits from ongoing advocacy, livelihoods and stigma work across four states.

It's implemented by The Leprosy Mission Trust India (nationally) and Brighter Futures. And supported by the European Commission and people just like you.

Mohan is hopeful the advocacy and stigma work will help to overturn the stigma of leprosy. He told us, "*There is (still) a need to inform the general community not to mock people with leprosy!*". He explained that when people are educated about leprosy they don't mock.

Praise God for the ongoing advocacy work in India overturning the stigma of leprosy.

Inspired by her hospital stay, Neelam now dreams of working in the medical field. **Please pray Neelam will experience life in all its fullness.**

**World Leprosy
Sunday 2020**

**Let's finish what
Jesus started!**

WATCH Bhim making a wallet here:
leprosymission.org.au/bhim



Bhim now trusts in Jesus — thank you for your support!

By SUPA THEJAN, Merchandise Manager
The Leprosy Mission Australia

I recently visited Nepal to ensure all our suppliers for The Leprosy Mission Shop are adhering to safe and fair trade practises. It was great to see all the amazing work they are doing empowering people affected by leprosy, disability and poverty. I met so many wonderful people!

I spent time meeting patients and artisans at Nepal Leprosy Trust (NLT). They produce some of the fine leather, wood and felt products in our latest gift catalogue.

NLT operate the only major leprosy services centre in south-east Nepal. They provide medical treatment, social education and village development projects. They target individuals, small groups and wider communities. They supervise leprosy control activities on behalf of the Nepali Government.

NLT's services centre sees many new cases of leprosy and is one of the busiest centres in the world.

Their community development and livelihoods program continues to be successful in surrounding districts. It has changed the lives of thousands of people for the better — thanks to the support of people like you!

It was at the centre that I also met artisans – like Bhim...

Bhim is 71 years old. About thirty years ago, when he was forty years old, Bhim burned himself very badly. He was sitting next to the fire, but he didn't feel a thing.

It signalled that he had lost feeling in his nerves. He had leprosy. He then realised that he had leprosy for about 10 years without noticing.

When his family found out he had leprosy, they rejected him. Bhim then had no place to stay and was forced to live on the streets. The health post directed him to a hospital for leprosy treatment. But his wounds weren't healing. So they sent him to another hospital over in India for more extensive care. Yet, he couldn't afford to stay in India and pay for treatment there, so he returned to Nepal.



Supa (top right) meets Bhim (left of Supa), and some of the Nepal Leprosy Trust (NLT) team.

It was back in Nepal that he met with his 'long lost sister' and she knew about NLT and suggested that Bhim go and seek help there. He had not been receiving any treatment and was still suffering with his wounds.

It was at this point in the outpouring of his personal story that Bhim's face suddenly softened. He started to smile; ***"I met Jesus through my colleagues at NLT"***, he said. It was there he started to study the Bible and attend the church, he told me.

"I started praying regularly and my wounds started to heal," Bhim said.

After four years of treatments, he was still not cured. But by the grace of God, he heard about The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban Hospital and was finally cured through effective treatment there. Praise God!

"I believe Jesus has helped me through this whole journey," – Bhim

After his recovery, Bhim met a widow with a son. ***"We realised that we could use each other's support,"*** Bhim said. They had two children together. One of them died due to an illness, and

the others, now grown, have abandoned their parents. But Bhim told me that he and his wife still love and look after each other. And with the support of NLT, Bhim has been able to buy land and a house for the two of them!

Praise God blessing the work of NLT so Bhim and his wife could buy a place of their own.

At the end of our time together Bhim told me, ***"I don't want anything now, because I have God."***

Praise God for defeating Bhim's leprosy and transforming his life!

Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for buying products through the gift catalogue made by people like Bhim. Your shopping is providing livelihoods. The income is help families and communities out of poverty.

May God bless you richly this new year.

Please pray for Bhim and the other artisans at Nepal Leprosy Trust as they make products to sell though The Leprosy Mission Shop. To SHOP to STOP leprosy, ask for the latest gift catalogue to be sent to you. Call 1800 537 767 or go to: www.leprosymission.org.au/shop



No Back To School for Kamali – yet...

Kamali is a young woman in India. At 15, she couldn't finish her schooling because she had leprosy.

At that time she had an ulcer on her leg which meant that she had difficulty walking so she couldn't get to school. Her classmates and others in the community also began to either hit her or ignore her. She told us that none of her former friends would talk to her or sit with her.

She became afraid of leaving the house.

Her parents brought her to The Leprosy Mission hospital for treatment. There she had medical procedures to treat ulcers including flap surgery and skin grafts for ulcers, and since then, further surgery for foot drop.

When we asked her how she thought she might support herself in the future she said she didn't know. She was also uncertain about the possibility of marriage.

She said that when she had had her operation she would like to go home and resume her studies. Then she could think about how to earn a living.

'For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds,' declares The LORD, 'Because they have called you an outcast, saying: "No one cares for her."

— Jeremiah 30:17

Please pray for Kamali's surgery and full recovery. Please pray she may find a way forward to further her studies and be restored to her community.

If you feel moved to provide monthly educational support to young people affected by leprosy, call Georgie or Lisa on 1800 537 767 or go to www.leprosymission.org.au

You can provide a scholarship or vocational training to someone affected by leprosy like Kamali, DONATE TODAY! Call 1800 537 767 or go to: www.leprosymission.org.au