

The many faces of leprosy



Treating leprosy is a complex issue. Not only does the disease affect a person's body, it can also affect their mental health, self-esteem and social standing. Here are just a few of the patients that The Leprosy Mission has helped in Bangladesh.

Mariom is 35 years old. She was diagnosed with leprosy in 2001 and treated at The Leprosy Mission's Nilphamari hospital. As well as receiving the cure for leprosy, multidrug therapy, Mariom needed surgery for a dropped foot; she can now walk normally. Mariom's relatives had rejected her and called her 'untouchable', causing such distress that she even thought of suicide, but after her treatment they accepted her again. She is now married and has two sons who are both doing well at school.



Mariom



Abutalab

Abutalab is 65 and is the president of one of the many self-help groups set up by the Mission. One of his duties is organising regular meetings and banking their group money; this is very significant as many of the group members had previously been refused bank accounts simply because of leprosy. The money they save together is then loaned out to members when they need it, allowing them a financial independence they'd never known before.

No two beneficiaries need exactly the same treatment or support

Korison, 61, lives with her daughter, Sabia, who has learning difficulties. Korison is blind and has disabilities to her hands and feet. When she was diagnosed, her husband divorced her. At first the community rejected her too, driving her from the village, but after treatment and a visit from a Leprosy Mission health worker to talk to the villagers she was gradually accepted back. Korison also received a house with a pump and latrine to improve her living conditions. Sabia was supported to buy a cow, which provides milk for the family to drink and sell.

As you can see, the needs of people affected by leprosy are diverse and often complicated – no two beneficiaries need exactly the same treatment or support. That's why The Leprosy Mission needs your help today to keep on providing the individual, holistic support that we know is so vital.



Sabia, left, and Korison, right

Building new futures through your support



Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13: 12 NIV

Shyam's daughter, Angana, going to collect water, with the house behind

I met Shyam and his family in Nepal in June 2009. At that time The Leprosy Mission was assessing his home with the view to providing low-cost house funding.

When I asked him how he felt about this, he simply smiled and said, 'Everyone dreams of a new house.' Seeing Shyam's home reveals what a truly humble understatement this was.

It is made of logs and plastic sheeting, with a roof of loose corrugated iron sheets held down with logs – a lot less secure than many inner city slum houses. Although some

Shyam shows the results of his successful surgery



other homes in the area are in a bit of disrepair, there is no comparison between them and Shyam's house.

He said, 'When there's a heavy downpour I have to go up on the roof and cover up the places where it's leaking with plastic.' The family has lived there for almost 20 years.

Shyam's attitude towards receiving a new house was that of someone who feels they have received much, and, while they might appreciate more, doesn't expect or demand it. I understood this more once I realised the situation he had been in only a short time before.

Shyam was diagnosed with leprosy at The Leprosy Mission's Anandaban hospital, and later he had surgery to correct his dropped foot. Before this he had gone for 15 years without the correct treatment.

'I went to different doctors and they all suggested it was a general nerve problem,' he says. Shyam used to run a successful sewing business from a rented shop in Kathmandu. To pay for all his treatment he had to give up the shop, where they were also living, and sell the sewing machines. Being in desperate poverty, the Government gave him a small piece of land on which he built his home with whatever materials he could find. Shyam still works as a tailor, and he and his wife receive Leprosy Mission funding for their son and daughter's education.



Shyam working at home

Visit The Leprosy Mission's website at www.leprosymission.org.uk



Building work goes on next to the old house

Recently we received some updated pictures showing progress since that initial assessment. Although Shyam seemed content when I met him, the look on his face now shows just how much a new home means to him – he is clearly aware of the difference this will make to his family's future.

There will be much more space and security in this new stone-built house, and he won't have the trouble of constantly patching up the roof. It is worlds apart from the dilapidated shack beside it. Importantly, it also will raise his status in his local community. As you can see from the delight on this face, being the owner of this new home is already restoring so much of the dignity and hope that leprosy, misdiagnosis and poverty had taken away.



Shyam with his daughter as the building work continues

Save the stamps

Help us raise vital funds for the Mission by sending us your used stamps! Demand is outstripping supply for many items. Please send to Phil and Eileen Jarman, The Leprosy Mission c/o 26 Drift Road, Clanfield, Waterlooville, PO8 0JL
t. 023 9259 8115 e. philj@tlmew.org.uk



Partnering with The Leprosy Mission

The lives of many people like Shyam are being changed every year through houses bought with funding from supporters in England and Wales.

Enid is a church representative at Narborough Congregational Church. Last year she had the idea of her church raising money for a house, through The Leprosy Mission's Gifts for Life scheme, after she saw an advert in her TLM Trading magazine. She says, 'I was amazed at how small an amount would do so much for a family. I sat thinking, "We could do that".'

'At the next church meeting the idea was received with an enthusiasm I have never seen before.

When God inspires and we obey wonderful things happen

'The children at our mid-week activities caught the vision and decided to fundraise themselves. These wonderful children raised over one tenth of the cost of a house. Other money was raised through a coffee morning, Bring and Buy and some very generous donations. On 23 May our Assistant Treasurer informed me that we had reached our target!

'Following that we have had a strawberry tea, and the money raised from that (plus gift aid) is a third towards a second house.

'When God inspires and we obey wonderful things happen, and it is not for us to limit the works of His Hand.'

Thank you to all those who have given the gift of a new home to a person affected by leprosy.

Please contact us if you are interested in receiving a Gifts for Life catalogue



Trek for Treatment

Join us in March 2012 for our sponsored trek through the Annapurna range in Nepal, raising money for Anandaban hospital. For more information, contact Jean Jones, t. 01733 404877 e. jeanj@tlmew.org.uk



Health for the whole community



Curing a person of leprosy means taking care of their emotional and financial wellbeing as well as their health. That's why the Leprosy Mission-supported DBLM hospital in Bangladesh takes such a holistic approach, offering a wide range of services.

DBLM hospital works closely with the Government of Bangladesh to provide quality services for people suffering from leprosy. For 25 years it has also worked in four regions of rural Bangladesh, training health officials to actively search out leprosy and providing care to thousands of leprosy sufferers every year. The focus is the whole person, including social as well as physical issues. Training is also provided for community leaders, village doctors and volunteers.

The gift you give today will help pay for:

- Awareness raising about eye health, to reduce blindness due to leprosy and other causes
- Health education and awareness through song, theatre, discussion, posters and community meetings
- Detection of new leprosy cases and the treatment of existing cases
- Training, evaluation and monitoring of health professionals working with leprosy
- Leprosy research

DBLM hospital provides crucial medical treatment for people affected by leprosy. If the hospital had to close, leprosy rates would rise and thousands of people would be left with no help and no hope.

All it takes is a small gift from you to help stop this from happening.

Our funding target is £80,000 – please, could you help us to reach it?

Bangladesh fact box

- Over two thirds of Bangladesh's population are farmers
- Over 30% of agricultural workers live below the poverty line
- Over 10% of all new leprosy cases in Bangladesh in 2009 already had a visible disability at diagnosis



The Leprosy Mission is an international Christian development organisation, transforming and empowering the lives of people affected by leprosy. Our goal is to eliminate the causes and consequences of this disease.

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