India: Vocational Education

Vocational Education
The Leprosy Mission Trust India’s (TLMTI) six Vocational Education Centres (VECs) train young people and adults affected by leprosy and other disabilities in vocational trades and skills which meet both the market demand and their specific physical needs (e.g. disability, limited mobility etc). Disability assessment and the individual tailor-made rehabilitation plans developed by the Occupational Therapists for the differently abled students of the VECs have motivated and encouraged the students to opt for careers which were formerly only dreams. These centres also support the students in being gainfully employed by providing placement assistance and raising awareness and advocating to promote fair labour conditions, and safe and appropriate working surroundings and facilities.

Community Based Vocational Training (CBVT) is another major function of the sustainable livelihoods programme, which enables TLMTI to reach out to more people. Hundreds of individuals (youths and married women) have received/are receiving training and employment support in mushroom cultivation, silk thread weaving, computers, mobile repairing and tailoring. CBVT is unique as it promotes community-based solutions in linking skills training and sustainable livelihoods (both self and waged employment) for the most vulnerable communities, especially those who cannot access established training centres.

Key Staff
Mrs Tina Mendis – Head of Livelihoods and Empowerment
Mr Gabriel Pani – Principal, VEC Bankura
Mr Mahendra Rao – Vice Principal, VEC Champa
Mr Keshaba Thanapati – Incharge, VEC Faizabad
Mrs Shyla Francis – Principal, VEC Nashik
Mr Tinson Thomas – Principal, VEC Vadathorasalur
Mr Vizia Vardhan Patta – Principal, VEC Vizianagram

Top: Candle-making in the Community-Based Vocational Training Programme.

Prayer points
Mon: QCI (Quality Council of India)
Accreditation renewal is required every five years for the formal vocational trade courses. Pray for the accreditation process to be successful, whereby TLMTI can upgrade their VECs with additional units and add new relevant sustainable courses like retail, hospitality, medical and service sectors.

Tue: Praise God for the 1,400 young people affected by leprosy supported through the vocational training programme. Pray for their good health, quality training, gainful employment and for God’s blessings on their families to overcome leprosy with healing and inclusion, to live happily with dignity in society.

Wed: Praise the Lord for the many churches and schools that came forward to support TLMTI’s vocational programmes during the year. Pray for the spiritual strength and wisdom for principals and other leaders to develop effective and efficient vocational education programmes. Pray that the spiritual needs of people affected by leprosy are met and that they experience the peace of God; that he will guard their hearts and minds.

Thu: Pray for TLMTI’s VEC and CBVT admissions process: that they will reach those most in need; successfully admit students affected by leprosy in government/private institutes as per their choice of course; and that admission of students from non-leprosy backgrounds in VECs will increase acceptance, participation and reduce stigma.

Fri: Pray for the follow-up stakeholders programme, that TLMTI can successfully address and solve advocacy issues like fair labour conditions and discrimination due to leprosy and disability and incorporate stakeholder feedback to improve programme effectiveness. Pray that girls and disabled graduates can overcome difficulties and retain jobs within safe working environments.

Sat/Sun: Pray for the potential partners and financial support required in effective establishment and maintenance of new and existing production/training units. Pray that these units further generate good profitable revenues to support vocational training programmes in return.
About TLM Germany
TLM Germany started as a local circle of friends around Mr Dr Riedel and his wife. He was a pioneer in the fight against leprosy, worked from 1951 to 1997 for The Leprosy Mission and passed away last summer at the age of 93 years. His request was to bring all people God’s love and to make God’s Kingdom visible. TLM Germany is eager to continue under this mission and wants to give its support to various projects of the TLM Global Fellowship.

All members of TLM Germany’s executive committee are volunteers and are part of different parishes. They organise special fundraising events to support projects in Niger, DR Congo, India and Chad.

About TLM Finland
Support for The Leprosy Mission started in Finland in 1968 and the National Council was formed in 1981. TLM Finland is operated solely through the generosity of part-time volunteers, who work to raise funds to finance leprosy and disability prevention work in DR Congo and also to increase knowledge and interest in Finland about leprosy and leprosy-affected persons.

In 2016 the team plan to publish four magazines in Finnish and Swedish; visit churches, schools and colleges; offer their new Sunday school material to churches and schools; offer the DVD film “One of us” to churches, schools and Christian and local TV stations; and produce a shortened version of the ASK Prayer Diary.

Prayer points

Germany
Mon: Pray that God will touch hearts through the events run by TLM Germany, especially their mission presentations in different churches and municipalities.
Tue: Pray for creative ideas to appeal to people and for successful fundraising activities. Pray especially for new donors for the work of TLM Germany and for donors to consider leaving a legacy to TLM in their Will.
Wed: In recent years TLM Germany moved into a new office and elected a new Board. These were positive developments but the new organisation’s new team and structure is still in transition. Give thanks to God for TLM Germany’s motivated volunteers and the new Board and pray that all the transitional difficulties in the organisation can be solved so their work can continue at full capacity.

Finland
Thu: Give thanks for all the volunteers involved in TLM Finland. Pray for the new volunteers finding their place in the community of TLM.
Fri: Give thanks for TLM Finland’s redesigned magazine – in 2015 they were able to give out four in Finnish and three in Swedish. Pray for the continued development of this publication and that it would be well received.
Sat/Sun: Give thanks for TLM Finland’s faithful supporters and donors. Pray for the major update and expansion planned for their database.

Senior Team

Germany
Dr Johannes Schäfer – Chair of the Board
Bettina Merz – Manageress

Finland
Dr Aki Hietaharju – Chairperson
Rev Ms Eija Klipi – Vicechairperson
Ms Ritva Pohti – Secretary
Week 15: 11–17 April

China

About TLM’s work in China
About 220,000 people are known to be affected by leprosy in China. 20,000 continue to live in 600 former leprosy colonies, particularly in Southern China. Whilst as a nation China has rapidly developed, people affected by leprosy have been ‘left behind’ and continue to face poverty and lack access to basic services. Lack of access to health care services and good quality treatment has meant that 40% of people affected by leprosy in China have become disabled as result of leprosy. Stigma and discrimination also remain strong and the children of people affected by leprosy are often excluded from attending school.

The Leprosy Mission targets these people who have been ‘left behind’ and works to transform their lives. TLM has been involved in China since 1981, working through partner organisations, Bless China International (BCI) and HANDA, to reach people affected by leprosy in South China who face poverty, stigma and exclusion. Projects in Guangxi, Yunnan and Guangdong Provinces develop communities, reduce poverty, combat stigma and discrimination, raise awareness and provide leprosy treatment, rebuild families and communities, encourage integration and empower and build the confidence of people affected by leprosy to achieve life in all its fullness.

Prayer points

Mon: HANDA plans to interview 100 people affected by leprosy for a documentary. Please pray that potential interviewees will have the confidence to tell their stories and that the public will recognise that all people deserve dignity and respect.

Tue: Please pray for the people affected by leprosy in Diqing Prefecture of Yunnan who live in a remote and very mountainous region often still under severe stigma. Pray for protection and success for the children whom BCI has helped to access school.

Wed: Pray for the eight villages where the Xishuangbanna Community-Based Rehabilitation project is currently being implemented. Pray that the community will recognise the prevalence of stigma against people affected by leprosy and be motivated to take action.

Thu: Pray that HANDA’s new project will be successful in raising awareness of rights among people affected by leprosy and their communities.

Fri: Please pray for the work and staff of BCI in Diqing. Pray for continued open doors, favour, protection, wisdom, patience, and love as they reach out to the precious people in this challenging place.

Sat/Sun: Pray for the success of the self-help groups currently being set up in Xishuangbanna. Many people affected by leprosy have been dependent on the Government and are not used to the concept of ‘self-help’ – please pray that they will be motivated to work together in these groups.

Senior Staff

HANDA
Dr Michael Chen – Secretary General
Sally Qi – Project Supervisor
Lili Wei – Project Coordinator in Guangdong
Zeng Tingmei – Project Coordinator in Yunnan

Bless China International
Felicia Chang – Director for Operations
Chee Hsiang Liow – Director for Operations
Markus zum Felde – Site Director Diqing Project
Jaap den Butter – Site Director Xishuangbanna Project

Top: BCI project staff shared about the needs of poor households affected by leprosy in Pa Dian village and were able to mobilise local volunteers and raise money for goods like oil, salt, rice, eggs and other materials.
Papua New Guinea

‘The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul’
Psalm 23:1-3a

About TLM Papua New Guinea
TLM Papua New Guinea (PNG) assists the “National Leprosy Control Partnership” with training in the six high endemic provinces and in some pocket areas in low endemic provinces. To support this training the project has distributed a “Leprosy Manual” and developed Community Mobilizers to raise awareness of leprosy in communities. The Community Mobilizers also assist health staff in active case-finding and monitoring treatment.

To be able to give good leprosy treatment and care, much improvement is needed in basic health services, especially in reliable reporting. An evaluation of the national programme by the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded that the situation of people affected by leprosy in PNG has not improved in the last five years. The Government, WHO and TLM have to find ways to change this, despite the scarcity of resources. A new project is in development to start in August or September.

In the autonomous region of Bougainville, TLM works with the Ministry of Health and other rehabilitation agencies to implement the Bougainville Healthy Communities Programme (BHCP) across all 13 Districts of Bougainville. This project improves awareness and hygiene practices to encourage a community-based and owned primary health system. Trained village leaders and village health volunteers educate Bougainville’s population on disease prevention, health practices and their rights to healthcare.

Top: TLM PNG team, from left to right: Maggie Taupa, Afinini Tawi, Monica James, Jacqueline Pil and Natalie Smith.

Prayer points

Mon: It is likely that TLM PNG will move its country office from Madang where it has been since the 1970s to the capital, Port Moresby. Pray for the consequences this will have for the staff who are resident in Madang (Jacque, Maggie, Afinini and Monica).

Tue: Pray for Natalie Smith who became the new TLM PNG Country Leader in October 2015. Pray for wisdom as she will not only have to deal with the leprosy-related issues but also with technical issues like property maintenance and problems with the internet. Pray that she will find good friends to relate to outside the office.

Wed: Pray for Miriam Pahun and her team in the PNG National Department of Health. Miriam has been a faithful leader in the leprosy sector for more than 20 years. Pray for continued good relationship between TLM and the Government of PNG.

Thu: Pray for the Community Mobilizers who are often alone representing TLM in remote provinces. Pray that they will be faithful even when working unsupervised for long stretches of time and that they will find ways to reach communities with the message that leprosy can be cured, that treatment is free and that we should not be afraid to associate with people affected by leprosy.

Fri: BHCP recently extended its coverage into Torokina District. Pray that despite the huge challenges posed by geographical conditions, illiteracy and logistics, BHCP can successfully roll out its activities through commitment, good planning and the wise use of resources.

Sat/Sun: Pray that with the increase in referral of suspected leprosy patients to health facilities in Bougainville by BHCP trained village health volunteers, those diagnosed and confirmed can receive immediate care and treatment as well as uninterrupted supply of multi-drug therapy.

Senior Staff
Natalie Smith – Country Leader
Jacqueline Pil – Project Manager
Afinini Tawi – Finance Manager

BHCP
Ruby Mirinka – Programme Director
Neil Toura – Operations Director

Week 16: 18-24 April
Mozambique

About TLM Mozambique
The Leprosy Mission in Mozambique works in close cooperation with the Health Department in support of the Leprosy Control project in the province of Cabo Delgado. There are also strong links with community partners including community volunteers and self-care groups. ALEMO is an association of persons affected by leprosy, supported by TLM Mozambique, that works to improve the livelihoods of its members through improved agriculture methods, training and advocacy. About 200 children affected by leprosy are included in the Iphiro Yohoolo project, which aims to keep them in school and inspire them to break the cycle of poverty.

During 2016 TLM Mozambique will continue to implement a new DFID (UK Department for International Development) project aimed at improving livelihoods in 80 communities where they have self-care groups. They will also start to explore a more decentralised and integrated approach to improve leprosy services at district level. Church community mobilisation also remains a priority and TLM Mozambique hopes to continue to grow in their knowledge and understanding of this.

Prayer points

Mon: Towards the end of 2015 a new project was started financed by DFID, focusing on sustainable agriculture methods and savings groups for self-care groups in 80 communities. Please pray that the beneficiaries will be well selected and for God’s diverse blessing on the activities of this initiative.

Tue: Community involvement is key to TLM Mozambique’s leprosy control and prevention of disability programme. Over the past years they have however seen a change in attitudes and a reduction in community participation. Pray that they will find new ways and new community partners to support the leprosy services in rural villages.

Wed: The team in Mozambique have been very encouraged to see some of the self-care groups take on the challenge to start savings groups. Pray that this initiative will spread and help people affected by leprosy develop new skills to help adapt in a fast changing socio-economic environment.

Thu: The need for more integrated partnerships at the district level is increasingly apparent. Pray with us for the development of good processes to mobilise and involve different government and community interest groups including people affected by leprosy.

Fri: Pray for TLM personnel working in Cabo Delgado. Conditions in the field are often very challenging with risks of malaria and road accidents. Pray for God’s protection and that everyone will be inspired by God’s love and will have a strong team spirit.

Sat/Sun: During the year TLM Mozambique will be distributing recorded Bible stories in local language to many self-care groups. They are also looking for ways to mobilise the local church to be involved in leprosy-affected communities. Pray that the Good News can touch people affected by leprosy through word and deed in more profound ways.

Senior Staff
Dr Arie de Kruijff – TLM Country Leader
Senhor Belarmino Reich – Project Manager, ALEMO and Iphiro Yohoolo (school scholarship) projects

Top: The team in Mozambique (Dr Arie de Kruijff, TLM Country Leader, at centre).
Below: Training in modern and sustainable agriculture methods has helped ALEMO members increase their crop yield.