

Nepal Leprosy Trust

Changing lives

25 years anniversary!

The NLT leprosy services at Lalgadh were officially opened on 1st November 1996, 25 years ago. At the time, our growing annual patient load was only 10,000 including some general patients, and we never imagined that number would grow to more than 100,000 within 20 years. There have been so many challenges, not least the Maoist insurgency, monsoons, erosion damage, religious persecution, earthquakes and Covid; but God has faithfully kept the work going at every point of difficulty. With our wonderful supporters walking and praying beside us, and the hard work of many staff, the work has grown and flourished. Leprosy care continues to be at the core of everything we do, but with the help of major inputs from organizations like American Leprosy Missions, Indiana University, and others, our facilities have been able to develop to accommodate the amazing popularity that compassion and quality services have produced in the communities around us.



Eileen on the dias with the Health Minister at the opening

Many of our staff have been with us all their working lives, and have invested their commitment and passion to serve the poor and needy into their work at Lalgadh. This has created a community of people who share a powerful vision of a better way of living that has built hope and dignity into lives that were marked only by poverty and despair.

The work began with a vision in Eileen Lodge's heart of providing services in southeast Nepal for people affected by leprosy, who otherwise had no hope. That vision was underwritten by a faithful God, plus the signature of a brave trustee of a tiny charity called NLT that promised the Nepal Government to build a leprosy hospital on the Terai, likely to cost three-quarters of a million pounds. Despite the annual turnover of the charity being a mere £10,000 in previous years, God opened His treasury, and provided everything needed, without input from any government or major organization. Since then, the work at Lalgadh has been blessed with the support of several major organizations, but its founding remains a miracle that cannot be explained by anything except that God wanted it to be there, and to make a difference in His Name! He wanted to show His love for the people of Nepal, and the poorest in particular.

That difference is exemplified in the care that our staff give to everyone who comes for help, and is in great contrast to many other services in the area. It is also exemplified in the Village Alive programme, as our community team take NLT's care and values into the poorest villages and initiate meaningful transformation from the ground upwards.

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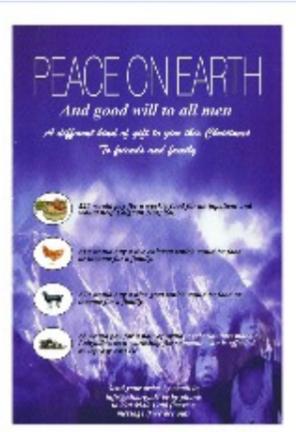
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There's still time to order cards!



Because we have a wide selection of cards, with many lovely batik cards, we have made an A4 insert for this newsletter that highlights some of the best of our card range. The standard sized batik cards are £1.25 each with a discount for 10 or more, and the mini batik cards are 70p each, again with a discount for 10 or more. Our standard cards are £4.50 for 10 large, and £4 for 10 small. Packaging and postage is extra. Please contact us on 020 8940 1200 and leave a message if we are not in the office, or email us on info@nlt.org.uk.



We have also developed some **alternative gifts**, so that instead of giving a gift to somebody, you donate towards patient meals, a chicken, a goat, or a pair of shoes. We will send you a laminated insert explaining the gift, which you can then put into a card of your own (or one of ours) to send to your friend or loved one.

We wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year. Thank you so much for all your support and prayer.

Child Sponsorship

Helping poor families to educate their children is an excellent way of lifting people out of poverty, and generally produces good outcomes. Every year, some children finish their education support and others join the scheme. Due to the lockdowns in Nepal, and reduced communications, the numbers of families coming forward to seek help has been less, but this will soon increase. We are grateful to every sponsor who supports children in this way; and if you would like to start helping a child, please get in touch.

A Touch of Providence

Don't forget to order a copy of this book, full of photos and fascinating stories from the beginning of NLT and its the work at Kathmandu and Lalgadh. Amusing accounts of different people's experiences add colour to this amazing story. Only £10 including UK postage.



Speaking Team!

When things are back to normal, Enid and/or Mike would love to visit your church, school, club or group to share about the work of NLT and life in Nepal, and show you the NLT handicrafts made at our fairtrade workshops!

Twitter



NLT has a Twitter account!

See the tweets on our website or follow us at:

[@NepalLeprosyTr](https://twitter.com/NepalLeprosyTr)

If you are someone who prays for NLT, we send out a monthly prayer letter by email. If you do not use email, we can post it to you if you let us know. It will help to keep you updated between our newsletters.

If you would be happy to receive your copy of this newsletter by email to save NLT some postage, please let us know by emailing us at: info@nlt.org.uk

Nepal Leprosy Trust, 10A The Vineyard, Richmond, TW10 6AQ (England)
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(During the current situation, you can also telephone Mike on 07932 621391)

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A recent evaluation of a Village Alive 'Mushar' Dalit community elicited many good quotes from villagers and officials who are connected to, or involved with, the programme. A government official said:

"The Mushar (mice eating) community now looks shiny for me. They are active these days as they talk about their rights and live more cleanly. Especially now, they come to the municipal office to make housing claims as they don't own land. We have allocated a budget to improve the roofing of their houses... Our area has the highest number of Maha Dalit population in Dhanusha District and we have allocated money to support Maha Dalits. We call them Maha Dalit because they are the most marginalised even among Dalits. We are keen to work in collaboration with Lalgadh to support improvements for Dalits."

A teacher said: *"I have been teaching for the past 20 years and I have seen significant changes in the nearby Mushar village in their hygiene and sanitation habits, and in the active participation of women in the group meetings which I never thought could happen. The awareness-raising works of VAP have played key roles in this change. There exists a new social harmony in the village. Both Dalit and Bahuns (high caste) started drinking tea together in the same tea stall which was not possible previously. A key change I have observed in families is that previously the classroom used to stink a lot and it was very difficult for me to teach for a long time in the classroom because of unwashed dresses and lack of personal hygiene among the Dalit kids. Now it does not stink and they come to school neat and much cleaner."*



Villagers said: *"Previously some men used to drink alcohol and spend money wastefully. Some even beat their wives after drinking. Now our group would not allow any domestic violence to happen in the village. If someone did, we will file a case against them."*

"We produce a lot of rice and livestock in this part of the region, yet we would see malnourished children even in the well-off families due to lack of knowledge and practice of right feeding habits. Due to VAP's awareness sessions, we are not seeing malnourished children now."

"There were many leprosy cases previously and leprosy patients used to be discriminated against. Because of the self-help group works, there is a change in people's attitude towards leprosy-affected persons nowadays. They are treated normally."

There are many more quotes, but they all show that NLT's work is changing everyday life for the better for significant numbers of very poor people. We are grateful to Irish Aid and to all those who helped with matched funding, both for the programme just completed and the new one about to begin.

NLT UK 50th Anniversary

2022 marks 50 years since Nepal Leprosy Trust was formally established as a charity in the UK, to support the work of Eileen Lodge in Nepal amongst people affected by leprosy. The part-time UK staff and volunteers have changed over the years, but have all found that the work gets hold of their hearts, as efforts here - and in Ireland and other places - have a direct impact on improving the lives of extremely vulnerable and poor people in Nepal. We had a 40th celebration which was a blessing; and some of you came to that. Our 50th anniversary is a good opportunity for another celebration of all that the Lord has done through NLT.

Watch out for news about a celebration in 2022... probably sometime between May and July.

St Margarets Fair

We attended our first summer fair for two years in September, at St Margarets, Twickenham, with sunshine, very little wind (great for our marquee!) and crowds of people enjoying an outing after so much time without such events going on.



It felt really good to be out there again, talking to people about the work amongst people affected by leprosy in Nepal, and there was a lot of interest - in the work and in our NLT products, which sold well.

We have a few more outings this year, and hope that next year will provide more opportunities to get out and meet people.

NLT Sponsored walk

After having to cancel last year's walk we set out on the 2021 sponsored walk on 2nd October. We explored the village of Turville (Vicar of Dibley territory) and admired the windmill used in 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Although the walk was only about 9 miles, the challenge came in our choosing the wettest Saturday possible, and we walked - and ate our cream tea - in the pouring rain! But it was a good time with camaraderie in shared adversity. ***Our thanks to our sponsors and our guide Matthew (one of our trustees) - all funds raised will be used to support our work in Nepal with people affected by leprosy.***



Update on the 'Interesting Opportunity'

We mentioned in the last newsletter of a surprise opportunity from a trust, to receive matched funding against any new sources of funding we found in excess of £500, by September. We are thrilled to report that the response from our last newsletter prompted new giving of £5000 which was eligible to be matched with funds of £5000 from the trust involved. These funds will help support year one of the new Village Alive programme that is about to start at Lalgadh. ***Thank you so much to all who prayed that we would find new funds that could be matched. This was a great outcome.***

2022 Envisioning Trip

After our successful envisioning trip in November 2019, and two years lost to the pandemic, we are planning the next trip for 2022, late in the year when the weather is more comfortable. If you are an NLT supporter or simply interested in Nepal and would like to join a trip, led by people familiar with the country and with NLT's work, do get in touch with us. It is an opportunity to see parts of Nepal that you would not see as a tourist, and to understand a bit more about the work NLT is doing for people affected by leprosy in this amazing but very poor country.



Rukumaya, an NLT batik worker

Rukumaya was born into a poor family in Nepal along with her 3 sisters and 4 brothers. She had no chance of schooling, but later on she took some non-formal education to become familiar with the alphabet.



Rukumaya married Guna when she was 16. Guna was a poor man who already had a wife and two sons; and so life became harder for Rukumaya. It became more difficult still after Guna fell from a tree while cutting branches for fodder, and his back was injured. Sadly, his spinal cord was broken, and despite treatment he did not get better and was unable to move without someone's help. His first wife left him, but Rukumaya stayed and took care of him. Their life became impossible in the village, so they came to Kathmandu searching for any work. They were in need of everything.

A year after the accident, Rukumaya heard about Eileen Lodge, the founder of NLT, and went to see her to ask for help. Eileen arranged for further tests and treatment for Guna, but to no avail. Guna was spending most of his time sleeping in bed, as his legs were paralysed, but Eileen was determined to help him towards independence. She gave him training in making batiks and then employed him to make batik cards for NLT. Rukumaya also learned how to make batiks and, because Guna found it very hard to sit properly for any length of time due to his injuries, Ruku ended up doing most of the batik work with their daughter, Renuka, helping them to do the drawing. Guna passed away a few years ago, but Ruku has continued with the batik work and Renuka has trained to be an Auxiliary Nurse. Ruku and the other batik makers are very grateful for all those who buy their work and make it possible for them to have some security, often after very difficult starts in their lives.

Covid News

It seems that no communication is complete without some mention of the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Nationally in Nepal the situation has remained stable and it is possible to travel to Nepal now. However, there are still many new cases of Covid arising, including our own Dr Krishna, who was infected whilst organizing his father's funeral in Kathmandu. A few other staff have been affected, but they have recovered well and life is generally more 'normal' again, with Lalgadh once again the busy place that it always has been. ***Please pray for Krishna, as he is suffering from the after-effects of Covid and is still having to rest quite a lot.***

Leprosy still at large in Nepal

In 2019-2020, there were 3,282 new cases of leprosy diagnosed in Nepal, of which 45% (1,484) were in Province 2 where Lalgadh Hospital is based. Lalgadh itself diagnosed over half of those and also managed 9,264 consultations with people affected by leprosy coming for help, and another 72,388 consultations with general patients. Apparently, leprosy has increased in Nepal during the pandemic, so there is plenty of work to keep Lalgadh busy for many years to come.