

No Pain, No Gain

Leprosy and The Leprosy Mission

What is leprosy?

Leprosy still exists. Each year over 215,000* people around the world are diagnosed with leprosy, with the majority of new cases in India. (*World Health Organisation, 2013)

Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease that attacks nerves in the skin's surface resulting in loss of sensation. If a person affected by leprosy steps on a piece of glass in bare feet, they would feel no pain. As a result, these wounds are often left untreated and infection sets in, wounds do not heal and lifelong disabilities can occur, including blindness and the loss of limbs. Around four million people in our world today live with leprosy-related disabilities.

And yet leprosy is completely curable. A course of drug therapy provides the cure and, if caught early enough, the person will have no lasting effects of the disease. But because leprosy primarily occurs in poor countries and communities, many of those who have it do not have access to good healthcare. They may ignore the symptoms because they can't afford to see a doctor, or because they are afraid their family or community will reject them if they have the disease.

Sadly, even today, many people affected by leprosy live in colonies with other leprosy-affected people because they are stigmatised and discriminated against. There are 850 such colonies in India alone.

About The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland (TLM NI)

The Leprosy Mission works to change people's perceptions of leprosy and integrate people who have been cast out of their homes back into their communities.

TLM NI is part of a global organisation that exists to defeat leprosy and transform lives.

We support hospitals and projects in Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Nigeria and Tanzania that cure, care for and restore the lives of people affected by leprosy.

Because leprosy and poverty are inextricably linked, The Leprosy Mission provides holistic health care, education, skills training, small business loans and low-cost housing, all with the aim of transforming the lives of the poorest of the poor.

At its heart, The Leprosy Mission follows the example of Jesus to demonstrate compassion for the poor, the lonely and the outcast.