



**Providing vital treatment
and care for people
affected by leprosy.**

 Anandaban Hospital, Nepal

A lack of free, specialist treatment for people with leprosy in Nepal continues to be a problem.

Leprosy is endemic in Nepal due to desperate poverty, poor sanitation and a lack of healthcare. This disease devastates the lives of the most vulnerable, the poorest of the poor. Around 3,000 new cases of leprosy are diagnosed in Nepal every year, and services to treat leprosy-affected people are extremely limited.

Leprosy is caused by a bacterium and is easily cured using a combination of three antibiotics. But fast diagnosis and treatment are essential to prevent disability. Left untreated, the disease causes loss of feeling in hands and feet. This makes everyday activities fraught with danger. Imagine what happens when you can't feel pain. It's so easy to burn your hands when cooking or cut the soles of your feet when walking on stones.

If you don't know how to care for these injuries, or ignore them because they don't hurt, infection sets in. Ulcers develop, and sometimes the only way to prevent infection spreading is amputation. Far too many people lose fingers, toes and limbs because of a lack of knowledge and treatment.

Leprosy also paralyses the nerves in your hands and face. Fingers begin to 'claw,' so you can't grip a tool or hold your child's hand. With hands that don't work, it's hard to look after yourself or dependent family members, and virtually impossible to work.

Eyes that can no longer blink mean that blindness is also one of the terrible effects of leprosy.





Fear and poverty delay treatment

If you or I developed a strange skin patch, we'd see a doctor. But for people facing a leprosy diagnosis it isn't that simple. The discrimination and fear surrounding the disease mean that people hide symptoms for as long as possible. They don't want to carry the shame of 'being cursed' or lose all that they hold dear. Even today, people are thrown out of their homes and communities and are forced into a life of exclusion. It doesn't matter who is affected; mothers are torn from children, husbands from wives. You can imagine the impact this has on mental health.

Yet seeking treatment quickly is not always the answer. Access to health care is extremely limited for leprosy patients. Even when they are seen by government health providers, leprosy is often misdiagnosed in the early stages. Government hospital staff are not properly trained in leprosy care. And private healthcare is too expensive for someone living hand-to-mouth. In addition, medical staff in these clinics often refuse to treat people affected by leprosy because of stigma.

Anandaban Hospital provides the solution

Since 1957, Anandaban Hospital has been a beacon of hope for people affected by leprosy. Here, caring and dedicated staff welcome men, women and children who are unwanted everywhere else. The hospital provides medical care for around 30,000 people every year. It is a refuge for the marginalized, and people flock here from all over Nepal.

Anandaban is known as a center of excellence in specialist leprosy care. This includes ulcer treatment, reconstructive surgery, physiotherapy, bespoke prosthetics and mobility aids, skin camps and self-care training. All of these services are provided free of charge for people affected by the disease. With your help, we can continue to provide vital treatment for people who cannot get medical care anywhere else.



What your grant will provide

1. Reconstructive surgery for patients who have lost mobility in their hands and feet because of leprosy. This will enable them to work and walk once more and will restore their dignity and their self-esteem.
2. Ulcer care and treatment. This helps to prevent amputation.
3. Eye care for conditions like lagophthalmos and cataracts. This is essential as nerve damage can prevent eyes from blinking and cause blindness.
4. Counselling for people carrying deep emotional scars because of leprosy. This is so important because many are rejected by their friends, families and communities when they are diagnosed with the disease.





Who will you be helping?

People just like little Kamal, who at just seven, came to Anandaban with the tell-tale patches of leprosy. The little boy's face was covered in patches and lumps. As you can imagine, his mum Premila was distraught with worry.

Premila is 30 and has three children. Her youngest is just five. Like so many in her village, Premila couldn't afford to go to school, and she is illiterate. Her husband Romesh is a builder and together the family lives in one of the poorest and most rural communities in Nepal.

Their home collapsed in the 2015 earthquake, and now they live in a mud hut with two small living spaces. The monsoon rains drip through the tin roof, and there is little respite from the heat of the summer sun.

Premila shared: "It's so hard to make a living in my village. I have a small piece of land and grow enough to feed us for 4-5 months. But after that it's really difficult and I worry constantly."

Little Kamal first started showing leprosy symptoms four months ago. Premila took him to a traditional healer. Can you imagine the trauma when they were told that he had been cursed by the snake god? Fear took hold of the family as they tried their best to make this snake god happy with prayers and offerings. But nothing seemed to lift the curse. What whispers must Kamal have heard and what effect did this have on him? At just seven, he couldn't understand why they were going to the temple and wondered what he had done wrong.



Thankfully, not long after, Premila brought Kamal to Anandaban Hospital. Kamal was diagnosed quickly and welcomed on to the women's ward with his mum.

He'll need to take tablets for a year, a long time for a little boy. The tears fell softly on her lap as Premila asked "Why have we been cursed? What if all my children get leprosy?" The counsellor explained that the family hadn't been cursed and that this was a disease that Premila didn't have to fear. They would ensure Kamal's siblings were tested quickly.

Kamal doesn't really understand the implications of the disease, but he says his tongue is very sore and he's also struggling to breathe through his nose. Premila is just desperate for his face to heal so there are no more visible signs of leprosy. And she needs this to happen quickly because she has to get home.

Premila took Kamal's hand in hers. "I want Kamal to grow and study, to have a good life. Maybe one day he'll take care of others like the nurses here. I'm so thankful for this hospital. I couldn't help my husband or my son because we have no money for medicine. If treatment wasn't free for us, I don't know what we would do."

Because of the kindness of trusts and foundations, Kamal's leprosy was caught and treated quickly. He will no longer struggle with loss of feeling and he is protected against future disability. What an amazing gift for this young boy! He can go back to his community and return to school. His future is now full of hope. And one day, he'll be able to take care of his lovely mum who works so hard to provide for her family.

Please will you help someone like Kamal?

Budget

Description	Cost (\$)
Reconstructive Surgery for 180 patients	110,448
Ulcer Management for 50 patients	30,615
Eye care for 25 leprosy patients	4,160
2,000 counselling sessions for leprosy patients	10,685
Total	155,908

Monitoring and evaluation


We receive reports every six months from the Anandaban team. Clear indicators have been set for each output and outcome and these are measured against targets. Mid-year and annual project reviews enable stakeholders to come together to discuss the project and identify key learnings. Focus group meetings with patients, surveys and a free phone service ensure patient voices are heard and that they are part of decision-making. A member of The Leprosy Mission Great Britain team also visits the project each year to observe its activities and any ways in which they can be improved.

Sustainability

Anandaban Hospital charges non-leprosy patients for general treatment. This includes maternity care, dermatology, accident and emergency and much more. This ensures a sustainable income stream. A business plan has been developed to increase the scope of general treatment.



**Thank you for taking the time to
consider helping people affected by
leprosy in Nepal.**

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