

Lepra launches exciting doubled donations appeal meaning, “£1 pound from you, we get two”.

Embargoed until the 16th of September

On the 16th of September, Lepra will launch its “£1 from you, we get two” appeal, where the public can double donations. For every one pound donated by the public, Lepra will be able to double the donation, helping us reach twice as many people.

To give Lepra a great head start, we have received pledges to match the first £34,500 we receive in donations over the next 6 weeks. So when we receive £1 pound from the public, we get two!

This year, our appeal focuses on our Mental Motivators pilot project, launched in Bangladesh in May 2019. We have trained 30 people from four districts in Bangladesh to provide basic mental health support for those affected by leprosy.

Mental Motivators are designed to improve the mental wellbeing and social interaction of those affected by leprosy or lymphatic filariasis.

They act as counsellors, providing care and support and also act as ‘signposts’ so that those suffering may seek more intensive treatment or linking group members to training, employment and social opportunities.

With more than half of people with newly diagnosed cases of leprosy and lymphatic filariasis (LF) developing anxiety or depression, our Mental Motivators project provides an important service to improve the mental health and quality of life of up to 10,000 families.

Our Ambassador Stuart Miles, former Blue Peter presenter, is collaborating with us on this exciting appeal.

Stuart visited Lepra’s Blue Peter Public Health and Research Centre in Hyderabad, India last year and saw first hand the impact of leprosy on people’s mental health. He met Adriana, who felt that she was no longer beautiful due to her leprosy diagnosis.

“She broke down when telling her story and it really brought it home to me. There are so many mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts which can result after a diagnosis of leprosy or LF as the people affected face prejudice, discrimination and worry about their future.”

The impact of leprosy goes far beyond physical disabilities.

People affected by leprosy and lymphatic filariasis are sometimes forced to leave their villages and towns, losing family and friends. Others are shunned, forced into hiding and isolated from their communities.

By 2030, it is believed that mental health conditions could become the largest contributor to the global health burden.

Tackling diseases, like leprosy and lymphatic filariasis, which link to mental health issues, will play a key part in reducing the amount of people suffering from anxiety, depression and other mental health problems as a direct result of diagnoses.

With the continued support of the public, we can increase the number of trained Mental Motivators, helping to raise awareness of leprosy and LF and the possible mental health issues associated with new diagnoses.

Taslina, one of our newly trained Mental Motivators in Bangladesh, helps people in her community understand their diagnosis and helps them practice self-care and mental wellness.

Taslina feels that it is very tough work as people have limited knowledge about mental health in Bangladesh.

She has also recognized that mental health is a very important aspect of someone's life. "Life is worthless without good mental health".

ENDS

For more information, please contact:

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Notes for Editors

About Lepra and leprosy

Lepra is a UK-based international specialist charity that has been working to beat leprosy since 1924. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of Lepra in 1952, shortly after the death of her father King George VI, who had been Lepra's Patron since the charity was founded in 1924.

Leprosy affects over 7 million of the most vulnerable people in the world, causing life-changing disabilities and attracting terrible prejudice and discrimination. **But there is a cure.**

Lepra works to beat leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique by finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by the disease. By raising awareness, pushing for early detection and supporting people living with disabilities caused by leprosy, Lepra works towards a day when this disease no longer destroys lives.

Last year, the charity reached 301,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and care. It reached a further 1.7 million people through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases.

Find out more about Lepra on its website and social media channels:

Website: www.lepra.org.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LepraUK>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LEPRAUK/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LEPRAHinA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/LepraUK/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lepra/>



We will beat
leprosy together