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Lepra and University of Essex form a new research partnership in the fight against leprosy.

COLCHESTER, ESSEX – Lepra and the University of Essex have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to form a new partnership working towards better outcomes for people affected by leprosy and other vulnerable groups throughout the world.

The new collaboration will focus on projects and academic research where Lepra and the University of Essex share common interests, providing opportunities for both organisations to advance the fields of public and global health. Together, Lepra and the University of Essex will address current and pressing issues such as human rights and advocacy, medical and para-medical science, social science as well as human science.

In signing the agreement, Jimmy Innes, Lepra CEO, said, “I’m delighted that we are launching this new partnership between Lepra and the University of Essex. We both share the same physical home in Colchester, and we both come with rich and diverse histories that offer us great complementarity. For Lepra, we relish the chance to work with the university’s students and staff, to help engage in our work addressing leprosy in India and Bangladesh, and in pursuit of a world that is free from prejudice and disability due to leprosy”.

Professor David O’Mahony, University of Essex’s Dean of Partnerships (Research), said: “The University of Essex is really excited to be launching a new partnership with Lepra. Together we will be able to work and cooperate on the important work that Lepra delivers across the world in the combat against leprosy. There are wide range of opportunities for our respective organisations and for our researchers and students – from undergraduates to PhD students - to benefit from this partnership and we look forward to working together.”

Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease, which affects the skin and the peripheral nerves. If left undiagnosed or untreated it can cause severe disability. If caught early enough, leprosy is curable with a course of multi-drug therapy, that is provided free of charge. Millions of people are affected, with numbers continuing to rise. For over 7 million people across the world, leprosy causes damage to their health, livelihoods and futures. 600 people are diagnosed with leprosy every day and 50 of those are children.

Last year, despite the global pandemic and concurrent lockdowns, Lepra directly reached more than 290,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and holistic care. More than 225,000 people were further engaged in their communities through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases, in order to reduce transmission and promote wellbeing. Through raising awareness, prevention, treatment and follow-up, Lepra supports vulnerable people so that they can equally enjoy the benefits of society. Lepra is actively involved in the strengthening of health systems and assists local governments in their leprosy management programmes.

By delivering this partnership, Lepra and the University of Essex plan to explore and create innovative joint projects which will have a long-lasting impact for people affected by leprosy.

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Notes for Editors

About Lepra and leprosy

Our Vision - A world free from prejudice and disability due to leprosy

About Lepra: On 31st January 1924, the British Empire Leprosy Relief Association (BELRA) was launched at Mansion House in the City of London. They operated under this name for 40 years, before renaming as the British Leprosy Relief Association (LEPRA) in 1964. They been known simply as Lepra since 2008.

Currently, Lepra work in India, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe and offer support, training and health system strengthening to local and national governments in its projects countries. Lepra aims to provide early diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation for people affected by leprosy.

From raising awareness at a local level through to national advocacy, Lepra works to ensure that people affected by leprosy can lead normal lives; free from the damage the disease causes to their health, livelihood and future.

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/>

About the University of Essex

At the University of Essex, we are committed to two things: excellence in teaching and excellence in research. Our students are members of a unique, transformational living and learning community which empowers them with the skills to make a difference to the world around them.

We put student success at the heart of our mission - supporting every student, from every background to achieve outstanding outcomes and preparing our students to thrive in their future lives.

We have a powerful global outlook and our impact is growing. We now have nearly 1,000 active researchers and over 17,800 students from more than 140 different countries with 100.000+ alumni making a difference across the globe.

The University of Essex is Top 30 in the UK (The Complete University Guide 2022) and Top 25 in UK for research quality (The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2022) We are also Top 25 for international outlook (Times Higher Education, World University Rankings 2022).



We will beat
leprosy together