

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM ILEP INDIA COORDINATOR

Welcome to the first issue of ILEP India's newsletter for the year 2023!

With the introduction of the "National Strategic Plan for Interrupting the Transmission of Leprosy in India" on National Anti-Leprosy Day, January 30, 2023, this year has gotten off to a great start. You will learn more about the NSP launch in this issue, along with the interesting events that happened in January, February, and March 2023.

Our efforts to strengthen coordination with the Central Leprosy Division and the ILEP Global Team are ongoing, and regular meetings with the relevant stakeholders have been held to better plan and develop need-based strategies to improve our support. This issue additionally shines a light on several intriguing activities taking on in the field, including our approaches in case-finding, service delivery, capacity building, migration and leprosy, and innovations that benefit persons affected by leprosy. Every quarter, we will publish a new issue of our newsletter where we will continue to give you all more interesting insights into our work.



Dr. Srilekha Penna

Key Activities

1 National Anti-Leprosy Day

- The National Anti-Leprosy Day celebration and observation was conducted by Central Leprosy Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Govt. of India) at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi on 30th January 2023.
- Stakeholders working with the National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) came together and shared their thoughts and practices regarding leprosy.



Image 1 Dignitaries launching NSP on National Anti-Leprosy Day

- ILEP India also took part in the celebration and shared the response with the audience.
- National Strategic Plan for interrupting the transmission of leprosy in India by 2027 and National Guidelines on Anti-microbial resistance (AMR) was launched by the MoHFW – GoI; ILEP India supported the preparation of these guidelines in collaboration with Central Leprosy Division and World Health Organization (WHO) India.
- Several ILEP India organizations also celebrated this day at the district level along with the persons affected by leprosy (PAL) and the district health administration.
- You can access the NSP guidelines and AMR guidelines along with some other important resources on our website through this link: <https://ilepindia.com/iec-material/>

2 Coordination with the ILEP Global team

- Post International Leprosy Congress (ILC) 2022, a virtual discussion was initiated by ILEP Global between the global CEOs and ILEP India CEOs.
- The discussion was related to strengthening the capacity of ILEP India’s NLEP consultants and enhancing their coordination at the state and national level leprosy program.
- ILEP India Coordinator presented the role of consultants in the Indian system and existing coordination mechanisms.
- Several issues related to consultants were discussed; suggestions were provided by the Global and Indian CEOs.

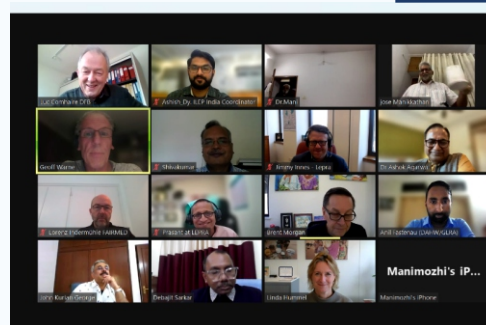


Image 2 Coordination meeting between ILEP Global and ILEP India CEOs

3 Strengthening coordination with Central Leprosy Division, MoHFW

- Routine discussions were facilitated by Coordinator and Dy. Coordinator with Central Leprosy Division.
- The monthly activities planned by CLD during 2023 were discussed during these meetings i.e. reconstructive surgeries (RCS) for backlog cases, Leprosy Case Detection Campaign (LCDC), capacity building of govt. staff, campaigns against stigma and discrimination, awareness campaigns, etc.
- Also, how ILEP India could support in clearing the RCS and training backlog was discussed.

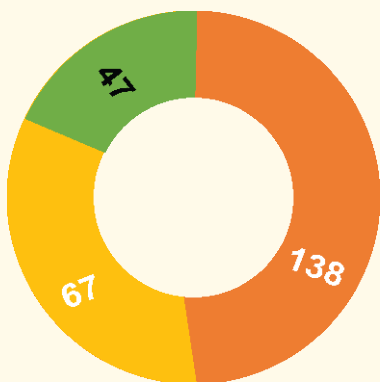
4 Knowledge sharing between various public health programmes

- Indian Association of Epidemiologists (IAE) announced the conference focussing on collaboration and resource sharing to achieve more in national public health programmes.
- ILEP India, WHO India, and U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) became the official organizing partners for the conference.
- NLR India Foundation (ILEP India Coordinating agency) became the secretariat of the conference to take up the coordination.
- Committees were formed under the supervision of Addl. Director General Health Services and frequent meetings were conducted to organize the conference on 29th-30th April.



Key activities in the field

■ Visits ■ Trainings ■ Meetings



The ILEP agencies continued to support field and policy-level assistance to National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) through their 14 NLEP consultants across 18 endemic states. These consultants routinely visit the health care facilities, organize self-care camps, assist district and state leprosy officers, train the self-help groups, monitor the drug availability in the districts, and assist in active case detection activities. From January to March 2023, the state and district-level programme was supported through 47 advocacy and program implementation meetings; 67 trainings; and 138 visits to the districts, different health facilities, and leprosy colonies.

1 Community as the first responder towards case finding

➤ One-day training program was organized by The Leprosy Mission Trust India for the artisans of the Saloon Operators Association on leprosy; Barbershops constitute potential sites for community health promotion programs.

➤ 23 suspicious symptoms of leprosy were explained to barbers of the association along with detailed information on referral and treatment. IEC material (posters) on symptoms were distributed to barbers so it can be installed in their hair salon.



Image 3 Training program team and participants

➤ An appeal was made to not discriminate if someone is found with these symptoms while performing a haircut and refer them to the nearest health centre for a suspect check.

2 Step towards understanding migration and leprosy

➤ To understand the impact of migration and its consequences on people affected by leprosy and their households in India, in 2021 FAIRMED India initiated a study on “Migration and Leprosy in India” in 4 states namely Delhi, Chandigarh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. The consultation was organized in collaboration with State Leprosy Office (SLO), Uttar Pradesh; around 30 participants attended the consultation including a few District Leprosy Officers, District Leprosy Consultants, SLO staff etc.



Image 4 State Leprosy Officer - Uttar Pradesh lighting the lamp



Image 5 Country Coordinator - FAIRMED India briefing the participants

➤ Country Coordinator, FAIRMED India set the context of the study, emphasizing on input, output, coverage, approach, the target group of the project, etc. He also emphasized developing a definition of migration in the leprosy context; one of the key outcomes of the consultation.

- Sampling, Target, Respondents, Research tools, and pilot were the few aspects discussed in the later part of the consultation. SLO Uttar Pradesh actively took part, provided a few suggestions, and ensured the required support for the study.

3 Support towards providing leprosy care services

- During the quarter, Damien Foundation India Trust (one of the ILEP India agencies) provided services to 25,898 OPD patients among which 182 new leprosy cases were detected; 39 persons were detected with grade 2 disabilities while 61 patients were female patients.
- DFIT hospitals during the period provided services for 488 inpatients covering 11,068 bed days. 92 patients were treated for lepra reaction while 95 deformity corrective surgeries were conducted.
- Efforts were made to reach out to 2967 patients through field activities and counselled them for self-care practice; 2136 are practicing self-care presently.
- Beyond clinical services, small business support to 12 persons, housing support for two families, and educational support for five children affected by leprosy was provided.



Image 6 RCS surgery being carried out by DFIT

4 Use of innovative techniques to benefit persons affected by leprosy

- TLMTI conducted a five-day workshop in Tamil Nadu to explore the use of 3D printing technology to fabricate assistive devices. The workshop focused on how 3D printing can transform the lives of people with disabilities and how it can be used to create customized objects, such as prosthetics and orthotics.
- The benefits of 3D printing are cost-effectiveness and eco-friendliness. 15 TLMTI occupational and physiotherapists attended the workshop.

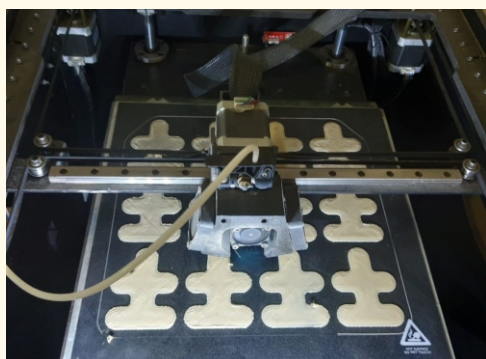


Image 7 The demonstration and mass production being carried out by TLMTI

- The objectives of the workshop were to update the concepts of recent trends in 3D printing, stimulate innovative thinking skills, and enhance the skills of physiotherapists and occupational therapists of the leprosy mission trust India in 3D printing technology.

- The intended beneficiaries of the workshop were people affected by leprosy, people with disabilities, and healthcare professionals.

5 Celebrating Anti-Leprosy Day with patients and families affected

- Anti-Leprosy Day was celebrated by Coordinator – Community Based Rehabilitation, Leprosy Program Advisor, and counsellor from NLR India Foundation at Garibdas Kusthha Ashram; three colonies namely Garibdas Kusthha Ashram, Navjeevan Kusthha Ashram, and Mahatma Gandhi Kusthha Ashram have participated. The winning team was encouraged by organizing a quiz competition and distributing chocolates to all the participating children.
- An awareness rally was arranged with the children and people of the colonies; seven leprosy patients and 16 children participated in the celebration including the head of the colony.



Image 8 National Anti-Leprosy Day celebration in leprosy colonies

6 Re-sensitization meeting of Physiotherapists

- Damien Foundation India Trust in collaboration with State Leprosy Office Bihar organized two days of re-sensitization and review meetings for physiotherapists and DNTs from 35 districts of Bihar. The discussion was held regarding their activities carried out under NLEP during the Year 2022-23, challenges, and their experiences during the meeting.



Image 9 DFIT team with the SLO staff and participants from re-sensitization session

- Suspect Identification, diagnosis, classification, management, reaction identification and management, disability, self-care, RCS and RCS Follow up, physiotherapy in leprosy, roles and responsibilities in the NLEP Program, and Referral system mechanism were a few topics discussed during technical sessions. Interactive sessions were held along with patient demonstrations and case presentations.

- First batch of training was conducted in MLCU, Rudrapura (Sasaram) from 14th March 2023 to 15th March 2023; physiotherapists and DNTs from 15 districts participated while the second batch was conducted at The Leprosy Mission - Muzaffarpur from 17th March to 18th March 2023; members from 20 districts participated.

UPCOMING PRIORITIES

1

Assist in the roll-out of NSP.

2

Support in the organization of the 13th National Epidemiological Association conference on leprosy and other public health priorities.

3

Initiate discussion towards inter-ministerial collaborations to benefit the affected.

4

Repealing discriminatory laws.