

THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The board of trustees have pleasure in presenting their Annual Report, together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charitable company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Leprosy is not simply an affliction from ancient times; it is a modern, 21st-century disease that is still devastating the lives of people across the globe today. A person is diagnosed with leprosy every two minutes. In addition, millions more go undiagnosed every year. It's an injustice.

However, there is a cure. No one should suffer from a preventable and treatable disease.

As long as leprosy afflicts individuals and communities, we are committed to breaking the chains of leprosy, addressing underlying causes as well as working to prevent disability and empowering people to attain healing, dignity and wholeness in their lives. Our vision is leprosy defeated and lives transformed. We seek to do everything that we can so that children can be born into a world without being at risk of leprosy because it is no longer transmitted; anybody affected by leprosy can enjoy fullness of life; and there is inclusion, and not discrimination for people affected by leprosy.

Compelled by the example of Jesus Christ we minister and work in support of The Leprosy Mission International (registered Charity in England & Wales No: 1076356). The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland (registered charity No: NIC 106322) works to raise awareness of leprosy in Northern Ireland and to raise vital resources to make leprosy a thing of the past. This work is undertaken through prayer, fundraising, advocacy, and volunteering in fulfilment of the following charitable purposes:

- The advancement of health and relief of poverty for the benefit of the public, in particular in relation to leprosy;
- The relief of those in need by reason of ill health or disability, in particular with people who are disadvantaged by leprosy and people connected with them; to enable their integration in their communities;
- The eradication of leprosy

Globally, The Leprosy Mission (TLM) has an ambitious, targeted goal of Zero Leprosy Transmission by 2035 which links with our two other focus areas, working towards Zero Leprosy Disability and Zero Leprosy Discrimination.

Zero Leprosy Transmission

To interrupt transmission, we target areas with high rates of leprosy prevalence and adopt an approach that combines multiple tactics, including local government ownership, health system integration and development of new technologies to support and develop leprosy expertise in primary and secondary healthcare workers. With a strong record in leprosy research, we utilise field presence to develop, investigate and trial research innovations related to reducing transmission, early diagnosis, monitoring relapse, antimicrobial resistance and reactions to Multi Drug Therapy (MDT), the cure for leprosy.

Zero Leprosy Disability

Disability is not an inevitable consequence of leprosy. However, people continue to be affected by it, often due to late diagnosis or treatment complications. Limited local government ownership of leprosy care, complications in care management and lack of disability services, coupled with declining leprosy expertise (which can spot the first signs of leprosy) means that people are not getting the timely interventions they need. Globally, we continue to provide rehabilitation and well-being services into countries where local governments need assistance. We particularly focus on work at a community level to promote models of self-care that empower people to manage their impairments.

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Zero Leprosy Discrimination

There are over 130 laws in different countries that legally discriminate persons affected by leprosy from enjoying certain fundamental human rights guaranteed under the national constitutions for citizens of their respective countries. People affected by leprosy are still routinely overlooked, ignored or prevented from a full participation in public, social, economic and cultural life. They also feel shame and isolate themselves due to self-stigma. Stigma and discrimination are key factors why those affected by leprosy do not seek out help.

Globally, we support people affected by leprosy to challenge injustice and self-advocate for their rights and entitlements. Together we target discriminatory law and official practice, while encouraging nation states to uphold the relevant international treaties especially the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Principles and Guidelines for the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy and Their Family Members.

We promote opportunities to earn a sustainable living and we work with communities to address the barriers that prevent this from happening. We know from what those affected by leprosy tell us that when they can bring resources into the household economy their standing in the family and wider community increases and their voice begins to be heard.

Partnership Working

The charity delivers its charitable aims through grant making using global partners, chiefly other TLM national programmes. This utilises local knowledge and expertise and promotes empowerment and long term sustainability.

The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland is a member of The Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship (GF), made up of 27 member countries and affiliates, and a signatory to The Leprosy Mission Fellowship Charter which underpins the worldwide operations of the charity (30 May 2011/ Updated September 2018). Together, we are the largest player in the fight against leprosy. We work collaboratively, particularly with our colleagues within the U.K, The Leprosy Mission Great Britain, The Leprosy Mission Shop.

Globally, The Leprosy Mission is a key member of The Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy which brings together organisations including The International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP), the Novartis Foundation, the International Association for Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement (IDEA), as well as national leprosy programmes and is supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This partnership co-ordinates action to accelerate research, mobilise technical assistance and expertise and increase advocacy and fundraising in the pursuit of a leprosy free world.

We are also a member agency of ILEP (the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy organisations), EU-CORD (a network of European Christian Relief & Development non-governmental organisations), People in Aid, the Micah Network, the Neglected Tropical Disease NGDO Network (a global forum for non-governmental organisations working together on neglected tropical diseases) and BOND (The International Development Network). In Northern Ireland we are also a member of the Missions Action Partnership (MAP), Will To Give (WTG), Volunteer Now, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) and CADA (Coalition of Aid Development Agencies in Northern Ireland). TLMNI is also a signatory of the Dochas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages <https://www.dochas.ie/resources/communications-pe/code-of-conduct-on-images-and-messages/>

Public Benefit

TLMNI supports leprosy projects worldwide, working at an individual, community and governmental level to support research, develop capacity and implement programmes to raise awareness and deliver effective medical care and outreach. People affected by leprosy are also given the support they need to get back on their feet and live healthy lives by providing access to education, vocational training, housing and sanitation.

We have referred to The Charity Commission's guidance on reporting on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and planning our activities. Globally, The Leprosy Mission and its partners work with people around the world irrespective of their race, faith or nationality and the Board of Trustees have ensured that the activities undertaken contribute to the aims and objectives of the charity and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. The Trustees are therefore confident that we meet the public benefit requirements.

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Achievements and performance

The past twelve months has continued to be a challenging and difficult year for our work both locally and globally. As our programmes continue to be subject to disruption by political and economic instability and are still feeling the significant impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are thankful for the generosity of supporters who have sustained core services and have enabled those affected by leprosy to receive vital care and treatment.

2023 has seen financial growth for TLMNI, £788,019 total income compared to £759,095 in 2022. In contrast to the previous year, this growth has occurred in unrestricted giving. Local supporters have continued to give generously throughout the year, with general donations and gifts received increasing by nearly 7% compared to the previous year (2022: £380,782/ 2023 £405,886). This increase is largely due to an additional fundraising appeal in the year boosting individual giving alongside an overall increase in church giving. Legacy giving saw a slight decrease in the year of c.£30,000. However, a greater proportion was unrestricted allowing trustees to have greater flexibility to direct funds where they are most needed.

We have continued to provide core funds to our long term partners, over the past year. Good financial and long term planning has enabled the charity to continue to provide significant funds, totalling £422,927 to overseas projects and to support the unique and critical work of The Leprosy Mission International (TLMi). Compared to the previous year's funding (2022: £452,005), there is a decrease of 6% in overseas funding. This is largely due to delays in project delivery in Ethiopia, as a result of internal conflict and civil unrest and legacies received late in the year. The Board are hopeful that as the situation stabilises in Ethiopia, that the project will be delivered as planned in 2024.

In 2023, Remittances were transferred from Northern Ireland to part support the projects and programmes in Bangladesh £70,000, India £28,625, Nepal £189,795, Nigeria £42,780, Tanzania £12,726, and Ethiopia £4,000 as well as our apportioned contribution (Global Fellowship Levy) towards The Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship of £75,000. This contribution helps co-ordinate efforts to meet the needs of those affected by leprosy on a global platform and ensures that robust monitoring and due diligence processes are in place for all projects.

Funds transferred to Nepal totaled £189,795 which included support towards Anandaban Hospital, the main leprosy referral hospital in Nepal, and funds of £112,385 in support of 'Dignity First' – a 3 year project, 2023-2025, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT - Irish Aid Civil Society) which seeks to improve the health, well-being and dignity of 1,089 people affected by leprosy and enhance the technical capacity of 90 Government health workers and 300 Community Health Volunteers to identify, diagnose, treat, and manage leprosy and complications. A grant of €100,000 was received from DFAT at the end of FY22 for disbursement as per agreed budget in FY23, alongside TLMNI's match funding commitment. A further grant of €130,000 (£112,385) was received in FY23 for use in 2024.

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The kindness, care and compassion of our supporters, alongside the dedication of our partners and staff have enabled the following successes throughout the past year. Our vision is leprosy defeated, lives transformed. Behind each of these numbers, is a life supported and a step closer to the defeat of leprosy:

India

In partnership with other global TLM members, funding support achieved:

- 14,555 cases of leprosy were seen at **Purulia Hospital** during the year (1,036 new and 13,519 revisits), with 22.8% of grade 2 disability in newly diagnosed cases. It was particularly encouraging that 0 cases of children with grade 2 disability were found.
- 3,088 clients were treated for leprosy complications (eg: reactions, neuritis and ulcer care)
- 36 reconstructive surgeries for leprosy affected, with 97.2% of improved function and appearance following surgery
- 3,393 items of footwear were made for leprosy affected people, giving increased mobility, and helping to prevent further disability
- 24 artificial limbs were provided
- 23 individuals referred for livelihood training or attendance at vocational training centres
- 8 outreach health clinics were conducted
- 48,463 medical consultations were conducted, which covered general medicine, orthopedics, dermatology, dentistry, psychiatry and pediatrics
- The loss of a qualified surgeon during the year meant that only 83 minor surgeries were conducted

As a result of the **Children Unite for Action** programme:

- 542 children affected by leprosy (Male=292; Female=250) were selected and benefited directly from this programme
- 10 Children Parliaments have been formed and were supported to provide children a larger platform to learn and participate in different activities focused on the importance of personal hygiene and advocating for their rights and developing leadership and communication skills
- 16 leprosy champions were identified and capacity building programmes delivered to support the selected children in their roles
- 21 Village level Child Protection committees were formed
- 146 children affected by leprosy were provided with educational support
- 16 children affected by leprosy were referred for vocational training
- Community based vocational training activities were started in all 3 locations of the project
- Orientation programmes for parents were conducted at 3 locations of this project

Bangladesh

In partnership with other global TLM members, funding support achieved:

- 18,896 community people were reached through 1,112 community awareness sessions
 - 5,389 school students & 52 medical college students were orientated on leprosy through 82 school sessions
 - 465 new leprosy cases were found through partners and government health centres as part of the '**Activating & Engaging Partnerships to reduce leprosy in Bangladesh**' (AEP) project. 100% of cases have been registered and are receiving multi drug therapy (the cure for leprosy).
 - 147,469 people from 31,373 families were screened from identifying new cases through contacts and skin camps
 - 19 Church leaders and key staff at 3 Tea Companies received training in leprosy case detection, treatment, referral, awareness and complication care
 - 206 patients with leprosy complications received vital treatment from TLM and partner hospitals
 - 121 persons with leprosy disability had access to protective footwear, wheelchairs or other mobility assisted devices
 - 144 self-help groups with 1,939 members across eight districts were also supported, with 85.5% of members reporting that they have improved inclusion as a result
 - 31 leprosy affected volunteers were trained in promoting self care
 - 22 federations were formed with representatives from the self-help groups and received leadership and organisational development training with the aim to build the federations as sustainable people organisations
 - The work achieved through the federations and self help groups led to 22 advocacy initiatives to access local government services
 - 36 out of 54 persons reported an increased income as a result of being engaged in income-generating activities using self help group loans
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During 2023, three **research studies** were also conducted in Bangladesh, part funded from TLM Northern Ireland, which contributed towards global research priorities.

Global Research Workshop

TLMNI provided seed funding, in partnership with TLM Great Britain, for the first Global research workshop in 2023 which took place in Ethiopia.

The workshop had 3 goals:

- For researcher's to get to know each other
- To increase awareness on research work being conducted and specific expertise in Global Fellowship
- To build a sense of community amongst TLM researchers,

with feedback from participants affirming that opportunities like the workshop were vital in facilitating collaboration and coordinated work.

One participant said:

"This is the most effective research workshopit has helped me a lot in networking, understanding the work done in different TLM Organisations, learning more on different types of research done. This will help me and us to grow more in leprosy research. Through the help of research, we can beat leprosy and END LEPROSY TOGETHER!"

A key outcome from the workshop was the formation of four communities of research practice – Laboratory research; clinical research; public health; emancipatory research.

Research teams from TLM Nepal and TLMT India participated in person and representatives from TLM Nigeria, DR Congo and Ethiopia were also present. Unfortunately, the Bangladesh research team were unable to attend TLM Global workshop due to visa issues.

Ethiopia

During the year, TLMNI part funded the country office and key staff posts in TLMI- Ethiopia. Unfortunately, funding available for the project, **Dare to Dream** (an integrated and comprehensive leprosy control model through health system strengthening and community empowerment and ownership), was not used in 2023 due to civil unrest and conflict in project areas. By the end of the year, the political situation had become more stable and after a project review, it is hoped that the project will be able to deliver agreed activities in 2024.

Tanzania

In partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Central Tanganyika (DCT) we continued to support work at **Hombolo Hospital** and through the **Community Health Education Programme (CHEP)**. Unfortunately, the CHEP Director who had resigned during 2022 was not replaced by DCT and this led to difficulties in the implementation of activities and caused a number of delays during the year. Despite these circumstances the following achievements occurred:

- Leprosy screening continued in 6 villages in Dodoma region where 211 individuals were screened for leprosy
- 12 new cases of leprosy were confirmed during the year, following screening in villages and, at Hombolo Hospital
- 2,867 people benefitted from community awareness sessions in the villages which advocated for the importance of early case detection to help reduce disability and social stigma
- 5 self help groups were successfully supported to introduce the production of small scale vegetables, irrigation, tailoring, livestock keeping and cash crops cultivation. During the year, growing sunflowers and keeping livestock were particularly successful. As a result, leprosy affected individuals are better able to care for themselves and generate income for their family needs. These groups also provided a network for leprosy case follow up, particularly around self care for nerve damage.
- Safeguarding training was received by 5 village chairmen, 6 volunteers, 8 hospital workers and 79 individuals suspected of having leprosy.

Given the ongoing difficulties and the low number of leprosy cases being detected, the Board, in collaboration with TLM International staff, conducted a comprehensive review of activities and funding available, during the year, to review achieved outcomes and ensure that there was an appropriate return on investment given capacity and funding provided. It was concluded that the funds invested could be better used in another TLM Country to maximise the global impact of our strategy to enable zero leprosy transmission, zero leprosy disability and zero leprosy discrimination. TLMNI will continue its partnership with DCT through prayer and encouragement, as required.

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Nigeria

In 2023, we continued to fund the expanded project for **Integrated leprosy control towards zero transmission in Kogi and Kwara states**.

During the year;

- 203 general health workers, traditional healers & community volunteers were trained on how to identify, refer and, if qualified, diagnose and manage cases of leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases. Rates of referral from the communities have increased following the training.
- 20 government health workers were trained to diagnose leprosy through skin slit smears as most patients are missed at government health clinics due to wrong diagnosis. This has enhanced early detection.
- 1,418 persons were screened in 5 skin camps across the states
- 22 new cases of leprosy were found during skin camps by newly trained health workers. All leprosy cases have been registered and are receiving MDT, the cure for leprosy and 96% of new leprosy patients had their household contacts screened with 1 new case of leprosy being diagnosed
- 26 members from 6 self care groups received training on how to manage their ulcers and improve general hygiene. As a result of training, group members are actively mobilized to support other members in the self help groups. There is significant improvement in ulcer management and wound healing, and a reduction in ulcer reporting and amputation of limbs.
- 1,277 young people attended school based workshops to improve their personal and environmental hygiene helping to prevent disease. Information was provided on hygiene, hand washing, proper sanitation, and disposal of waste material, signs and symptoms of leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases and where to go for help when needed. This has led to improvement in health and environmental cleanliness with wider impacts for all community members who have adopted health practices such as proper storage of drinking water, frequent hand washing and getting rid of refuse correctly.
- 317 people across 4 communities were reached with information on symptoms, causes and treatment of leprosy and other neglected tropical diseases.

Nepal

Despite another challenging year, Anandaban hospital, the main leprosy referral hospital in Nepal, continued to provide high standards of care by providing consultation for over 39,350 outpatients visits and caring for 929 inpatients.

Alongside the support of global partners the following was achieved:

- 144 new cases of leprosy were diagnosed through the hospital
- 7,323 leprosy patients were seen at outpatient clinics
- 169 leprosy surgical interventions occurred and 432 ulcer septic surgeries conducted for leprosy affected
- 112 reconstructive surgeries occurred for leprosy patients helping restore mobility in leprosy affected limbs
- 1,127 items of footwear & 29 prostheses were distributed
- 928 supportive appliances were provided
- 2,959 physiotherapy sessions were delivered
- 6,149 patient sessions were conducted at outreach satellite clinics, of which 562 patients received consultation for leprosy services
- School health programmes were initiated during the year to raise awareness to children and their families on health promotion, prevention and treatment. 548 school children from 6 different schools were reached with more than 50% reporting health related issues.
- During the year, a number of renovations were completed at the hospital and equipment purchased for the emergency and trauma wing. Fencing was also installed around the hospital to increase security.

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2023 also saw the first full year of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT - Irish Aid Civil Society) funded project, **Dignity First**, which seeks to improve the health, well-being and dignity of 1,089 people affected by leprosy and enhance the technical capacity of 90 Government health workers and 300 Community Health Volunteers to identify, diagnose, treat, and manage leprosy and complications. During Year 1, the project reached 12,189 people with 1,178 people receiving direct help from pop up health clinics. 10,059 close contacts were traced which led to 311 people receiving a leprosy diagnosis and receiving medicine and treatment. Medical interventions supported 438 leprosy patients' health, wellbeing, independence & social acceptance. During the year 415 community health volunteers were also trained, 314 of whom were female. This is particularly important given that one of the key aims of the project is to increase detection of leprosy in women and girls and support their health, in general.

Advocacy – The global membership support levy, which TLMNI contributes as a member of the Global Fellowship, funds strategic posts and activities, including advocacy. The following key global advocacy achievements occurred during the year:

- The Leprosy Mission attended the UN's CRPD Conference, where Ana Ivonia was the co-chair of a roundtable discussion on 'reaching underrepresented groups of persons with disabilities'. Ivonia is a young leader of an Organisation of Persons Affected by Leprosy in Timor-Leste. In a meeting of many diplomats and civil society activists giving policy messages, Ivonia's speech stood out because of its raw power. Through tears she told the gathered dignitaries of her experience with leprosy and closed with a powerful message for change.
- Also at the CRPD Conference, TLM hosted a side event in partnership with Disabled Peoples' International. The theme was 'Reaching the millions of under-represented people affected by NTDs' and included speeches from across civil society in the NTD sector. TLM's team was the only one that spoke about the massive overlap between NTDs and disability in the global south. With 1.8bn of the world's poorest people affected by NTDs and 80% of persons with disability living in low income settings, it is wrong for us to miss this overlap. TLM's advocacy is crucial in drawing attention to this.
- In 2023, the UN renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on discrimination against persons with leprosy (Hansen's disease). This was a major success and was in part thanks to the advocacy efforts of TLM Member Countries, who spoke to their UN representatives.
- During the year, TLM Nigeria made a submission to the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC) as part of the Universal Periodic Review process. Through this process, the HRC reviews the human rights situation in all UN countries. The TLM Nigeria submission highlighted the human rights challenges for persons affected by leprosy in Nigeria and made concrete suggestions for improvement. We await the outcome of this process.
- TLM was involved in developing the NISC tool. (Neglected Tropical Disease Inclusion Scorecard). This tool allows NGOs to establish how effectively their work includes persons affected by NTDs and allows a consistent process of improvement for all NGOs who want to include the voices of persons affected by NTDs through their work. Mathias Duck (TLM Advocacy Lead) was one of the key individuals in producing and disseminating this tool.

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Where Our Support Comes From

Income is received from a variety of sources, with the majority of funds raised from individuals (including legacy giving) and Churches across Northern Ireland. Our core supporter base continues to faithfully prioritise people affected by leprosy in their charitable giving and we continue to extend our sincere thanks to each and everyone. Legacy giving remained over £250,000 last year, however the receipt of 2 large legacies late in the year, December 2023, meant that these critical funds had to be rolled over for disbursement in the next financial year.

Funding grants were also received during the year from The Fermanagh Trust and TBF & KL Thompson Trust for work in Nepal. A new grant was also received from The Church of Ireland Bishop's Appeal for the AEP project in Bangladesh. After several unsuccessful trust funding applications during the year, trustees were delighted to receive notification, in December 2023 of a successful grant awarded from the McClay Foundation which will be allocated to project funding in 2024. We pay particular thanks to the Board of Trustees of these Trusts and organisations for their financial support and commitment of our work. As already noted, a funding grant was also received from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) for 'Dignity First' project in Nepal. A 3 year project (2023-2025) that seeks to improve the health, well-being and dignity of 1,089 people affected by leprosy and enhance the technical capacity of 90 Government health workers and 300 Community Health Volunteers to identify, diagnose, treat, and manage leprosy and complications.

General donations (including responses to direct marketing appeals) and gifts received in 2023 saw an increase of £20,000 or 7% compared to the previous year (2022: £380,782/ 2023: £405,886). This is largely due to an additional fundraising appeal in the year and increased fundraising events and activities, including 3 'Tea Parties' in Belfast, Ballymena and Portadown. During the year, we also acquired 23 new regular givers giving a total of 216 regular givers in the year.

Church giving, which had suffered significantly as a result of the impact of COVID pandemic, increased slightly during the year (£2,000) and activity remained consistent with the previous year. The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland relies heavily on the commitment and support of over 200 Church Representatives (volunteers) across Northern Ireland who faithfully pray, raise awareness and financial support in local churches, groups and Christian faith based organisations. These Church Representatives are the life blood of all that we do, ensuring that the voice of those affected by leprosy is heard in different locations in Northern Ireland and ensuring those that financially support TLMNI are provided with regular updates about how their giving is helping to transform lives every day.

Unfortunately, the impact of the pandemic which saw a decline in church attendance in some local congregations has continued to be felt in 2023 with a number of church leadership vacancies, mid week group closures and aging congregations no longer able to support as many mission agencies. These external factors have a considerable impact in our work amongst churches in Northern Ireland and is an area of concern for the future as we continue to find meaningful ways to connect and engage with churches. Despite, this difficult environment, trustees are delighted that The Leprosy Mission still holds a special relationship with over 220 congregations across Northern Ireland who faithfully gave donations during the year. 52 speaking engagements occurred in 2023, consistent with the previous year. Intentional follow up and proactive engagement was also prioritised with over 20 key church partners during the year helping to nourish relationships and keep the need of those affected by leprosy at the fore in busy congregation schedules.

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As well as the circulation of our supporter magazine, INTOUCH, 3 times in 2023 an online Supporter Survey was also delivered which achieved a 20% response rate (105 respondents) and provided key learnings as we continue to nourish and develop supporter relations. Key findings included:

- 100% respondents care about the work of TLM
- 95% respondents believed that we are effective in achieving our mission
- 98% respondents trusted TLM to deliver meaningful outcomes for our beneficiaries
- 97% respondents believed that TLM used funds appropriately
- 99% respondents believed that their support was making a real difference to ending leprosy and helping leprosy affected people
- Most supporters were motivated to give because they wanted to provide the cure for leprosy affected people and they wanted to end the injustice caused by the stigma of the disease
- 20% of respondents had a connection with TLM for less than 5 years

Staff and trustees were encouraged by the results and look forward to building upon this work in 2024 and 2025.

During the past year, the charity continued to strengthen online engagement activities through active engagement on social media platforms and the creation of videos that could be used to promote and raise awareness, and to help supporters hear first hand accounts from leprosy affected people and frontline TLM staff. Monthly prayer emails were circulated via email, as well as programme updates from overseas partners and promotion of key supporter events. The charity also held online prayer sessions for supporters during our Global day of prayer in May. Despite efforts, there was a 18% decrease in visitors to the website compared to 2022 and a 55% decrease in social media reach, largely due to the change in algorithms which are outside of our control and disadvantage smaller charities with less budget for advertising. Despite this context, we saw a 26% increase in number of online donations and a 20% increase in value of online giving. This is an area that we will continue to build upon as we seek to raise awareness of those affected by leprosy, remain relevant and connect with new audiences beyond our normal pool of supporters.

Financial review

The results for the period are set out on pages 20 to 42. The charity returned net incoming resources of £35,825 (2022: net outgoing resources of £66,636) of which there were unrestricted net incoming resources of £26,164 (2022: net outgoing resources of £241,081) and restricted net incoming resources of £9,661 (2022: net incoming resources of £174,445).

As at 31 December 2023, the level of unrestricted reserves held was £788,758, of which £286,600 has been designated by the Board at the year end.

In light of the fundraising challenges faced in recent years, the turbulent economic forecast for 2024 and consistent high levels of legacy giving, over which trustees have no influence year on year, the trustees continue to review levels of reserve and designated funds position of the charity at the end of 2023.

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During the year, Trustees reviewed and updated our Reserves Policy. In calculating our reserves we exclude those funds committed in property and equipment necessary to undertake our work. The restricted funds are not included in the Trustees' view of reserves' needs because they are held by the charity for only as long as necessary before transfer to the respective project or country. In an uncertain and volatile climate, Trustees are keen to ensure sustainability both locally and globally, whilst at the same time ensure that funds, where possible, are remitted on to overseas projects as quickly as possible. Capacity constraints globally, alongside the receipt of funds late in the year, have meant that this has been difficult to achieve. However, after a further review of the Reserves position, Trustees agreed to develop a plan to reduce cash reserves whilst ensuring that sufficient reserves are in place as per good practice guidelines for both operational and project commitments. Funding commitments for leprosy programmes are made to global partners in advance of the funding being received in any financial year. Commitments are based upon a financial review of projected income and expenses and planned fundraising activities during the year. The Trustees have retained the charity's programme reserve at 25% of normal funding commitments for the purpose of honouring any agreed funding commitments and to have an appropriate amount of match funding in place as part of our commitments for Dignity First project in Nepal 2023-2025. Reserves will be kept under review as per normal financial monitoring procedures. At the end of the year, it was agreed that the legacy reserve fund would be increased by £30,000 in line with our 2024 budget and that funds of £10,000 would also be designated for Ethiopia in 2024 given project delays in 2023.

As part of our good governance, Trustees regularly review the charity's risk register to assess any risks to which the charity may be exposed, in particular those related to safeguarding, global programme operations, the potential loss of income streams and ensuring compliance with regulators and standards of best practice. A separate Safeguarding Risk Register, developed in 2021 as part of the roll out of updated safeguarding policy and procedures, continues to be reviewed on a quarterly basis. Trustees are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks, including any new risks that have been caused by the global economic downturn. Board members, as part of board meeting proceedings, have as a standing agenda item the requirement to disclose any conflict of interest when discussing the Charity's business agenda. Trustees, in partnership with other global TLM national offices, ensure that any harm that may flow from its activities is mitigated through agreed global policies and safeguarding arrangements.

Plans for future periods

Our Global Strategy, 2019-2024, outlines the long term change we want to see as well as the priorities that we will focus on globally. It is centred on Christ, with the main priority of reducing transmission as we work towards our long term goal of zero leprosy transmission by 2035. This links in with our two other focus areas of zero disability and zero discrimination. In 2023, TLM Global Fellowship began the process of developing a new global strategy. For the first time, TLM started this process by approaching the leaders of Organisations of Persons Affected by Leprosy to consult them on their desires for this new strategy. All TLM members, and key external partners, were also consulted for input. The consultation and development process are ongoing and will be finalised in 2024, which will also mark the 150 year anniversary of The Leprosy Mission. Given this significant milestone, a number of engagement activities (globally and locally) will be planned to give thanks for all that has been achieved in 150 years of the mission and for God's faithfulness throughout the years. This anniversary year will also be used as a launchpad to engage new audiences towards greater heights as we seek to see an end to leprosy once and for all.

In 2023, the Board of Trustees conducted a mid term strategic review of performance and progress against agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) in our strategy, *It's Time to Make Leprosy a Thing of the Past*, 2021-25. Given the impact of the COVID pandemic and the challenging economic climate since the commencement of our strategy, some downward revisions were made to acquisition and supporter retention targets. These changes do not reflect a change in our vision, determination and drive but to the increasingly challenging context in which we are operating within as we seek to engage with new audiences and increase income. In 2024, we will continue to invest to strengthen relationships with our current supporter base and invest in the acquisition of new donors in 2024 as well as actively contribute towards the development of a new global strategy.

The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland, in 2024, will plan to continue to support programmes and projects in India, Nepal, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Ethiopia with an increasing focus on prioritising more funding on projects that work towards our global strategic goals of zero transmission, zero disability and zero discrimination with a particular focus on research to see an end to leprosy. Further local research and relationship building with local trusts and grant providers will occur, as well as collaborative working with other TLM members to maximise on any opportunities to apply for project funding in support of the three Zero's.

THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Structure, governance and management

The charitable company is a company limited by guarantee, registration number NI 640401 and is a charity registered in Northern Ireland, registration NIC 106322.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr M Noble

Mrs F Davidson (Chair)

Mr T Doran

Mr J Caples (Honorary Treasurer)

Miss J Carson

Miss H Johnston

Mr R Marshall

Rev P Hilton

(Appointed 22 May 2023)

Ms J Willcocks

(Appointed 22 May 2023)

4 Trustee meetings occurred online during the year, utilising Zoom, with Trustees meeting in person for supporter engagement events and safeguarding training during the year. All company directors have confirmed their willingness and eligibility to act as a Director and have declared that they do not have any conflict of interest in doing so. There are no related parties or significant interest to be noted. None of the Trustees have any beneficial interest in the charitable company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of the company winding up. Trustees are unpaid and are not remunerated for their trusteeship.

New Trustees are recruited as per the Memorandum and Articles of Association. In 2023, the Governance & Nominations committee met twice to continue the recruitment and selection of new trustees – work that had commenced, late 2022. This resulted in the election of 2 new Trustees at our AGM in May 2023.

During the year the Finance & Audit Committee also met 4 times and the Supporter Engagement committee met three times. All sub-committees, as delegated sub-groups of the Board of Trustees are made up of staff and members of the Board to further agree work items in each of these respective areas and to report back to the Board of Trustees for review and further action. Jo-Anne Thompson (Head of Resource Development, TLM International) and Stuart Towell (Campaigns & Supporter Experience Manager, TLM Great Britain) are also co-opted members of the Supporter Engagement Sub-committee to strengthen and bring expertise to the committee as we seek to recruit additional members with fundraising expertise.

Governance & Nominations Sub-Committee:

Mr Tom Doran

Mrs Fiona Davidson (Chair)

Mrs Joanne Briggs

Finance & Audit Sub-Committee:

Mr Jim Caples, Hon. Treasurer (Chair)

Mrs Fiona Davidson

Mr Mark Noble

Mrs Joanne Briggs

Mrs Joy Jamieson

THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Supporter Engagement Sub-Committee

Miss Judith Carson (Chair)

Mr Roy Marshall

Mrs Joanne Briggs

Mrs Hazel Coulter

Mr Stephen McCartney

Mrs Jo-Anne Thompson (TLM Head of Resource Development)

Mr Stuart Towell (TLMGB Campaigns & Supporter Experience Manager)

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the review of all activities, approval of budgets and future strategy. They undertake a full programme of Board strategic and governance activity including regular reviews. The National Director has delegated responsibility for all operational matters including the management of the staff team, programmes and budgets. The charity currently employs 3 full time and 3 part time members of staff. During the year, fixed term contracts for the roles of Communications Officer (Digital) and Programme Funding Officer were strategically reviewed, including an analysis of return on investment. Following the comprehensive review, the Board agreed to extend the Programme Funding officer role for a further 2 years until August 2025, in line with our current funding commitments with Irish Aid. In a difficult economic climate, the role of Communications Officer (Digital) was made redundant and a new role, Supporter Engagement Officer, was developed to divert capacity and resources to areas which increased fundraising opportunities and yielded a better return on investment, for example in-person supporter engagement meetings and fundraising events. This role was offered and accepted as alternative employment by Communications Officer (Digital) for 12 months, until August 2024 and will be reviewed again by Trustees in Q1, 2024.

During the past year, the Board approved a number of updated or new policies and procedures including an External Audit Policy, Travel & Subsistence Policy, Business Continuity Policy, Statement of Reserved Matters & Delegated Authorities, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Appraisal/ Staff Development Policy and statement on Succession Planning. Recommendations, following FIRENI audit in autumn 2022, were also implemented in 2023 as well as the tender for audit & accountancy services given that our current contract with GMcG Accountants had expired following the completion of 2022 Audit. TLM Global Fellowship Member review was also conducted during the year – this is one part of the accountability commitments that Members of the Global Fellowship have made when signing the TLM Charter. Any recommendations following the audit review were actioned by the end of the year. At the end of 2023, all staff participated in TLM Global staff engagement survey with high results achieved across all areas and all respondents reporting that they would willingly recommend TLM as a good place to work. Results will be further reviewed in 2024 and plans put in place to further strengthen and develop the current staff team, particularly in areas of well being and work/ life balance.

Safeguarding

Globally, The Leprosy Mission expects the highest standards of professional practice in all our work and contact with people – particularly with children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from harm and ensuring their rights to protection are realised. In 2023, global safeguarding policies and procedures continued to be rolled out across the organisation with any concerns or reported global cases being dealt with as per our procedures. A named Trustee, appointed in 2021 to support the National Director, with safeguarding matters remains in place, and ensures that the Board is fully updated as required. Safeguarding remains a standing agenda item for all Board and staff meetings and quarterly reports are also submitted to TLM International. Staff & Trustee training on safeguarding matters was delivered in October 2023, with a number of areas highlighted for further development. These will be actioned in Q2 & Q3 in 2024.

Key Management Personnel Remuneration

The pay of the charity's National Director is linked to the National Joint Council (NJC) scales and reviewed annually by the remuneration committee as part of Finance and Audit's Committee's responsibility. The remuneration is benchmarked with other charities of a similar operating size and activity to ensure that pay awards set are fair and not out of line with that generally paid for similar roles and level of responsibilities.

The Board of Trustees wish to express their sincere thanks to the National Director for her leadership over the past year and to the whole staff team for their flexible working, commitment and unstinting efforts to ensure the ongoing operations of the charity in 2023 and for all that they do to help make leprosy a thing of the past.

THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that GMcG LISBURN be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the trustees has confirmed that there is no information of which they are aware which is relevant to the audit, but of which the auditor is unaware. They have further confirmed that they have taken appropriate steps to identify such relevant information and to establish that the auditor is aware of such information.

The trustees' report was authorised and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mrs F Davidson (Chair)

Trustee

14 June 2024