

## A selection of shawls made from nettle for sale!



These lovely shawls (code GA002) are made from the *giant nettle* 'Allo' plant in Nepal. Size 48" x 24" Cost: £15.00 plus p&p

Contact: [info@nlt.org.uk](mailto:info@nlt.org.uk) / 020 8940 1200 (The NLT office is now staffed part-time, and has an answer phone)

### Child Sponsorship for Schooling

We are grateful to everyone who supports children in this valuable way, and can assure you that it makes a real difference to their lives. Every child has benefited, and some have gone on to train and become nurses, accountants and even doctors. Some work with NLT now. More recently we have been able to extend support to children living in the communities around Lalgadh. Some of them come from families affected by leprosy, and would not be able to go to school without help. Thank you to all those who now support 11 children from the Lalgadh area. Shanti and Punita, who are cousins and are also from the Lalgadh area, are still waiting for sponsors. If you would like to know more about sponsoring a child (at £15 per month), please do get in touch.

Shanti 7 years



Shanti has had leprosy, but she received treatment in time, so has no disabilities. She has a brother aged 14 who works as a labourer to help support the family. Their parents are elderly and poor, and their father is unable to work regularly. Some of Shanti's other siblings died very young.

Punita is Shanti's cousin and she lives with her grandmother, because her mother died in childbirth. Punita has also had treatment for leprosy. Shanti's mother practised self-care with Punita, to help prevent Punita from developing deformities or disabilities.



Punita 6 years

### Speaking Team!

When things are back to normal, Enid and Mike would love to visit your church, school, club or group to share about the work of NLT and life in Nepal, and show you the NLT handicrafts made in our fair trade workshops!

**Help in the office at Richmond** is always needed. If you would like to spend a few hours a week - post Coronavirus - helping with admin tasks, handicraft stock management and/or helping at fairs and events locally, please contact us.

### Twitter



NLT has a Twitter account!

See the tweets on our website or follow us at:

[@NepalLeprosyTr](https://twitter.com/NepalLeprosyTr)

**For information about NLT please phone us: 020 8940 1200 or email: [info@nlt.org.uk](mailto:info@nlt.org.uk)**

**If you would be happy to receive your copy of this newsletter by email to save NLT some postage, please let us know by emailing us at: [info@nlt.org.uk](mailto:info@nlt.org.uk)**

Published by: Nepal Leprosy Trust, 10A The Vineyard, Richmond, TW10 6AQ (England)

Telephone: 020 8940 1200; Email: [info@nlt.org.uk](mailto:info@nlt.org.uk); Website: [www.nlt.org.uk](http://www.nlt.org.uk)

NLT is a company limited by guarantee (no. 4046961) and a registered UK charity (no. 1081952)

**To unsubscribe from this newsletter, please email, phone, or write to us.**

# Nepal Leprosy Trust

Changing lives

## Covid-19, Lockdown, Curfew, and Relief



No entry without a mask

After some lockdown relaxation in June and July, enabling people to get a breather, lockdown is back as the Covid-19 situation worsens in the south of Nepal. In towns along the border with India, including Janakpur the main town near Lalgadh, a curfew has been imposed, restricting entry and exit.

At Lalgadh, the Covid-19 protocols are working fairly smoothly, with only a few people at a time allowed to enter, after a fever-check. All staff wear PPE in the medical areas of the Centre and up until recently no confirmed Covid-19 cases had come in. However, in early August staff twice treated a lady for serious respiratory problems, before referring her to the specialist units in Kathmandu where, sadly, she died. Her family brought her back for a funeral and then her Covid test result came through, showing that she had been positive for Covid. At least one member of the nursing team, related to the patient, had to isolate for two weeks.



Fever Station



Baby Laxmi

The uncertainty about who might have Covid-19 is unnerving for the staff, some of whom have been quite anxious under this constant stress and the need to be extra careful with every patient. But the work goes on, with the usual variety of illnesses being treated, and babies being born. We all hope and pray that things will become more normal again fairly soon.

As we described in our last Newsletter, the lockdown is especially difficult for the poorest people in Nepal, as a result of the travel restrictions and loss of daily work. In addition, many who worked outside Nepal to send money back to feed their families have lost their jobs in India or Middle Eastern countries. NLT's Community Team was given permission to take food aid to local villages. After a small local project was completed, Sasakawa Health Foundation (SHF, of Japan) kindly gave some funds for our team to work for three months to provide supply packs to 600 families (25 kg of rice, plus lentils, oil, salt, soap and some face masks in each).



Food for a month

The SHF-funded project required our team to also provide community awareness about Covid-19, and advocacy for the neediest families (to local health and other key authorities). This allowed us to help 25 villages with food relief and support during June to August. However, Lalgadh has close connection with over 150 such villages, so it is only a start.

Once again, our network of self-help groups throughout two districts was vital. The groups could quickly identify those families who most needed help, because of their close connection with the poor in their villages.

S  
U  
M  
M  
E  
R  
  
2  
0  
2  
0

## Thank You

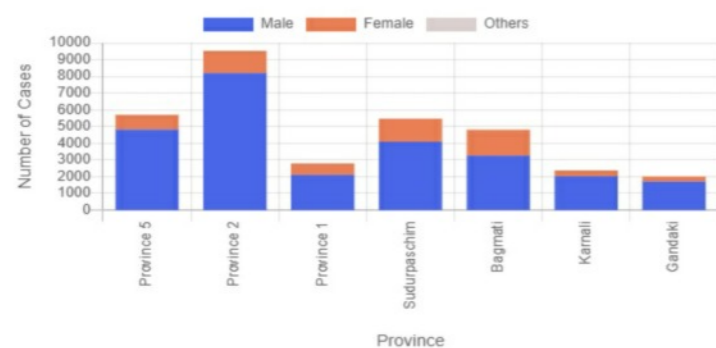
We have been very encouraged by the way that so many of you have kindly sent gifts to help the teams at Kathmandu and especially Lalgadh, through the financial challenges that they are facing with the lockdown in Nepal. Help has come from a variety of places, with NLT UK supporters providing about £25,000, ALM provided 3 months' leprosy patient costs, and some churches linked to Lalgadh through Dr Clugston also helped very significantly. This combined support has brought NLT Nepal through five months of difficulty so far and all the NLT Nepal staff are so grateful for your generosity.



The medical team

## Update on Covid-19 in Nepal

Date: 2020-01-01 / 2020-08-24



Up until the 24<sup>th</sup> August, there had been 32,678 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Nepal, with 157 deaths recorded. The number of PCR tests conducted have been 610,469. In four provinces, including Province 2 where Lalgadh is, the Covid-19 transmission rates are still increasing; but in the other three provinces, the rates are much lower. As the chart shows (taken

from the Ministry of Health and Population website), Province 2 has had by far the most cases.

## Envisioning Trips

Our 'Envisioning Trip' to Nepal in 2019 was very positive, and the participants hugely enjoyed seeing the work at Kathmandu and Lalgadh with their own eyes. They met staff and patients, and travelled into the field to meet with self-help groups and Village Alive groups. They saw something of the real Nepal, and had a glimpse of what it is like to be poor, and to be affected by leprosy. They also enjoyed being tourists, visiting Chitwan National Park for elephant rides and tiger-spotting, and exploring historic parts of Kathmandu.

We have strong interest in a trip for 2022, but could also arrange something for 2021 if there are people who would like to see Nepal for themselves and see the great work that NLT does (if the Covid situation allows). If you are interested in a fascinating adventure, please get in touch!



## Morning prayer time in the Inpatients department at Lalgadh

Every morning after breakfast, there is a time of prayer. This began among the staff, but for years many of the patients have joined in the worship, Bible reading and prayer.

## Village Alive in 2020

The Village Alive programme (VAP) has been active since 2007, and is still our primary strategy for working with poor Dalit communities. It applies the benefits and lessons learned from our leprosy self-help group (SHG) work to improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised people in specific village communities.

VAP combines elements of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), maternal and child health (MCH), education (adult and child), and income generation. This is achieved through the formation of men's and women's SHGs. A powerful and novel aspect of VAP is that local leadership comes from leprosy-affected men and women who have successfully overcome their own social stigma from leprosy through the activities of their own SHG. These men and women are highly motivated to help other groups in society to overcome their marginalisation. NLT staff provide guidance and support throughout the project's three-year lifecycle.

Village Alive projects (VAPs) mainly focus on Dalits, who have suffered discrimination for many years based on their caste status, have very low income and are typically landless. Dalit women are often deprived of education and employment opportunities, and frequently do not access health facilities in childbirth and post-natal care. Since 2007, NLT has initiated 14 VAPs in Province 2 of Nepal, of which nine are completed and five are in their final year. Although the model for VAP has evolved as lessons have been learned, the basic rationale has stayed the same.

Over the course of each project the communities are slowly transformed as mindsets change and health and wellbeing improves. These improvements can be measured, and have consistently met the project targets, resulting in better family health, successful savings schemes, toilet building programmes, village tidying projects, and greater harmony and self esteem.

There is always room for improvement, but Village Alive does successfully bring villages that are dark with poverty, despair and hopelessness into a much better situation. Very importantly, the projects have a strong sustainability aspect, as a key outcome is a change in individual and community behaviour. The groups carry on meeting after the formal ending of the three-year project and stay in contact with NLT staff, particularly if they need extra support from time to time. Members of completed VAPs support the start of further projects by sharing their stories with new groups beginning their journey to improved wellbeing and health. As one VAP member explained "Because of the project, social harmony has come to our village. Before, at Holi Festival for example, we would always fight and quarrel. Now we dance together and celebrate."

This is one project that we want to replicate as much as we can.



Women's development group in Harsahi

## Locusts in Nepal

At the end of June and the beginning of July it was reported that swarms of locusts were invading Nepal, affecting 26 districts. An estimated 200,000 locusts entered Kathmandu and then moved on to Nuwakot, where farmers prepared themselves for the possible loss of their crops. Locusts eat their own weight in plants each day, so a big swarm can destroy large amounts of vegetation.

Fortunately, the locusts were prevented from consolidating by the monsoon rain, which weighs down their wings and makes it hard for them to fly. The swarms have now died away.

## London Vitality 10k Run postponed

The Vitality Run for 2020 has been cancelled and NLT's six places have been transferred to 2021.

*If you would like to raise funds for NLT by running next year - please get in touch*

## Neelam - 4 years on

Some of you will remember Neelam, one of the young people regularly treated at Lalgadh, who is now about 18 years old. She has been coming to Lalgadh since she was 5 years old, with damage to her feet caused by leprosy and a hard life. At 11, she had to have her left lower leg amputated, and was then fitted with a



Shova, Neelam and Ruby

prosthesis. As she has grown, this has had to be changed for bigger ones, but Neelam always uses her time in hospital well and studies her school work. She had to come back to Lalgadh late in 2019 because her right foot and leg had bad ulcers again. She was due to sit her Secondary Education Exam (year 10) in March, and had been studying hard in the girl's ward. NLT staff were going to take her to and from the exam, but with Covid-19 the Government cancelled all exams on the first day. Subsequently, they have given passes to examinees, so all was not lost. At the end of April, Neelam's right foot was still in a serious way. She has support for her education and lives in a hostel, but please do pray for this bright young lady who is just starting out on life, yet is so challenged.

## A Touch of Providence

This book has lots of great photos and reports from the early days of Eileen Lodge's work in Nepal. It tells the story of the growth of NLT through the eyes of many who were involved. If you would like a copy - £10 including UK postage - let us know.



## Training Fund for Lalgadh

In the last newsletter, we highlighted the need for training funds, particularly for our medical staff, to help develop the future of the work at Lalgadh. We do appreciate the support that some of you have provided over the years for staff training and wanted to mention this need again as it is so critical to Lalgadh's future. *Many thanks*