



# LEPROSY

“The INF staff touched me and cleaned my wounds...I was overwhelmed by INF’s love and care. I had never experienced anything like it.” Neelu Sunar

Leprosy is a devastating disease affecting the skin and nervous system. As well as the physical effects, it carries with it a terrible social stigma. People with leprosy are often alienated from communities and think their suffering is a form of divine punishment for past wrongs.

For over 65 years, INF has been at the forefront of treating people affected by leprosy, changing the public perception for the better and assisting them with reintegration into their communities.

Due to a massive decrease in reported cases of leprosy, in 2010 the Nepal Ministry of Health announced that leprosy had been eliminated. This means that for every 10,000 people in Nepal, there is less than one affected by leprosy.

Leprosy is a disease, however, that predominantly affects the poorest and most vulnerable. Unfortunately, for that population in Nepal, leprosy continues to be a significant issue. Our work in leprosy therefore continues, supporting those still being diagnosed each year, of which 37 year-old Man Bahadur Bista was one.

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Neelu



“It was not easy for me to accept that I had leprosy. I was worried because if my family or community heard they might shun me and I would be alone. I was sad and depressed but also somehow relieved that finally I could get the right treatment.”

Man was admitted to our Leprosy programme in Surkhet where he began treatment.

“I received counselling and that helped me to accept the reality: I had leprosy which can be cured with proper treatment and care. I also saw other patients who had the same disease and talked with them and gradually my fears reduced.”

With INF’s intervention and treatment, Man has now reclaimed his life.

“My wounds are almost healed. I am very grateful to the doctors and all health care providers for their constant care and support and wish the best for this clinic.”

One day, leprosy in Nepal will not be only eliminated, but totally eradicated. Until that day, INF will continue to be at the forefront of fighting this disease.

INF’s Leprosy programme works in the following districts

- Kaski
- Surkhet
- Jumla
- Banke

Follow this link for photos and video:

**[www.inf.org/inf-work/leprosy/](http://www.inf.org/inf-work/leprosy/)**

- 3223 – number of reported cases of leprosy in 2013-14
- The prevalence of leprosy in Nepal is two and a half times higher than the global average
- 6145 – number of clients treated and examined by INF leprosy centres in 2013-14
- 1611 – number of footwear and assistive devices given to patients in 2013-14