

Leadership Team Meeting

7 January 2021

Participants

Leadership team members and guests

- Amar Timalina, President, International Association for Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement (IDEA) Nepal
- Benedict Quao, Program Manager, National Leprosy Elimination Program of Ghana
- Bill Simmons (Chair), President & CEO, American Leprosy Missions
- Gangadhar Sunkara, Senior Global Program Clinical Head, Novartis
- Geoff Warne, CEO, International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)
- Linda Hummel, Chair of Executive Group, Leprosy Research Initiative (LRI)
- Maarten van Cleeff, Former Director of Challenge TB project, KNCV (guest)
- Mathias Duck, Chair of ILEP Panel of Persons Affected by Leprosy
- Takahiro Nanri, Executive Director, Sasakawa Health Foundation
- Wim van Brakel, Medical Director, Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR)

Secretariat

- Andie Tucker, Project Manager, Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy
- Bill Gallo, Secretariat Director, Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy
- Caroline Cassard, Communications Specialist, Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy
- Mondie Tharp, Project Manager, Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy

Invited but unable to attend

- Alice Cruz, UN Special Rapporteur (observer)
- Arielle Cavaliero, Global Franchise Lead, Leprosy, Novartis
- Erwin Cooreman, Team Leader, WHO Global Leprosy Programme (observer)
- Mauricio Lisboa Nobre, Consultant to Brazilian Leprosy Program
- Rao Pemmaraju, Technical Officer, WHO Global Leprosy Programme (observer)
- Rekha Shukla, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India
- W. Cairns Smith, Emeritus Professor of Public Health, University of Aberdeen

I. Welcome: Bill Simmons

- **Bill Simmons:** Welcome to the first LT meeting of 2021. Geoff will start the meeting with an update from ILEP.

II. Introduction to ILEP 2021 - 2023 Strategy: Geoff Warne

- **Geoff:** The ILEP strategy is not the total of what we do as individual agencies, but about what we can accomplish together. The current strategy has expired. We're looking for input as we frame our new strategy. There's a consultation document in four languages and there are three questions. The deadline for responses is 25 January.
- **Bill Simmons:** Four of us are part of an ILEP member organization. This is an opportunity to think about how other member organizations align their strategies to the strategy of GPZL and the NTD roadmap. We aspire for all partner organizations to work toward alignment of strategies.

III. 2021 Workplan and budget discussion, continued: Geoff Warne, Arielle Cavaliero, Taka Nanri, Bill Gallo

- **Bill Simmons:** The Partnership is not a donor-owned organization. Our budget and workplan are not driven by the donors but are affirmed by the Leadership Team. Because we're a bit of a hybrid, the role of the donors is critical. The Secretariat has made sure that the donor group approves of the budget and workplan before we share it with the LT.
- **Bill Gallo:** Thank you to Taka, Geoff, and Arielle for stepping up to develop this new workplan and budget. There has been discussion about having more transparency about our plans. Andie will walk us through the two documents that the working group developed in multiple meetings.
- **Andie:** The narrative of the work plan is a high-level overview, and the milestones document is more granular. These two documents are overviews of what GPZL seeks to achieve in 2021. The milestones are a medium-level of granularity of what we hope to achieve in 2021, broken down into our four objectives: research, country work, resource mobilization, and governance. It's broken down into quarters and shows how the outputs contribute to the objectives.

- **Geoff:** As we've been doing this work, we've been aware that we are not only doing this work as donor organizations but as a working group for the LT. Arielle led the research section and we had input from Peter Steinmann. We can move this forward after being stalled in 2020.
- **Benedict:** It's good to see that a huge proportion is being given to the country model implementation, where much of the work will happen.
- **Bill Gallo:** We had challenges due to the pandemic, and those challenges will continue in the coming year. Regarding country work, we have multiple models now of how we can achieve our work, whether or not we can be on the ground. With the help of a consultant, we will be refining these tools so that countries can carry that out on their own. For research, we're looking at holding discussions with working groups to craft proposals and identify funders. For resource mobilization, we will also work on building the capacity of our partners at the local and national levels to advocate for more resources for leprosy activities. This will partly be achieved through high-level meetings to introduce the action plan and advocate for more resources.
- **Geoff:** We knew that we should move forward with implementation for credibility. We've had enough experience in Morocco, Nepal, and Ghana to give us a reasonable grounding to carry on.
- **Linda:** Should we add a couple of sentences at the top about the problems that we are seeking to solve together, as an entry point? For the milestones, I asked our team here about the research parts. It would be good to understand better about the stakeholder groups. Who selects participants and organizes the workshops?
 - **Andie:** In the past, we've collaborated with LRI, so we hope to do this with you, too. We hosted a workshop around PEP with LRI at the end of 2019. We talked with Peter Steinmann, who was a part of that group, and looked to that as an example of how researchers can collaborate and how we can support them. That's why we've laid that out as a template for what we'd like to see with the other key areas.
- **Maarten:** This is an ambitious plan. I have two observations: 1) I was wondering about the roles of the country partners. We could be more specific about it. 2) The other one is the budget as an output. I think we should try to get a global budget for the 2030 strategy: what does it cost to get to zero leprosy, and our country budgets until 2030.
- **Wim:** For the research section, apart from the PEP working group, there was also a stigma working group already in the works. The Leprosy Mission (TLM) had agreed to take the lead on

that in April 2020, but it was postponed due to COVID-19. I'm hoping that TLM will take that up again.

Secondly, there is mention of WHO in some sections of this plan. I think it's good to stress the need to collaborate at different levels with WHO.

Thirdly, the Task Force on Criteria for the Elimination of Leprosy (TFCEL), which I'm chairing on behalf of WHO, is written in the plan as something that has yet to be started, but it is rounding off its work. Two documents have been produced: 1) concepts, definitions, and indicators related to the elimination of leprosy, and 2) a matrix with criteria for readiness. To what extent does the resource mobilization group liaise with the role of Uniting to Combat NTDs? We need to get them to take on leprosy needs as part of all NTD groups.

- **Andie:** Caroline and I sit on the communications working group for Uniting to Combat. We are involved with Uniting to Combat in planning for World NTD Day. Julie Jacobson, who serves as our resource mobilization consultant, actually started Uniting to Combat. We're still in conversation with her about how we can best utilize that connection.
- **Bill Gallo:** We would like to see this group look at the issue of seed funding to provide to countries to begin our work. We need to decide how that funding is allocated. It relates to how much it will cost, and where other money will come from. This is a preview of what we will discuss in future meetings.
- **Bill Simmons:** To follow the discussion about seed funding is the critical nature of connecting the stakeholder activity and the working groups within a country. There needs to be engagement of external stakeholders or external bodies that represent internal stakeholder groups. Many times offices of NGOs cannot promise resources, but international headquarters can. There is a need to connect international stakeholders. I'm concerned that we won't be specific enough in our objectives. In our targets and Action Framework, we have a 2030 soft objective at the highest level: to help our country partners reach their targets in their 2030 roadmaps. We need indicators to show that we are on the path in these next 9 years and outline SMART objectives. This is the responsibility of the LT to make sure we target specific outcomes. We know this, but we haven't stated that in our strategy. We have a few country implementations, and then maybe we can work on adding those into our plan.

- **Taka:** I want to respond to Wim's point. It's important for us to partner with WHO at different levels. We need to develop partnerships at the country level. We need support from WHO leadership and the Regional Directors.
- **Benedict:** Taka's point is important. In our case with the Ghana mission, we realized there was stickiness at the regional level. We have a good relationship with the country office, so they supported our work. But that is a very good suggestion from Taka. We should also look at how they are moving more toward integration of all NTDs. We should package it in such a way that they receive it better.

IV. GPZL Country Work in 2021: Mondie Tharp

- **Mondie:** As a recap of our country work in 2020: Between October and December, we held meetings with national leprosy programme managers in our 2020 countries. We determined current needs, discussed COVID-19 challenges, and developed individual work plans for each country partner. We are working on country model implementation through road mapping and drafting Terms of Reference (TOR) documents. Four of our country partners have borders that are currently closed, so we look forward to providing more support after June 2021. As the TORs come together, we can figure out how to best support their needs. Through action planning in Nepal, we will build on the current momentum around leprosy and then work in other countries in late 2021 and early 2022. We will open a call for new country partners later this year to be ready to start in January 2022.

Country model development: We have country review tools, but need to develop action planning template tools and M&E tools. We will issue two TORs to support the development of these tools: 1) Country Model Validation/Endorsement Working Group and 2) Country Model Development Consultant. We have identified 2021 Country Model outputs:

- Report of findings from prior country model implementations
- Updated tools for country review, stakeholder meeting, and roadmap creation
- Revised implementation guide for country model implementation (includes governance, finances, programmatic concerns, etc)
- Action plan template
- Quality criteria for each stage of the country model
- M&E Framework and tools
- Exportable country model package

Next steps:

- Distribute TORs and begin solicitation process
 - Continue development/refinement of individual work plans for each partner country
 - Action plan development
 - Resource mobilization
 - Seed funding allocation discussion
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- **Wim:** Regarding the working group to be established, I can recommend people that would be great to include.

 - **Linda:** Is the seed funding for the initial country review or later state funding?
 - **Mondie:** That's intended for later-stage funding.
 - **Linda:** Is there any provision for the review and roadmap process itself?
 - **Mondie:** Yes, we do have funding within GPZL to support those pieces.
 - **Linda:** How does that process work for countries to receive that funding?
 - **Andie:** In January 2020, we convened stakeholders alongside NLR to discuss metrics for how we would select country partners. We created a matrix of a wide variety of indicators, and then we solicited applications. Christine Fenenga and I spoke with national leprosy programme managers to better understand their programmes and then evaluate them against this matrix. We developed recommendations for which countries we should work within 2020, and those same countries were carried over into 2021. The LT approved the countries identified by the Secretariat.

To clarify funding: We have two buckets of funding within the budget: one for implementation of the review/road-mapping process and the action planning process, and a separate bucket which is seed funding, intended to support countries in launching their action plans. We hope to discuss how this funding is applied/distributed in our February meeting.

- **Geoff:** When Christine and Andie developed a list of countries to focus on in 2020, other countries spilled over into year two. Do we continue with those recommendations or do we start all over again? Secondly, countries like Bangladesh, where the Prime Minister has identified the goal of reaching zero leprosy by 2030, can become ripe for the attention of GPZL. How do we prioritize those that we put on the backburner while also taking advantage of new opportunities?

- **Andie:** We sent letters to those we did not select, encouraging them to apply again. We would ask them to do that again in the call we put out later this year. We looked for political buy-in when assessing applications, and Bangladesh did not apply.
- **Mondie:** We've only been through one round of proposals, so we can look at being strategic about approaching countries to apply as well.
- **Bill Gallo:** As this tool becomes more comprehensive, it won't require as much horsepower from the Secretariat, so we can expand or extend our reach after this year. We need to have a process for accommodating more ad hoc requests for assistance.
- **Bill Simmons:** Having flexibility has resource implications. We have to be flexible and not restrict our resources.

V. The Leadership Team in 2021: Bill Simmons

- **Bill Simmons:** In our March meeting, we need to address the role of representative from the research community. I invite the Secretariat for clear descriptions of what the role is so that we can see who will fit that role. We need nominations by 1 March so that we can vote in our March meeting.

My 2-year term as chair ends in March. I am eligible for a second 2-year term. Taka asked if I would be willing to serve again and I said I would, but I don't need to restrict the LT. I'm happy to serve if invited to do so for one more term. Please send nominations to the Secretariat. We will take time in the March meeting to take care of the roles.

VI. Closing Remarks

- **Benedict:** We spoke about reconvening Working Group 1 around the rifampicin issue. Arielle and I are co-chairs of this working group. We are looking to bring major stakeholders together in a meeting in mid-January or early February. We need to know what the supply chain situation is from them so that we, as a partnership, are not stepping into the roles of those stakeholders. If at the end of that roundtable meeting we still feel that WG1 needs to convene again, then we will take that up.

- **Wim:** As you probably know, the ITC has addressed the issue of nitrosamine impurities in a statement that has been shared widely. EMA has said the same. ILEP had also done an inventory of the MDT situation in endemic countries in November and December. As a response, we have formed a subgroup of the ITC to look into MDT issues. There is a group in GPZL that is also looking at MDT. We can liaise so that we don't duplicate. We should work together because there is an urgent need to address that issue.
- **Bill Simmons:** We should consider a standing group on the matter of MDT and supply chain. This would give a place for an ITC group to have input from the NGO community.