



ANCHOR

#ZeroLeprosy - Rooted in Partnership, Driven by Change

Executive Director's Message



As we close 2025, this quarter reflects consolidation of our Annual Business Plan priorities, strengthened strategic alignment, and measurable progress.

GPZL has continued to deepen its engagement within the global health landscape while reinforcing its distinct and complementary role as a collaborative platform.

A significant milestone has been securing formal government approval from Brazil, Nigeria, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea to undertake the MDT Supply Chain Assessment – a strong signal of trust and shared commitment to strengthening last-mile delivery systems as a critical step toward interrupting transmission.

In a rapidly evolving health environment, we remain anchored in evidence, country ownership, and the lived realities of people affected by leprosy (Hansen's disease). Zero transmission is ambitious, but through sustained collaboration, research-driven action, and person-centered approaches, it is achievable.

Warm regards,

Dr. Ritu Ghosh

Executive Director

Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy

Strengthening Strategic Engagement with WHO

GPZL initiated the process of registering as a WHO Non-State Actor this quarter, following its formal registration as a non-profit association in Geneva, Switzerland. This important step will facilitate closer engagement in WHO leprosy-related working groups and ensure that GPZL's contributions are directly aligned with global policy processes. Engagement has also expanded to WHO regional offices (AFRO, SEARO, WPRO, and AMRO/PAHO), laying a strong foundation for enhanced regional collaboration in 2026. In line with WHO procedures, GPZL has deliberately prioritized contributing through established official mechanisms rather than creating parallel structures – reinforcing complementarity, strengthening coherence, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

MDT Supply Chain Assessment

Country engagement gained strong momentum in Q4, with four countries – Brazil, Nigeria, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea – formally confirmed for the MDT Supply Chain Assessment. Government endorsements were secured, and kick-off meetings were successfully completed, marking an important step toward a structured review of last-mile MDT delivery systems in diverse epidemiological and health system contexts. To strengthen the overall evidence base and ensure that findings extend beyond the four targeted countries, GPZL adopted a multi-layered approach:

- A 10-year literature review on last-mile MDT delivery was launched:** This review examines published and grey literature from the past decade to identify systemic bottlenecks, operational challenges, and documented best practices in forecasting, procurement, storage, distribution, and monitoring of MDT. The objective is to consolidate existing knowledge and identify persistent gaps affecting uninterrupted drug availability at peripheral levels.
- A complementary global survey was launched beyond the four assessment countries:** To capture broader global insights, a survey targeting national programme managers, implementing partners and supply chain stakeholders across endemic countries is underway. This effort seeks to document real-time operational experiences, contextual constraints, mitigation strategies, and innovative practices. By extending beyond the four focus countries, the survey ensures that recommendations are informed by diverse settings and reflect both common and context-specific supply chain realities. Scan the QR code or click the link below to take the survey.
 

 Link: <https://shorturl/GTjmd>

- A session at the 2025 NTD NGO Network Conference generated valuable global insights:** A dedicated session on MDT supply chain strengthening convened global partners, country representatives, and technical experts. Discussions highlighted cross-cutting challenges such as forecasting accuracy, coordination across
 

supply chain tiers, integration with broader health systems, and resilience in fragile contexts. These insights are being systematically incorporated into the assessment framework.

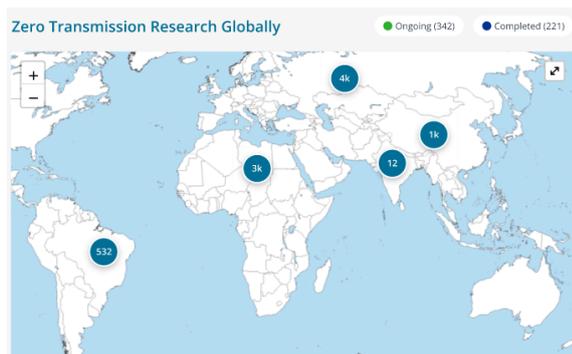
These efforts will support practical, country-driven solutions to strengthen supply chains and interrupt transmission.

Accelerating Research Towards Zero Transmission

GPZL made significant strides in aligning global research efforts toward zero transmission. A comprehensive zero transmission landscape review was launched, identifying 674 publications for screening across epidemiological, clinical, operational, and social science domains. The review aims to map existing evidence, identify critical gaps, and inform priority areas for future research and coordinated action. This work will help strengthen strategic alignment between research generation and programmatic needs in endemic countries.

Web-Based Research Repository to Support Transmission Interruption

A web-based zero transmission research database is currently under development. The platform will aggregate and curate key research and evidence related to the interruption of *Mycobacterium leprae* transmission. It will serve as a centralized knowledge resource for researchers, programme managers, policymakers, donors, and practitioners working on leprosy (Hansen's disease), synthesizing evidence across disciplines, regions, and programmatic contexts. A research expert group will meet biannually to ensure the database remains current and relevant.



Making Research Accessible

Two manuscripts from the Zero Transmission Symposium were simplified to enhance accessibility for non-technical audiences, including frontline health workers. This effort supports broader understanding and practical application of research findings at the implementation level.

You may access full manuscripts through the below link:

(i) [Interrupting transmission of *Mycobacterium leprae*: synthesis of new evidence and research recommendations](#)

(ii) [Operational approaches and recommendations to interrupt transmission of *Mycobacterium leprae*](#)

Localized, person-centered approaches

The Prioritizing People Pillar reaffirmed that meaningful progress requires localized, person-centered approaches. Thus, virtual training was deemed less effective; instead, localized capacity-building approaches will be prioritized. The group is exploring stronger representation of persons affected by leprosy in technical pillars. The commitment remains clear: zero leprosy must be achieved with, and not just for, people affected by the disease.

Strengthening Communication for Zero Transmission

GPZL has completed and published a comprehensive gap assessment of existing IEC/BCC materials related to zero transmission of leprosy. The review examined currently available information, education, and behaviour change communication resources to identify gaps in messaging, technical accuracy, audience targeting, and alignment with the zero-transmission agenda.



The assessment found that many existing materials are designed primarily for policy or technical audiences rather than for people affected by leprosy, their families, and community health workers. Complex language, limited translation into local languages, and insufficient cultural adaptation have reduced accessibility and impact at the community level.

These findings provide a strong evidence base to guide the development, simplification, and contextual adaptation of future materials – ensuring communication tools are clear, relevant, and responsive to the needs of endemic countries and affected communities. This represents an important step toward strengthening strategic communication as a core pillar of transmission interruption efforts.

Building the GPZL Brand and Mobilizing Resources

GPZL secured memberships in 3 resource mobilization platforms. While several funding opportunities were explored, GPZL has taken a strategic approach, pursuing only those aligned with its mandate and value proposition to avoid any duplication specifically targeting non-traditional donors which are contributing in global health but not as such in leprosy elimination.

A Media and Communication Policy has been drafted and a 2026–2030 Communication Strategy has been developed.

In News: Global Leprosy Landscape

Novartis Renews Partnership with WHO to Advance Leprosy Elimination



Novartis renews partnership with the WHO to eliminate leprosy

Novartis has announced the renewal of its long-standing partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the global fight against leprosy.

Over the past 25 years, Novartis has provided multidrug therapy (MDT) on a not-for-profit basis,

contributing to treatment access for more than 8.3 million people worldwide. With approximately 200,000 new cases still reported annually, the renewed commitment aims to support treatment for an estimated 1 million additional people by 2030.

🔗 [Read the full post : https://novartis/news](https://novartis/news)

Global Appeal 2026 launched in Brussels



The Global Appeal 2026 to End Stigma and Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy was launched in Brussels at an event co-hosted by Education International and the Sasakawa Leprosy (Hansen's Disease)

Initiative, in partnership with the Damien Foundation. The Appeal emphasized education and community inclusion as essential tools to eliminate stigma and discrimination, reinforcing the importance of dignity, rights, and social participation for persons affected by leprosy.

🔗 [Read full article: https://prnewswire/shf](https://prnewswire/shf)

Funding Call: Powering Change from Lived Experience

THE LEPROSY MISSION

NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

POWERING CHANGE FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE

FOR ORGANISATIONS LED BY PEOPLE AFFECTED BY LEPROSY

- Complete the form available in the link below
- Send your concept note by email to: applications@lm.org.uk
- Deadline: 30 April 2026, 23:59 (GMT)

Are you part of an organisation led by people affected by leprosy?

This funding call invites you to turn your ideas into action and create lasting change in your community.

✉ Send your concept note to: applications@lm.org.uk

📅 Projects start from 1 October 2026

👉 [Learn all the details here https://lm.uk/fund](https://lm.uk/fund)

Access to Medicines is a Human Right!

The United Nations Special Rapporteur has released a powerful report on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their families. The report highlights urgent barriers in the leprosy drug supply chain, from production to last-mile delivery, that leave thousands at risk of disability, poverty, and exclusion. Key messages include:

- Access to leprosy medicines is a human rights issue, not just a health matter.
- Delays in treatment cause life-altering consequences—disability, economic hardship, and stigma.
- Women, children, and older persons are disproportionately affected.
- States and partners must guarantee predictable supplies, strengthen last-mile delivery, and involve persons affected in decision-making

At GPZL, we stand with the Special Rapporteur's call: access to treatment must be recognized as a legal and ethical obligation. Ending leprosy means tackling not only transmission, but also the systemic injustices that deny people their right to timely care.

🔗 [Read the full report here: https://zeroleprosy/4ilw5](https://zeroleprosy/4ilw5)

Call for Input

Call for input from the Special Rapporteur on leprosy regarding **historical legacy, current conditions and future plans of former leprosaria and leprosy colonies or settlements.**

The information collected will be presented at the 62nd Human Rights Council session in June 2026.

Dr. Beatriz Miranda-Galarza
Special Rapporteur on leprosy

- **Deadline:** 31 Dec, 2025
- **Word/Page limit:** 2000 words, 8 pgs
- **Format:** Word Document
- **Accepted Languages:** English, French, Spanish
- **Email Address:** hrc-sr-leprosy@un.org
- **Subject line:** Submission to the leprosy mandate – HRC report 2026

The UN Special Rapporteur on leprosy is seeking contributions on the former leprosaria and leprosy colonies or settlements, including:

- Historical legacy.
- Current conditions.
- Future plans.

Your input will help shape an important report to be presented at the 62nd Human Rights Council Session in June 2026. This is a key opportunity to amplify the voices and experiences of communities affected by leprosy. Send submissions to: hrc-sr-leprosy@un.org. Subject line: Submission to the leprosy mandate – HRC report 2026.

👉 [Learn more here https://buff.ly/fGcg80l](https://buff.ly/fGcg80l)

Policy Shift Strengthens Surveillance: Leprosy Declared Notifiable in Maharashtra, India

Leprosy has been officially declared a notifiable disease in Maharashtra, mandating that all diagnosed cases be reported to health authorities within two weeks. This important policy shift is expected to strengthen surveillance systems, improve case tracking and early treatment initiation, and enhance accountability – marking a significant step toward the state’s goal of elimination by 2027.

Read full article: <https://special.ndtv/news>

Enhanced Surveillance Strengthens Early Detection in Nagpur, India

Nagpur district reported 902 new leprosy cases between April and December 2025, with prevalence rising above elimination thresholds following intensified surveillance and active case detection efforts. While strengthened case finding may temporarily increase reported numbers, it reflects improved health system responsiveness and proactive outreach. Early identification enables timely treatment, reduces the risk of disability, and reinforces long-term elimination efforts by addressing transmission more effectively.

Read full article: <https://timesofindia/news>

Community Skin Screening Strengthens Early Detection in Africa



Findings from a large EDCTP-supported project across Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Tanzania demonstrate the impact of community-based skin screening in accelerating early detection. The initiative identified more than 600 new cases and provided preventive treatment to over 36,000 contacts. By integrating active screening with post-exposure prophylaxis, the approach reinforces transmission interruption strategies and highlights the effectiveness of community-centered prevention models in endemic settings.

Read full article: <https://globalhealth/news>

Caribbean Nations Reinforce Commitment to Sustaining Elimination

Public health workers from across Caribbean countries came together under a regional initiative to strengthen competencies in early detection, contact tracing, and stigma reduction. This coordinated effort highlights a continued commitment to safeguarding progress, demonstrating that even low-incidence settings are proactively investing in capacity to prevent resurgence and sustain elimination achievements.

Read full article: <https://paho.org/news>

Voices from the Field

Lived Experience at the Frontline of Leprosy Care: Kaharuddin’s Story: From Patient to Health Worker

Kaharuddin, 36, from Indonesia, was diagnosed with leprosy in 2010 while pursuing his bachelor’s degree. After completing one year of MDT treatment, he recovered – but the stigma and visible side effects made it difficult for him to speak openly about his illness.



Kaharuddin
PerMaTa, Indonesia

In 2012, he joined PerMaTa, an organization of persons affected by leprosy, and soon became a district branch leader, serving for ten years. At the same time, he began supporting patients at his local health centre – delivering medicines, accompanying home visits, and sharing his personal recovery story to reassure others that leprosy is curable.

Over the years, his role expanded. He supported chemoprophylaxis, disability prevention, and early detection in schools and communities. By 2025, he was serving as a leprosy health worker, examining patients and managing records. Despite gaining practical skills and even earning a second degree in Public Health, he has not yet secured permanent employment. Today, Kaharuddin continues to tell patients: “It is important that I tell them I am also a person affected.” His experience builds trust and restores hope.

He stated – “Persons affected by leprosy should be formally included and financially supported in leprosy programmes – because lived experience can be one of the most powerful tools in ensuring treatment completion and reducing stigma”.

Acknowledgment

United by a common vision, we thank our funders, partners, and members for their continued support and commitment to our shared mission.



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Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy

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www.zeroleprosy.org

[zeroleprosy](https://www.instagram.com/zeroleprosy)

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