THE LEPROSY MISSION TRUST INDIA

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## Contents

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS .................................................................................................................. 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ....................................................................................................................... 7

PART 1: VISION ..................................................................................................................................... 10

1.1 TLM'S GLOBAL VISION AND STRATEGY .................................................................................. 10

  Mission ........................................................................................................................................... 10
  Values ............................................................................................................................................ 10
  Vision and Goal .............................................................................................................................. 10
  Strategic Objectives ..................................................................................................................... 10

1.2. LONG TERM VISION OF TLM TRUST INDIA: ................................................................. 11

1.3 HOW OUR VALUES SHAPE THE WAY WE WORK IN INDIA .................................................. 12

PART 2: CURRENT SITUATION ........................................................................................................... 14

2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY AND THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ......................................................................................................................... 14

  Demographic Situation .................................................................................................................. 14
  Disaster Risk Situation .................................................................................................................. 15
  Health Situation ............................................................................................................................ 15
  Disability Situation ....................................................................................................................... 18
  Leprosy Situation .......................................................................................................................... 18
  Cross Cutting Issues ..................................................................................................................... 22
  Summary of Needs ....................................................................................................................... 24

2.2 HOW WELL ARE THE NEEDS BEING MET: ............................................................................... 25

  Who is doing what: ....................................................................................................................... 25
  Overview of TLMTI ....................................................................................................................... 27
  TLMTI Current Programmes ......................................................................................................... 27
  Opportunities for Collaborative Working with and/or through other Organisations .............. 30
  How is the present work being funded? ....................................................................................... 32
  Fund Raising Opportunities within the country: .................................................................... 32
  Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats/Challenges ............................................ 34
  Important Issues to be addressed by the Strategy .................................................................... 35

PART 3: STRATEGY ............................................................................................................................. 36

3.1 WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR CHANGE? ........................................ 36

3.2 WHAT DOES TLM NEED TO DO TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE? ........................................ 46

3.3 WHAT RISKS AFFECT THE STRATEGY AND HOW ARE THESE BEING MITIGATED? ........ 47
3.4. HOW WILL THE CHANGE BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED? ........................................................................... 50

Annexure 1: Demographic / Health Indicators – Major States ................................................................. 54
Annexure 2: New cases detected with Grade 2 Disabilities and Rate per 100,000 population. 55
Annexure 3: TLMI position paper .............................................................................................................. 56
Annexure 4: References ............................................................................................................................... 59
Annexure 5: NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY LEPROSY ........................................ 62
Annexure 6: Opportunities for Collaborative Working with and/or through Other Organisations in .......................................................................................................................... 66
Annexure 7: Feedback from Stakeholders ................................................................................................. 75
Annexure 8: Feedback from Directorate .................................................................................................. 82
Annexure 9: Peer Review Feedback ......................................................................................................... 92
ANNEXURE 10 - TLM India FUNDRAISING STRATEGY ROLL-OUT : TASK & TIMELINE ............ 100
Executive Summary

The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TLMTI) has an impressive 136 year old history as one of the largest and well reputed Christian Organizations in India working for and with those affected by leprosy. The global vision of TLMTI is a world without leprosy and its goal to eradicate the causes and consequences of leprosy.

To strengthen this vision and move closer to achieving the goal in the next 5 years, TLMTI embarked on a comprehensive, widely participatory process involving various stakeholders including key Supporting countries, TLM International, representatives of WHO and Government of India, Ministry of Health, people affected by leprosy, other Christian organizations, ILEP partners and staff from the field. This process was guided by a Steering Group.

The exhaustive discussions focused on the relevance of our role in the next 5 years going beyond medical care of the leprosy affected to a more holistic approach that includes physical, social, mental and spiritual issues related to the disease. The result is a strategic plan that clearly states our Mission, our long term vision (Transformed communities empowered to overcome leprosy, living lives of dignity), an immediate short term vision for the next 5 years (that we will evolve from a service delivery oriented organization to one that addresses holistic development, rights of leprosy affected people and removal of stigma, working at every level of need), the strategic priorities required to fulfill them and the steps needed to bring about change. It is a guide for our future, one that clearly reflects our desire to be relevant and the considerable commitment of our staff.

The strategic priorities for the next 5 years focus on 6 major areas:

1. **Organizational development** – Reorganizing ourselves to be relevant and effective; acknowledging that we need to change to meet the new environment and achieve our vision. We will do this by being an organization that is Christian, committed to its values, and achieving excellence through its people.

2. **Holistic approach** – Addressing the total needs (health, socio-economic, rights etc) of the leprosy affected in an integrated and cohesive way in order to achieve our vision, we need to bring all the different strands of our work together in a cohesive manner to achieve maximum impact. The different components of our work must work together and complement one another in order to address the total needs of people affected by leprosy.

3. **Fund raising** – As India’s middle class grows, there is a great opportunity to raise resources locally to fund our ministry. We will develop fundraising as a core competency within the organization with the goal of funding 30% of our programme budget by 2015.

4. **Advocacy** - We acknowledge that real progress for leprosy-affected people will only come about through a coordinated effort to change attitudes, practices, ideas, policies, power and resource distribution. Therefore we will work with leprosy-affected communities, empowering them to advocate for their rights. We will work alongside Churches, NGO’s and other civil society organisations, advocating against leprosy discrimination at national, state, and community levels.
5. **Partnerships** — acknowledging that we need to work with shared goals and mutual accountability alongside government and other civil society organizations, we will share our skills and resources to enhance our own impact and those of our partners in order to achieve our vision of transforming communities to overcome leprosy.

6. **Sustainable livelihood** — recognizing that it is essential for communities to be enabled and to develop self reliance, we will work alongside leprosy-affected communities to enhance capabilities and resilience in order to improve their quality of life.

**What does TLM need to do to bring about change?**

The role of TLMTI has mainly been that of an implementer, being directly involved in service delivery and programme implementation except in a few regions where it supported partners for service delivery. The engagement with partners is for them to support and strengthen TLMTI’s programmes. The new country strategy envisages a shift from this to a healthy mix of implementation and influencing. Influencing would mean that we will work with partners and not necessarily through them on various issues including advocacy that make life better for people affected by leprosy. Implementing would mean that we make a difference through centres (health, livelihoods, research etc) and people (our staff) of excellence.

The strategy entails the following changes in how we work:

**Partnership Development:**
The focus will now be on working through Partners thus widening the scope and outcome of partnership. Partnership development will become a priority in all our activities and identification of partners will be based on application of the Partnership Assessment toolkit. All new programmes will have a partnership emphasis for implementation with TLMTI’s role being more of support and facilitation. This should take TLMTI’s partnerships a level higher thus facilitating partners to begin work with leprosy affected people.

**Programme Development:**
For years TLMTI’s programmes were focused on implementation. The strategy addresses a shift widening this focus to include advocacy and influencing in addition to implementation. The strategy envisages a healthy balance in Programme implementation and Advocacy, implementation through centres of excellence (both own and partners) ensuring focus on quality of implementation, professional and holistic approach to programme development and implementation. Advocacy in the form of challenging discriminatory laws, rights of the leprosy affected (both societal and legal) and allocation of government funding. The other significant change is in making research a cross cutting issue across all programme interventions and building evidence based approaches.

**Organizational Development:**
The strategy addresses the overall issue of organizational development as a tool to facilitate and support the changes envisaged. The most significant change is developing a learning culture within the organization.

**Funding Development:**
The strategy recognises the importance of local fund raising and the need to change the way we approach this aspect of our work. The fundraising strategy was developed based on two key needs - to increase diversification of sources of funds and to support specific programs to grow the mission. Opportunities
to develop a strong ‘signature’ fundraising campaign that can both raise local resources and build the
TLM India brand exist which need to be taken advantage of. Given that a form of support can be ‘Gifts in
kind’, there is the possibility of mobilizing supporters to ‘adopt’ tangible aspects of TLMTI’s work eg:
operations, protective footwear, protheses, specific research etc. to build the base of supporters to be
nurtured to support through other methodologies. Opportunities also exist to build and widen
relationship with Churches for prayer, volunteer and financial support. The approach to individuals,
corporate and institutional funders will also need to change.

The strategic plan also addresses the issue of risks affecting each strategic priority and how these
will be mitigated. The change that the strategy envisages will be monitored and evaluated. A
Balanced Scorecard framework will be used for strategic performance management to measure
TLMTI’s progress towards its strategic objectives and to manage issues that arise.

We look forward to the challenges and opportunities presented by the strategic plan to transform
communities to overcome the problem of leprosy and for the leprosy affected to have life and have
it to the full.

Sunil Anand
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