



Schools & hospitals for people affected by leprosy India, nationwide

In five districts of India, FAIRMED is supporting reference hospitals specialised in the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of leprosy and its complications. This helps to provide patients with access to quality medical care to prevent the disabilities caused by leprosy and to treat existing disabilities.

Background

Leprosy is a poverty-related disease that occurs in the world's poorest areas. Each year over 200,000 people worldwide are newly diagnosed with leprosy. Over 60 percent of these live in India. Leprosy thrives in environments where people are malnourished, live in cramped conditions, and in poverty. Leprosy is transmitted from person to person as an airborne infection, and decades can pass until the disease breaks out.

For many years, victims of leprosy in India had little or no access to public hospitals. This affected in particular people that were living with the disabilities and abscesses caused by leprosy. In the seventies, FAIRMED established several leprosy hospitals in India with the aim of providing proper and respectful treatment for people affected by leprosy. Among other services, these hospitals carried out restorative surgical treatment for the hands and feet, and offered physiotherapy and reintegration programs. They also attended to people who had suffered an allergic reaction to leprosy treatment. Many of these measures were aimed at counteracting the strong stigma that is attached to the disease. These leprosy hospitals were originally constructed outside of residential areas, and thus schools were also constructed at the sites for the children of hospital staff.

As part of its strategy at the turn of the millennium, the World Health Organisation called for the treatment of leprosy to be integrated with public healthcare services. Within the scope of this strategy, the original leprosy hospitals were turned into reference centres for complicated leprosy cases. Since that time, the hospitals have also offered affordable or even free-of-charge treatments in the area of general medicine.

The project

Each of these hospitals is integrated in districtwide projects that are aimed at preventing the disabilities caused by leprosy, or at halting their progression. The health personnel are trained at guiding people affected by leprosy towards the independent care of their wounds. Consequently, only those people with advanced leprosy cases require referral to the hospitals. In addition, a leprosy case recognition program is actively pursued together with local health authorities and accredited community helpers. Throughout, the quality of leprosy treatments is continuously improved.

Population trends mean that the city boundaries have shifted. The former leprosy hospitals – originally constructed far from the cities – are now in the suburbs. For this reason, the schools at the hospital sites are now also open to local children. Attendance at these schools is fee-based. This revenue is aimed at helping the schools to become self-supporting in the near future, and also enables FAIRMED to finance scholarships for children from leprosy affected families.

FAIRMED supports the following hospitals and schools in India

Hospitals:	Schools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emmaus Swiss Hospital in Palamaneer• Sacred Heart Leprosy Centre in Kumbakonam• Hubli Hospital for the Handicapped in Hubli• RISDT Hospital in Kathipudi• GRETNALTES Hospital in Morampudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emmaus School in Palamaneer• Referral English Medium High School in Kathipudi• GRETNALTES School in Morampudi



Objectives and activities

By developing the scope of services and increasing the quality of healthcare, access to better quality health services for people affected by leprosy is being improved in the selected hospitals. The overarching objective of the project is to treat people affected by leprosy in order to prevent the progression of related disabilities. To accomplish this goal, the following selected measures and activities are being pursued

Through outpatient and inpatient treatment in the hospitals people affected by leprosy receive a higher-quality medical treatment.

- Treatment of complex leprosy cases
- Treatment of patients by trained medical personnel
- Partial or total absorption of the costs of treatment for people in need
- Qualitative improvement of leprosy treatment in the context of district-wide projects
- Prevention of disabilities; treatment of existing disabilities

At the schools, children of people affected by leprosy as well as the general population receive a basic education of high quality.

- Regular lessons with age-appropriate educational content
- Empowerment and strengthening of leprosy-affected families through education
- High quality basic education for children of rural origin
- Targeted support for girls

Beneficiaries

In 2015¹, a total of 21,732 patients received treatment in FAIRMED-supported hospitals. The beneficiaries of the project are leprosy patients referred to and treated by the hospitals within the scope of district-wide programmes for the early detection and early treatment of leprosy. The families of those affected and the people of the districts also benefit from the improved healthcare and treatment provided by well-trained medical staff.

Reference hospital	Number of patients in outpatient treatment	Number of patients in inpatient treatment	Total number of patients
Emmaus Swiss Hospital (ESPL)	3,230	1,110	4,340
Sacred Heart Leprosy Centre (SHLC)	1,802	1,087	2,889
Hubli Hospital for the Handicapped (HHH)	315	1,016	1,331
RISDT Hospital	4,698	1,696	6,394
Gretnaltes Hospital	6,136	642	6,778
		Total	21,732

In 2017, a total of 259 Students received a Scholarship.

School	Number of Students	
Emmaus-Schule (Palamaneer)	12	
Referral English Medium High School (Kathipudi)	114	
GRETNALTES-Schule (Morampudi)	133	
	Total	259

¹ The exact number of patients treated, as well as the treatment costs per service, is collected every other year based on the approach of the output-based aid. From the results, the average costs per health service are calculated (see also Chapter 'Budget'). This method enables a transparent cost calculation and shows the development of the services used.

Budget

Hospitals

Every hospital supported by FAIRMED uses a health information system that collects the total number of healthcare services provided on an annual basis. In the calculation of the respective treatment, all of the costs relating to doctors, the number of days of bed occupancy including pre- and post-treatment, physiotherapy, leprosy-specific drugs, other care materials, care staff and overheads (food, electricity, water, etc.) are taken into account. The following shows the average cost per health service (by hospital) in Swiss Francs:

Outp./Inp.	Treatment type	GRETNALTES	ESPL	SHLC	HHH	RISDT	Average
Inp.	General ²	30.80	34.50	40.20	97.30	27.20	46.00
Inp.	Reaction ³	60.40	57.00	41.90	107.30	55.60	64.40
Inp.	Uncomplicated ulceration	52.70	41.20	39.15	181.70	39.70	70.90
Inp.	Complicated ulceration	104.25	87.95	74.40	171.80	86.60	105.00
Inp.	Septic ulceration	187.90	124.25	132.70	315.10	136.00	179.20
Inp.	Foot reconstruction	176.45	199.10	20.70	376.10	272.40	209.00
Inp.	Foot reconstruction	186.50	164.20	58.30	299.90	256.30	193.00
Inp.	Eye surgery	107.00	59.10	-	-	203.90	74.00
Outp.	General ²	4.11	6.70	7.70	20.10	4.40	8.60
Outp.	ulceration	5.80	10.50	9.70	26.20	4.76	11.40
Outp.	Reaction ³	4.00	10.60	7.50	13.90	4.80	8.10

Schools

Thanks to the tuition fees the schools built by FAIRMED are to a large extent self-sufficient. However, FAIRMED still supports children whose parents or themselves are affected by leprosy as well as underprivileged children from the region with scholarships. Apart from the tuition fee, the yearly awarded scholarships include school material, uniforms, books, food, and boarding fees.

Total costs of scholarships CHF 30 000

Total number of students / 259

Average costs per student CHF 115.00

² A general treatment includes all treatments not directly related to the leprosy disorder of the patient; i.e. if the patient has an illness that is not directly related to leprosy (e.g. fever), the responsible leprosy doctor will also treat this condition. This is because a successful treatment for a leprosy affliction is directly related to the overall wellbeing of the patient. Individuals with multiple non-leprosy-related afflictions are referred to specialised healthcare providers.

³ The category of 'Reaction' covers all health complaints in a patient that must be treated as a consequence of a negative reaction to the therapy or the leprosy affliction itself.

Sarvan's Story

Ostracised by his classmates

Sravan Kumar lives with his family in a village in the Guntur district of India, where he attends the fourth grade of school. His father takes care of the family with his low wages as a rickshaw driver. Despite having little money, they manage to send Sravan to school. When he was ten, Sravan was diagnosed with leprosy. Although he went into treatment and was eventually cured, his left hand is now deformed. Back at school, Sravan was ostracised by the other children because of his deformity. As a result, he stopped attending his classes. His parents only learned about the GRETNALTES reference hospital in Morampudi two years later. There, he underwent an operation to reconstruct his hand. After six weeks, Sravan was able to return home. Today, he's back at school and has resumed his dream of one day becoming a doctor himself.

« Thanks to the treatment, I have regained my confidence. Finally, I can go back to school without being excluded by the other children. »



Our heartfelt thanks for your interest in our work. Since 1959, the Swiss development organisation FAIRMED has been committed to improving the health of people affected by poverty in Africa and Asia. Thanks to the support of our loyal donors, donations from foundations, as well as inheritances and bequests, FAIRMED is able to offer the very poorest a path to basic healthcare.

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