



LHCF Newsletter

3 Elmcroft Close, Eaton Rise
London W5 2HQ
020 8998 6315
enquiries@lhcf.org.uk
www.lhcf.org.uk

September 2009

Dear Friends,

We are really pleased to bring you some of the current news from LAMB, which shows a small selection of the many things that your support makes possible.

The Work Goes On



Sultana came from the far north of Bangladesh and had a difficult first pregnancy, with symptoms including swollen legs, headaches and an unexpectedly large tummy. When she was 29 weeks pregnant she went into labour and was referred to LAMB by her local midwife who knew something was unusual.

An ultrasound showed she was having triplets and because they were tangled, a normal delivery would be impossible. Fortunately she was able to have a Caesarean section at LAMB.

Because they were so young, all three babies needed two hourly feeds and top-ups by tube feeding. They were doing well and beginning to feed, but unfortunately just 9 days after their birth, and against everyone's advice and pleading, they left the hospital to go back home. It's unlikely that the triplets would have survived - they were just too small.

This highlights some of the difficult circumstances and attitudes that LAMB continually faces.

Please pray for Sultana, her triplets and other families who find themselves in similar situations.

Funds for LAMB

A big thank you to those of you who responded to our last newsletter by making donations or increasing your giving.

LAMB is still short of money for the Poor Fund this year, so if anyone else can help it would be much appreciated.

Please don't forget to cash in your LAMB Jars!

Christmas Cards

We have also enclosed a LAMB Christmas card with this newsletter.

If you would like to send these to your friends this Christmas, please contact us to order some more.

The cost of each card is 15p and we would ask for a donation to cover this and our postage costs.

For further details or to order some cards, please contact Chris Edwards ce@lhcf.org.uk

Who are LHCF?

LAMB Health Care Foundation (LHCF) is a UK charity (registered charity no: 110217) providing financial support to the innovative and exemplary work of LAMB in north-west Bangladesh. Through clinical provision in its 150-bed hospital and extensive community-based programmes, LAMB provides heavily subsidized and often free healthcare to some of the poorest people in the region. Please contact us for further information.

www.lhcf.org.uk

Purbo Saintara is one of the villages where the Community Health Programme operates. It's about 10 km from LAMB and most of its people are poor and not educated, although there is a primary school there now. There is a common belief that children with any kind of disability should not attend school. LAMB's rehabilitation team knew of 4 disabled children in this area and started to meet with the teachers and the community to make it possible for them to attend.

Resma is 9 and unable to walk. When she was first allowed to go to the school, her grandmother carried her there on her back every day. She was given a wheelchair by LAMB but there was no ramp up into the school. To the delight of everyone the school committee decided to build the ramp for her – at their own cost.

Education for All?



A Sweeper Community



LAMB is working in 10 of the 'slum areas' of Parbatipur, the nearest town to LAMB. We wrote previously about the opening up of latrines for one such community of sweepers (Hindus in a Muslim society) and thought you might be interested in a list they compiled, highlighting some of problems that they face;

- Being landless – they live at the side of the railway;
- Having nowhere to cremate their dead — no burning ghat;
- No permanent jobs, only casual work;
- No drains or rubbish collection;
- Limited electricity supply;
- No government health service available;
- Not being served by barbers;
- No cafes where they were allowed to go in.

Prejudice against them is marked and happens daily.

Seeds sown in 1991 bear fruit

A patient treated in 1991 has returned to the hospital because, having thought and dreamt about things he had heard as an in-patient, he has decided to become a follower of Jesus – after 16 years.

'Tell me what to do' he said, **'All these years I have been waiting to hear.'**

Richard Todd, one of LHCF's trustees, visited them earlier this year and experienced this prejudice first hand, when some women took him to the hotel/cafe on the 'proper road'. They had to stand outside and would not be allowed inside.

But progress is being made and the women are now allowed to attend antenatal care, provided by LAMB-trained government staff. It's a delight to see the joy on their faces when they are treated as individuals, with as much right to be there as anyone else.

Equally amazing is that the men of the sweeper colony are actually allowing their wives to go for care.

Please continue to pray for LAMB's work among these people.

Peter May (LAMB's Director) writes:

Greetings once more from LAMB.

Here in Bangladesh, as in many countries, the weather makes a big difference to life. Now in monsoon season here, we have been reminded of the realities. At its simplest, we see the number of patients coming to LAMB Hospital drops a lot when it is rice planting season,

as now. The same will happen at harvesting time – since both planting and harvesting, and the gleaning that follows, are all completely manual. Planting and harvesting, twice per year in this region, take priority over almost anything – good health can wait.

One of the clinics, in a community area maybe less than 20 miles from LAMB, is normally a pleasant walk or rickshaw ride from the road,

via a bamboo bridge. Due to the monsoon, it's already extremely difficult to get to because of the flooding and a fast flowing river and access is now a long round-about route. It is easy to understand why the commonly used term here for such areas is 'a remote area', despite seeming physically close to help.

There is now new effort, both by management and the LAMB Board to refresh the focus on

those tasks that we believe we are here for – health and justice, and focusing on the disadvantaged, in particular women, children, and the poorest of the poor. As we look afresh at the direction that LAMB overall should be heading, we keep needing to be reminded - and fortunately there are many who will remind us - of what we are here for.

Fistula Patients thank Dr Chris Edwards

August 2009

Each lady in this photograph was incontinent; ostracized and disowned by their families and communities, through no fault of their own.

The combined total of their suffering from this condition, was 185 years, 9 months and 18 days. The 18 days was a lady who sustained a fistula while delivering her baby, 18 days previously. Thankfully she won't have to endure the years of misery that the others have.

They are all extremely grateful to Dr Chris Edwards who returned to LAMB for a month and completed these operations during her visit. Good obstetric care helps to prevent fistulas and is infinitely better than trying to correct them.

So thank you to our LHCF donors for their continued funding assistance to LAMB, so that we can continue to provide preventative and emergency obstetric care, not only preventing fistulas but also saving the lives of mothers and babies.

We're also delighted to welcome Chris as a trustee for LHCF.

