



LHCF Newsletter

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Christmas 2007

This year

170 disabled children helped by LAMB have attended school for the first time

6700 village women have loans under LAMB's micro-credit scheme

In one area of LAMB's work, the number of children under age 5 dying is a tenth of what it was 10 years ago

55,000 people were seen as outpatients

What is LHCF?

LAMB Health Care Foundation is a charity dedicated to supporting the work of LAMB Hospital in NW Bangladesh.

Thank you for your prayers for Peter May as he leads this large project forward – he needs all the support we can give!

Please do look at our Website and make suggestions for its improvement; www.lhcf.org.uk

Location of LAMB Hospital—away from the cyclone area



Some Assertive Village Women!



Rosemary travelling to the new clinic!

Rosemary Croft travelled with her husband to LAMB Hospital in November to carry out a project evaluation. She writes:

A new clinic was built at Domadapur near to LAMB Hospital with the funds from The Department for International Development (DFID) that are channelled via LHCF. During our visit we heard from village women who had been trained to be volunteer health workers. Each looks after approximately 30 families living as neighbours; they are responsible to bring pregnant women for antenatal care to the clinic,

to bring children for vaccinations, and married women for family planning. They teach about common illnesses, for example, how to give oral rehydration solution to children with diarrhoea, and to recognise the signs of more serious diseases like pneumonia so that they can take them to get necessary treatment. The trainer told us that this group of 25 used to be shy and afraid to speak out, but there was no evidence of that now (they learned assertiveness from somewhere!) and they were all bursting to tell us their stories and answer our questions. One

lady told us of a 12 year old girl that she had taken to the health centre that week who had pneumonia (from which she might have died), and having received antibiotics she got better. The girl was from a poor family who even had they realised the seriousness of her condition, knew that they would not be able to pay for treatment – and it was only at this volunteer's insistence that the girl was taken and treatment given. Across the LAMB project there are now over 400 village health volunteers providing services in the community.

Some Village Health Volunteers



This bridge to the Damadapur clinic is only there for 3 months of the year. Much of the rest of the year the river makes the whole area only accessible by boat

99p Rug made near LAMB



The IKEA 'AGGER'
Rug— 99p

Richard Todd, one of the trustees visited one of the few factories not too far from LAMB; it had been opened with great excitement bringing the possibility of employment to local women. They make the rugs, from jute and rags, – and we think that these are the ones sold in Ikea for 99p. The working conditions are awful, noisy and very dusty so that their breathing is affected and their fingers get roughened. If they work a full week, meeting all their targets they will earn £4. Is this development? Do we need things this cheap? You might like to drop IKEA a line. about it!

Poor Fund or Bust



Gita interviews an
inpatient

Gita is a LAMB Hospital Social Worker. She has the tough job of working out whether a patient in the hospital should get a Poor Fund subsidy for their hospital treatment. Many village people are desperately poor and without this help they would simply not be able to get treatment. On the other hand, some can afford to pay—but may not want to! Gita asks the patients and relatives a series of questions about how much land they have, whether they have any animals, how many dependents (a whole extended family may live in one small hut), and whether anybody has a regular job. She then makes a decision about how much they will have to pay. Many patients will get their whole hospital bill paid for by Poor Fund—which LHCF contributes to.

Saving Lives, Restoring Dignity

In September a cleft lip camp with plastic surgeons visiting from Belgium operated on 39 patients. In addition, almost 100 operations on women with vesico-vaginal fistulae were carried out. Vesico-vaginal fistula is a dreaded complication of prolonged childbirth—the woman constantly leaks urine from her vagina. As a result she is always smelly and becomes outcast. The operation restores not only her continence, but also her dignity.

Autumn is the busiest time of year for the maternity ward with 12 babies born a day and some nights there are 3 or 4 Caesarian sections. It is almost as busy as the maternity unit in our home town of Reading—and that is much larger—with many more staff!

Dr Kris, one of the obstetricians, writes about a lady who, while she was having her Caesarian Section (under local anaesthetic) was crying, anticipating her husband's anger at having to pay for the operation. Her father had yet to complete his payment of her dowry and after 4

years of marriage without children she knew her husband was pressurizing her father to take her back – and now this! The new work on justice issues in the community begins to tackle these concerns just as the hospital helps her have a healthy baby, and the poor fund helps her financially—holistic care.



A child is weighed at the children's clinic

And Finally...

We have come home with many good stories to tell, of things made possible in the name of Jesus, partly through your generosity. Thank you for all you have given us. We, and the staff at LAMB are anxious as the hospital fees will increase by 20% in 2008 to help cover costs. This will inevitably mean that more patients need to access poor fund. From April 2008 the amount we can reclaim as gift aid reduces, and with increased costs, we will be needing to raise more money. Please do remember us if you are able to give more—we promise it can be put to good use. Wishing you a very Happy Christmas, and with very best wishes,

Rosemary Croft (On behalf of LHCF)