

Eileen Lodge, a British nurse, founded Nepal Leprosy Trust in 1972.

Before the 1950s Nepal was almost entirely closed to foreigners. Eileen travelled to Nepal in 1953, joining two medical missionaries, Dr Lily O'Hanlon from England and Hilda Steele from Ireland, who founded Shining Hospital in Pokhara.

Moved by the terrible suffering of those affected by leprosy, Eileen established Green Pastures Leprosy Hospital in Pokhara in 1957 and became its superintendent until the late 1960s. These three intrepid women provided the first western style medical care in Pokhara.

In the early 1970s Eileen moved to Kathmandu to develop income generation projects and training for leprosy-affected families living in isolation in Kokhana on the edge of the Kathmandu Valley. She established several workshops for leprosy-affected people, producing candles, pottery, and leather goods. She also founded the well-regarded Lalitpur technical school that offered vocational training including metalwork, carpentry, and secretarial skills.

Mike Winterburn Chairperson of Nepal Leprosy Trust Ireland shared this wonderful photo of himself and Eileen during those early years in Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital in Nepal.



Eileen Lodge on Mike Winterburn's Enfield Bullet motorcycle, circa late 1990's.

Out of these initiatives, the leather workshop has continued for nearly 50 years in Kathmandu and still produces quality leather, cloth and felt goods that are sold around the world.

In 1972 Eileen set up Nepal Leprosy Trust (NLT) as a charity in the UK, providing a formal platform for fundraising, awareness and prayer for the work in Nepal. NLT Ireland was established in the 1990s. During these years, Eileen committed to building a leprosy referral centre in south eastern Nepal. She also trained groups of people from Kokhana in farming and resettled them on land donated by the government in the Terai.

Nepal's momentous move to multiparty democracy in 1989 led the government to sanction the building of a leprosy referral hospital near Janakpur in the east of the country. Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital and Services Centre (LLHSC) was built near Lalgadh Village in Dhanusha District close to the East-West Highway. LLHSC has triumphed over many challenges to become a globally recognised centre for leprosy treatment and dermatology, as well as an innovator in community work to reduce the stigma of leprosy.

Eileen's contribution to leprosy work in Nepal is immense. She established leprosy treatment and rehabilitation centres in Pokhara, Kathmandu, Lalgadh, and Dharan. She gave up her British citizenship and became a Nepali citizen, living in Nepal for 66 years.

In 2019 Eileen passed away in Kumari Pati, Kathmandu where she had lived for many years. At her funeral many powerful tributes bore testimony to her compassion for all, regardless of status, and her huge stature in Nepal. Her desire to give and to believe for big things has challenged all who knew her to grow in faith and to trust God in the face of the impossible. Many of the current staff at Lalgadh Leprosy Hospital and the Kathmandu workshop worked and trained alongside her in their early years.

Eileen is greatly missed by all whose lives she touched. She was buried on (Thursday) 17th October 2019 in her favourite place: Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara, Nepal.