

Who We Are

The Office of Joint Program on Hansen's Disease was established in April 2018 to integrate leprosy programs of The Nippon Foundation and its affiliate, Sasakawa Health Foundation.



The Nippon Foundation is a non-profit private organization based in Japan. Established in 1962, it has implemented a wide range of projects based on its founding principle: "The world is one family and all humankind are brothers and sisters." Its involvement in the global effort to eliminate leprosy and the stigma associated with the disease is one of its priority areas.



Sasakawa Health Foundation (formerly known as Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation) was established in 1974, with the goal of eradicating leprosy from the world. Mr. Ryoichi Sasakawa (founder of The Nippon Foundation) and Prof. Morizo Ishidate, known as the father of leprosy chemotherapy in Japan, were the co-founders. Member of the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) and the Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy (GPZL).



WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination
Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, chairman of The Nippon Foundation, has served as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination since 2001. In this role he engages with government leaders to seek their commitment to leprosy elimination, raises awareness through media interactions, speaks out against discrimination and meets frequently with persons affected by leprosy to hear their concerns.



Leprosy Today (portal)



Newsletter



@SasakawaYohei



Office of Joint Program on Hansen's Disease

The Nippon Foundation
Sasakawa Health Foundation

Working for a World without Leprosy and the Discrimination It Causes

What's Leprosy?

Also known as Hansen's disease, leprosy is an infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*. It mainly affects the skin and peripheral nerves and can cause progressive disability if it goes untreated.

Leprosy is curable with multidrug therapy (MDT). Treatment with MDT is available free of charge throughout the world.

Leprosy has long been associated with stigma. In various parts of the world, persons affected by leprosy continue to face social exclusion and multiple forms of discrimination based on fears and misconceptions about the disease.

What We Do

1—Tackling Disease

- Partnership with World Health Organization

2—Fighting Discrimination

- Approaches to the United Nations
- Empowering persons affected by leprosy
- Raising awareness on leprosy



3—Preserving History

- Preserving the history of Hansen's disease as a legacy for future generations.

TNF/SHF supports people's organizations around the world.



Our Contribution

Partnership with WHO

- Financial support for WHO's Global Leprosy Programme totaling over US\$200 million since 1975, including covering free distribution of MDT from 1995 to 1999.
- Established the Bangkok Declaration Special Fund (US\$4 million) in 2013.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising by WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination, including issuing nearly 100 newsletters.

Approaches to the United Nations

- Advocacy led to adoption of landmark 2010 UN General Assembly Resolution on elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members and accompanying principles and guidelines.
- Supported nomination of UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on leprosy in 2017.

Empowering Persons Affected by Leprosy

- Supported establishment of national organization in India (APAL) in 2006 that operates in 750 leprosy colonies in 17 states.
- To date have supported 23 organizations of persons affected by leprosy in 16 countries to promote their social and economic rehabilitation.

Raising Awareness

- Since 2006 have organized annual Global Appeal to End Stigma and Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy with support of high-profile individuals and organizations.
- Organize conferences, symposiums and workshops, including, in recent years:
 - 2012-17 Five international symposiums/workshops on Hansen's disease/leprosy history as heritage of humanity
 - 2013 International Leprosy Summit in Bangkok
 - 2016 International Symposium "Towards Holistic Care for People with Hansen's Disease, Respectful of their Dignity" in Vatican
 - 2018 National Leprosy Conference in Myanmar
 - 2018 Regional Assemblies of Persons Affected by Leprosy in Asia, Africa, and Latin America/Caribbean.
 - 2019 Global Forum of Persons Affected by Leprosy in the Philippines

Preserving History

- Support for Culion Museum and Archives in the Philippines. The Culion Leprosy Archives were added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2018.
- Operation of the National Hansen's Disease Museum of Japan since 2016 (TNF).
- Promoting network-building and activities to preserve Hansen's disease history and heritage in 14 countries.

