



New Stigma Guidelines published on-line by the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) and the Netherlands Leprosy Relief (NLR), in August 2011

Recently both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations (UN) adopted policies to commit Member States to reduce stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their families. On 21st December 2010 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution (A/RES/65/215) on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and encouraged all relevant bodies to give due consideration to its set of *Principles and Guidelines on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy and their Family Members*. The guiding principles of WHO's *Enhanced Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden Due to Leprosy 2011-2015*, envisage countries applying cost-effective methods to improve community awareness, acceptance and involvement to combat stigma and discrimination against persons and families affected by leprosy.

In line with these recommendations, ILEP is increasingly committed to reducing stigma against people affected by leprosy. In 2009, the ILEP Technical Commission set up a Temporary Expert Group to develop advice and guidance on various aspects of dealing with stigma, particularly in the context of leprosy. A major workshop on this topic was held in Amsterdam in October 2010, the outcome of which was the preparation of *Guidelines to reduce stigma*, a series of four Guides titled:

- Guide 1 What is health-related stigma?*
- Guide 2 How to assess health-related stigma*
- Guide 3 A roadmap to stigma reduction: an empowerment intervention*
- Guide 4 Counselling to reduce stigma*

The Guides are for all managers, health workers and social workers and service staff who have to deal with stigma in leprosy and other health conditions.

The first Guide provides basic information on stigma, its causes, manifestations and effects. The second Guide describes when and how to assess stigma using qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments. It also explains how to use the instruments. The third Guide provides recommendations on how to develop an approach for reducing stigma. Through the use of a roadmap, several steps are discussed for reducing stigma related to a particular health condition. The fourth Guide explains the use of counselling, at a basic level, in dealing with stigma. It provides an explanation of different techniques and approaches for counselling persons affected by stigma.

The four Guides to reduce stigma are electronic publications. They can be downloaded at <http://www.ilep.org.uk/technical-advice/guidelines-to-reduce->

[stigma/](#) . There you can also find links to some supporting materials and other stigma-related resources and networks.

It is hoped that these Guides will be used both in the leprosy field and beyond and that they will be translated into as many languages as possible. A template is available to facilitate translation, which can be requested from ilep@ilep.org.uk or lenka.nahodilova@ilep.org.uk.

Additionally, as part of this commitment to reduce stigma linked to a disease, both the Leprosy Information Service known as Infolep, based at NLR, and the ILEP Secretariat, are collaborating on the creation of an on-line collection of information about stigma.