ILEP Members’ Assembly

Greenville, 20th March 2019

Annex 9 – The future of ILEP 2

Expected outcome of session:

Members build on the discussion at the October 2018 Members’ Assembly and reach consensus position on the value and the future of ILEP
Background
A paper on the future of ILEP was discussed at the Members’ Assembly in October 2018. It followed two lines of approach.

The first approach looked at the likely impact on ILEP of three scenarios for the GPZL:
- GPZL fails to deliver
- GPZL successfully mobilises resources and then winds down
- GPZL mobilises resources and continues as principal recipient of new major funders
In each case, ILEP would continue to be needed, but its rationale and activities might differ. The CEOs felt that it would be clearer by the end of 2019 which of the scenarios was emerging as more likely.

The second approach, driven by the budget deficit and concerns by some Members about the cost of funding two secretariats, set out options for a lower-cost ILEP regardless of what might happen with GPZL. There was little appetite for relocation: this was seen as a longer-term decision, and more effort was needed to test the benefits of the Geneva base. A greater concern was the size of the deficit.

The CEO was tasked to bring further recommendations to the MA in March 2019, taking into account developments in the next 6 months, with a particular focus on ILEP’s primary purpose and value to the Members and the implications for location and structure.

PART A: ILEP’s primary purpose and value to the Members

Purpose
If ILEP Members can agree on certain basic principles about our purpose (who we are and why we exist), it is easier to make decisions about what we value, what we want from the ILEP Office, and how we can best work together. This is not as easy as it sounds. For at least ten years we have struggled with this question. After Geoff Prescott and Burkard Kömm were asked at the March 2018 Members’ Assembly to tackle this issue, Geoff commented that:
- We might find strong consensus, for example as civil society organisations with a shared passion for zero leprosy and a common set of views about being beneficiary centred and holding ourselves distinct from government, business, power and multilateral institutions; or
- We might find weak consensus, so that all we really have in common is that we are not for profits with an interest in leprosy, and with a very different set of attitudes to governments, pharmaceutical companies, institutions, modes of operation and priorities

Perhaps a telling indicator of where we stand was the decision in Colchester to describe ILEP not as a federation (stronger linkages) but as a consortium (weaker linkages). This suggests that the second of the bullet points above is more accurate. But that is not the whole story. We have seen, in LRI and in some collaborative ventures in PEP, that groups of ILEP members can find very strong consensus and work in extremely collaborative ways, sharing finance and knowledge resources, for particular purposes. A key discussion point in this year’s the CEO Summit will be whether ILEP Members will find similar common ground when it comes to working together on zero leprosy strategies within National Partnerships for Zero Leprosy.
So we may see ourselves as a loose consortium, with a small number of shared principles, in which ‘coalitions of the willing’ may form into tight partnerships to achieve certain agreed objectives.

**Value**

Given the rather complex picture above, what is ILEP’s value to the Members? My conversations with CEOs have brought out a few factors that most or all will agree with:

1. None of us is well enough resourced to achieve zero leprosy on our own. We cooperate as ILEP because we are more effective, and have a more powerful presence and voice, together.

2. Interaction between ILEP members results in shared knowledge, new ideas and new, sometimes unexpected, opportunities to work together in better ways. This applies to interactions in all sorts of settings: the ‘official’ half yearly meetings, the ILEP conferences, collaboration meetings in endemic countries, shared ventures and activities, interactions on LRI, the coordinated communications and institutional funding groups, TEGs, etc. Facilitating and building on these interactions brings added value to all.

3. None of us is expert across the whole ‘value chain’ to zero leprosy. Some are particularly strong in health care, some in disability and rehabilitation, some in country level infrastructure or health systems strengthening, some in Government relationships, some in advocacy or lobbying, some in research, some in different language groups ... . Zero leprosy plans in endemic countries will need the capacities of several ILEP members working together, and our association makes this achievable.

4. Having a central office enables us to achieve some things more efficiently than we could do on our own. This is especially true in these roles:
   - Representation on networks such as NNN and IDDC, where ILEP participates on behalf of its Member associations
   - The voice of ILEP, as a key founder and funder, on GPZL, the main information resource for ILEP members on GPZL’s activities, and organisation of funding for the GPZL secretariat
   - Representation of ILEP’s views, and acting as a conduit of information to and from ILEP Members, with WHO Global Leprosy Program and WHO Geneva
   - Advocacy and lobbying to elevate leprosy and persons affected by leprosy in the various human rights instruments of the OHCHR
   - ‘Bringing the outside in’ – maintaining a wide overview of relevant events and developments and communicating these eg via the ILEP Updates
   - Managing the website, social media, and potentially other forms of external communication, on behalf of all Members
   - Coordination of co-working and resource production on campaigns such as World Leprosy Day
   - Planning and logistical support for all manner of ILEP meetings and bodies such as ITC, the Panel, communications officers etc.
   - Implementing agreed projects on behalf of the Members (using the projects fund, for example)
PART B: Implications for structure and location

If Members accept the list of ‘value-add’ factors in Part A, what does this say about location and structure?

Location
In the first ‘Future of ILEP’ paper it was suggested that relocation to another European location could be beneficial if there are not enough gains from being in Geneva. Savings could be up to CHF 125,000 per year (though this was based on cost of living indices and not on real investigation) and even greater if ILEP became a virtual organisation operating from Member offices. CEOs thought this was worth considering but only on a long-term basis (5 years +) because of the disruption.

In fact, two achievements in the past six months have changed the equation. The first is that the lobbying, advocacy and relational benefits of being in Geneva have become much greater. These are described in more detail in Part B of my CEO report (Annex 8). The second is that we have generated budget savings of around CHF 60,000 per year, enough to give confidence of breaking even against the current level of Member contributions. In combination, these two factors suggest that moving away from Geneva to another European location would be a tactical mistake. Moving to a location outside Europe could potentially reduce costs further, but the consequence would be to take away all the Geneva-based advantages described in my CEO report.

Structure
In terms of staff structure, I am already seeing an increase – possibly a major increase – in the time needed for better engagement with UN bodies in Geneva. I predict also that more attention to external communications will bring better profiling of leprosy in the media, in liaison with GPZL. This suggests that the current staffing level (2.5 full time equivalent) is not likely to reduce.

In terms of organisational structure, there is some attraction in business models like NNN (NGO NTD Network) and IDDC (International Disability and Development Consortium) or – more radically - ICTC (International Coalition for Trachoma Control) which were described in my paper in October. ICTC, for example, is not a legal entity and has no office. The work is done by people who are seconded and paid for by member associations, along with a set of task groups. For ICTC, the location of these people does not matter. It might be more complicated for ILEP if we want to retain at least one Geneva based person. The model depends on the willingness of Members to make people available or to co-fund staffing positions that one or other of the Members would employ – a nice example of collaboration. As I commented in October, this model needs further study to see if it actually works well and is translatable to an ILEP setting.

Geoff Warne
March 2019