International Epilepsy Day - Report 2023
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International Epilepsy Day is an annual event organized by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) to raise awareness about epilepsy and its impact on individuals, families and communities around the world.

**2023 Theme**

Epilepsy affects almost every aspect of a person’s life. Often, people living with epilepsy find dealing with the stigma attached to the illness more challenging than dealing with the disease itself. Misconceptions and myths often contribute to the stigma surrounding epilepsy.

This year’s International Epilepsy Day campaign sought to dispel these myths. By sharing facts about epilepsy, we wanted to challenge public misconceptions about epilepsy.
ILAE-IBE Joint Statement

Call to: Step Up Against Stigma to improve the lives of people with epilepsy worldwide.

On International Epilepsy Day, the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE), and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) are calling for greater understanding and intersectoral action to tackle the stigma and discrimination faced by people with epilepsy worldwide.

Addressing stigma and discrimination is a key component of the WHO Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and other Neurological Disorders (IGAP). The plan was unanimously adopted by the 194 Member States of WHO in May 2022.

“Epilepsy has significant personal, health, economic and social inclusion consequences for people living with the disorder and for their families and communities, the response should not be anything less than integrated, comprehensive and engaging all of society,” stated Dr. Dévora Kestel, WHO Director for Mental Health and Substance Use.

Full statement available at: https://internationalepilepsyday.org

International Epilepsy Day allows us to come together, to stand up against stigma and discrimination, and to build a world where no person’s life is limited by epilepsy and the harmful myths that surround it.

Prof. Helen Cross, ILAE President
#EpilepsyDay Video Messages

Video messages in support of the campaign were recorded by IBE and ILAE Presidents and Vice Presidents and shared on the International Epilepsy Day website, YouTube and across social media.
**Campaign Resources**

A comprehensive toolkit with campaign resources for social media was available to download from the International Epilepsy Day website. Campaign resources included customizable selfie cards to share personal #EpilepsyIs messages on International Epilepsy Day. Toolkits were translated into German, Spanish, Croatian, Russian and Portuguese. Thanks so much to those who helped with the translations.
Virtual Art Exhibition

Pictured on this page is a selection of entries to our virtual art exhibition on the theme of stigma. All entries can be viewed at internationalepilepsyday.org/art-exhibition.
Podcasts

The following *Sharp Waves* podcast episodes were released by ILAE to mark International Epilepsy Day.

“Living with epilepsy should not be a secret”: Jessie Nyirenda

Reported by *Bruna Nucera* | Edited and produced by *Nancy Volkers*

Addressing epilepsy stigma from the ground up: Mary Secco

Reported by *Bruna Nucera* | Edited and produced by *Nancy Volkers*
Stigma Stories

We are grateful to all who submitted stories about the stigma they have experienced as a person living with epilepsy. View the complete story collection at internationalepilepsyday.org/stigma-stories.

Epilepsy, known as ensimbu in my local language, sends shockwaves through communities at the mere mention of the word.

Nina Mago  
Uganda

"The most powerful tool we have is storytelling. Putting a face along with the disease makes it more human and more real."

Jessica  
USA

In my country, the condition is mistaken to be caused by a demon. People would advise one to go to a spiritual man to be prayed for and not the hospital.

Melissa Ndona Chinyanta  
Zambia

"A person with epilepsy can achieve anything in their life but stigma can only be removed from society when we start speaking openly about it."

Vinay Jani  
Delhi, India
Shining a Light

Buildings around the world lit up to shine a light on epilepsy. We thank everyone who participated in illuminating their local landmarks.

Italy

Greece
Events

International Epilepsy Day 2023 was marked around the world with events that raised awareness about epilepsy stigma. Below are a selection of images to illustrate the variety of events that took place. You can find out more by visiting internationalepilepsyday.org/events.
The following pages contain a selection of the many photos we received from our chapters around the world taken at events they hosted to celebrate International Epilepsy Day 2023.
Kenya

India

Croatia

Ukraine

South Africa
Social Media

A selection of social media images shared by participants on International Epilepsy Day.
#50MillionSteps

We’re excited to share with you the incredible success of IBE’s #50MillionSteps campaign, which took place in the lead up to International Epilepsy Day this year. Thanks to your efforts we were able to take a giant leap forward in raising awareness about epilepsy and the impact of stigma in society. Together we took more than 185 million steps to raise awareness of stigma and show support for those affected by epilepsy across the globe. A new record for the campaign!

Total Steps Walked
185,658,683 total steps for epilepsy awareness.

#50MillionSteps Toolkit was translated into 5 languages.

Twitter Header Images

Facebook Cover Images

Twitter Post Images

Download zip file of images
Download zip file of images
Download zip file of images
#50MillionSteps Global Participation

A selection of images shared by participants in the #50MillionSteps campaign. Thanks to all who stepped up against stigma.

1st Prize: Gerald Tanongan Pagaling (232,228)
2nd Prize: Reuben Victor (218,768)
3rd Prize: Kassandra Saguisag (208,740)
Special Award: Sean Patriarca Botavara

18 Epilepsy Warriors
1,805,639 STEPS

Shine Epilepsy Support Steps Challenge
We walked 2,182,726 steps
THANK YOU
We couldn't have done it without your support. Thank you to all our team members.

50 million Steps Against Stigma
We had terrific engagement across our social media channels and websites throughout the period of the campaign, with over two million impressions across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, and over 20,000 visitors to the International Epilepsy Day website.