

Caritas India receives prestigious award for its response to COVID-19

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Caritas Australia's partner, Caritas India, has recently been awarded the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi Award 2020 for COVID-19 Humanitarian Efforts.

The award recognises the tireless work of Caritas India during the pandemic to reach the most vulnerable communities.

The Executive Director of Caritas India, Fr. Paul Moonjely, says that receiving the award is a "recognition of the service extended by our partners, staff, volunteers and all our stakeholders who stood beside us in reaching out to the millions of people during Covid-19."

Caritas India has provided a valuable source of support to local communities through the Community Led Development & Governance program, implemented with the support of Caritas Australia, which works with some of the most marginalised communities, including Indigenous groups and members of the Dalit, or untouchable caste.

Through the program, more than 6,000 marginalised families have improved their income. Communities are now advocating for their own needs and entitlements more effectively, and nearly 3,000 households have received government benefits as a result of the program support, including disability pensions and old age pensions.

During COVID-19, over 74,000 masks and 19,000 hygiene kits were distributed, and thousands of people fed through dry ration distributions, community kitchens and food kits. "During the Covid-19 Humanitarian Response [Caritas India] went an extra mile to show solidarity and support to the vulnerable and marginalised sections of the society," says Fr. Moonjely.

"As a strong collective, Caritas India partners and congregational institutions contributed in breaking the chain of spreading Covid-19 by sharing knowledge, resources and reaching out to the weak and marginalised communities."

Caritas Australia is a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the world's largest humanitarian networks in the world with 162 agencies operating in 200 countries and territories.

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