

The ripple effects of clean water

On this World Water Day, Jesuit Mission Australia would like to thank the generous support of the Australian Catholic community in providing clean and safe water to over 137,000 people in Timor-Leste and Vietnam over the last four years.

Jesuit Mission's water projects bring life-changing new water systems to remote and coastal villages, ensuring children have access to safe drinking water, accessible toilet facilities and practice good hygiene to contribute to their well-being and vitality.

This year's World Water Day theme 'Water for Peace' highlights the ripple effect and critical role of clean water in providing stability and prosperity around the world.

"Today we are reminded of the profound impact that access to safe water and sanitation has on individuals and communities," said Helen Forde, CEO of Jesuit Mission Australia.

In rural Timor-Leste, the burden of collecting water often falls to women and children, who have to walk up to five hours each day, carrying heavy containers of water. This limits the hours in the day women have to earn income and partake in other opportunities, while many children also miss out on receiving an education."

"Access to clean water is life-giving, encourages school attendance, and inspires new livelihood opportunities and healthier environments," said Ms Forde.

Project partner of Jesuit Mission Australia, Jesuit Social Service Timor-Leste (JSS), last year installed six new water systems and 15 sanitation facilities in rural Timorese communities. The average time for a round-trip to collect water has been substantially reduced to less than 30 minutes. Community members are empowered to take ownership of the management of water in their villages and learn how to protect and conserve an ecosystem that supports the sustainability of water.

"After 20 years of independence, many Timorese living in rural areas still do not have access to basic water facilities," says Fr Júlio Sosa SJ, Director of JSS Timor-Leste. *"We thought that as Jesuits we could help lessen this burden."*

"Water helps our children grow. We want them to be teachers, doctors, and engineers. We want them to have a good life," said Jonia, a mother, and village chief in the community of Railaco in Timor-Leste.

In coastal regions of Vietnam, contamination of surface water by agricultural activities and pollution has meant vulnerable local fishing families have had to choose between buying expensive bottled water or risking severe illness from unsafe tap water.

"Due to chemical farming, the water sources in Hong Ky village in Nghe An Province, and their neighbouring areas are highly contaminated. Currently there are 60 villagers who got cancer due to using polluted water," said Fr Peter Truong Van Phuc SJ, Program Director

Thanks to Australia supporters, UV-sterilised water stations have been installed in high risk communities in Central Vietnam, and villagers can now access clean water, having an immediate impact on their health and dignity.

-END-

Media Contact:

Zach Martorana, Communications Officer, Jesuit Mission Australia
Zach.martorana@jesuitmission.org.au 02 8918 4109



Caption: Jonia (left) collecting water with her family in Railaco, Timor-Leste.



Caption: Fr Júlio Sosa SJ (second right) and the community of Manuleu, Timor-Leste, celebrate the inauguration of a new water facility.



Caption: The inauguration of a water facility in rural Timor-Leste.



Caption: Nam (pictured) can now bring fresh water to his family in Tam Hai a remote island in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.

Supporting Links:

Jesuit Mission Home Page

<https://jesuitmission.org.au>

About Jesuit Mission Australia

Jesuit Mission Australia works in over 14 countries across Asia and Africa to uphold the innate dignity of people living with the effects of poverty, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable. Funds from our supporters:

- Break cycles of poverty through teaching and education
- Protect the health of communities by providing medical care and programs that improve access to clean water and toilets
- Develop independent, sustainable communities through livelihood training and income-generating projects
- Provide vulnerable individuals with pastoral care, social inclusion and advocacy
- Support refugees in crisis
- Enable effective disaster response and relief.