

Media Release

9 December 2024

Australians defend human rights for over 500,000 people each year

On International Human Rights Day, 10 December, Jesuit Mission Australia acknowledges the Australian community for supporting their Jesuit partners in over 14 countries who work on the frontlines every day to promote peace, build resilience and defend human rights.

With a vision of building an inclusive and just world where humanity flourishes, Jesuit Mission honours and upholds the innate dignity of every person and specifically focuses on helping God's most vulnerable and excluded to understand, realise and access their human rights.

Every year, through Jesuit Mission projects, Australians are **helping over 28,000 children realise their right to education** giving them hope for a pathway out of poverty. Education projects include providing scholarships for students in Timor-Leste, India and Myanmar; training and funding teachers and tutors in Timor-Leste, India, Myanmar and in refugee camps in Thailand; delivering basic literacy and numeracy lessons to the Dalit people in India and children with disabilities in Cambodia; and even buying bicycles for very poor rural children in Cambodia to travel to school.

Australians **help over 23,000 people annually to access their right to water and sanitation** - enabling life, hygiene and growth through Jesuit Mission projects. Projects such as building new and accessible quality water supply systems in Vietnam, Laos and Timor-Leste; constructing accessible toilets for people living with disabilities and living in extreme poverty in Cambodia and Timor-Leste; and conducting training programs to raise awareness of hygiene and sanitation practices for good health.

The Australian community support more than **25,000 people every year to attain their basic right to healthcare and health services** through Jesuit Mission projects that enable physical and mental health and safety. Jesuit Mission's health projects include a mobile medical clinic that delivers vital health consultations and medicine to extremely poor families in the mountainous villages in Railaco, and operating a health clinic on the outskirts of Dili in Timor-Leste; trainings on health and nutrition in India and Timor-Leste; and emergency medical services and kits following humanitarian disasters like those in Ukraine, Myanmar and Lebanon in 2024.

Jesuit Mission Australia's CEO, Helen Forde expresses her heartfelt gratitude to the Australian community: *"This year our projects will reach over 500,000 people, including many people living with disability, from Indigenous groups, and families on the brink of survival due to poverty, oppression and natural disasters.*

"Almost 300,000 people will be reached with capacity strengthening projects including advocacy and awareness raising of basic rights and services in India, and over 170,000 will receive essential services following crises in Myanmar, Lebanon, Ukraine and Syria.

"Our projects are diverse and all of them are backed and made possible by generous and compassionate Australians. We are blessed to have a community of supporters who choose to put their faith into action by donating, praying, and advocating for those who are less fortunate in our world," said Ms Forde.

The theme for this UN Human Rights Day is “Our Rights, Our Future, Right now” and focuses on how human rights are a pathway to solutions, and play a critical role as a preventative, protective and transformative force for good.

“This Human Rights Day, I’d like to remind our supporters, that every time our brothers and sisters truly attain one human right they are catalysed and empowered to unlock many more. The impact of every donation lives on long after the immediate program is completed. I wholeheartedly thank our wonderful community of supporters,” said Ms Forde.

Whilst expressing gratitude, Jesuit Mission would like to take the opportunity ahead of Christmas to remind the Australian community of their Gifts for Change. Every Gift for Change is an investment in human rights. Gifts for Change have the power to transform lives through education, emergency relief, independence and empowerment for our brothers and sisters most in need.

A Gift for Change replaces a traditional present with something truly impactful. Each Gift for Change comes with a personalised printed or electronic card, illustrated card created by students from Jesuit Mission projects.

Gifts for Change include gifts to:

- fund a teacher or scholarship, or buy a bicycle to help a young child travel to school
- provide medical care, food or safety for a family impacted by conflict or disaster
- help people living with disability find independence with mobility or an accessible home, or
- build sustainable communities with access to clean water and sustainable food.

Visit jesuitmission.org.au/Christmas or call 02 8918 4109 to order Gifts for Change this Christmas.

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Caption: Jesuit Mission Gifts for Change - A gift to fund a teacher in a village school in India for a year.



Caption: Jesuit Mission Gifts for Change - A gift to fund a child's school fees in Cambodia for one year.



Caption: Jesuit Mission Gifts for Change - A gift of accessible toilet for a person living with disability and their family.



Caption: Jesuit Mission Gifts for Change - A gift of mobility could pay for a wheelchair customised for the rough terrain in rural Cambodia.

Supporting Links:

Gifts for Change

<https://jesuitmission.org.au/christmas>



About Jesuit Mission Australia

Jesuit Mission Australia works in over 10 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.