

Honouring and empowering motherhood

This Mother's Day, as we celebrate the incredible mothers in our lives, Jesuit Mission encourages all Australians to honour all mothers in our world, especially those like Leela in India. Through Jesuit Mission's Gifts for Change program, you can honour your mother by supporting and investing in programs that uplift marginalised women and their families and communities around the world.

"When my daughter was three years old, she was malnourished and weighed only eight kilograms," recalls Leela, Anika's mother. "But now she weighs over ten kilograms and stands tall. It fills my heart with joy to see her thriving."

Leela, a mother of six, embodies the spirit of resilience in the face of adversity. Her husband works in Goa, India, farming and gardening, while she takes on casual labour jobs in their village to make ends meet. Despite their challenges, Leela remains steadfast in her commitment to providing a better life for her children.

In 2023, Jesuit Mission's Sustainable Development of Indigenous Tribal Populations program, supported over 1,300 Indigenous tribal people, including Leela, in education, addressing malnutrition and empowering women through self-help groups to advocate for their rights.

These mothers are becoming educated on nutrition and are working with the community childcare centre (Angawadi) to claim food from the government, such as milk and eggs.

"This fantastic program also encourages mothers to grow vegetables together and contribute to the well-being of the whole community," said Helen Forde, CEO of Jesuit Mission.

Run by North Karnataka Jesuit Educational and Charitable Society, and supported by Jesuit Mission, the maternal health centre attended by Leela is providing transformative assistance to her and her family's health.

"At three years old, Anika was fragile, but I refused to give up hope," says Leela. *"I became determined to ensure her well-being and happiness."*

Leela's story echoes the experiences of countless mothers around the world who face adversity with courage and resilience. Despite the challenges they encounter, they remain steadfast in their commitment to nurturing and protecting their children.

Through Jesuit Mission's Gifts for Change program, you can honour the sacrifices, strength and love of mothers like Leela by investing in initiatives that empower families and communities.

"Every child should have the right to a quality education," says Leela. "I want Anika to study more, to be independent."

Celebrate the bond between mothers and children this Mother's Day. Support our Gifts for Change program and make meaningful impact in the lives of families around the world.

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Caption: Leela and her daughter Anika.



Caption: As her health improves, Anika can focus on her education and break the cycle of poverty.



Caption: Gifts for Change cards. Available online.

Supporting Links:

Gifts for Change

<https://fundraise.jesuitmission.org.au/shop/category/gifts-for-change>

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.