

Harvest 2023

Equip people like Vavi to thrive

Sri Lanka is known for its beautiful landscape, abundant wildlife and historical sites that make it a centre for tourism.

But since 2019, the country has faced the worst economic crisis in its history. Families are struggling with soaring prices and shortages of food, fuel and other essentials. Sadly, three in ten households do not have enough food. And life is even harder for families affected by leprosy.

Leprosy is enough of an issue on its own. Even though there is a cure, the disease robs people of family, jobs, and dignity. Stigma and discrimination mean people with leprosy hide their symptoms for as long as possible, living in fear. But if the disease is not treated early, those affected can lose their mobility and their sight.

But the effects of leprosy are also made worse by poverty and poor nutrition. Without good food, people are more vulnerable to catching leprosy, and their bodies are less able to make a good recovery. For communities in Sri Lanka living in poverty, this can mean becoming trapped in a cycle of poor health, struggling to earn a living.

This Harvest season, you can play a part in breaking that cycle. And in a country suffering a financial crisis, where many families can barely afford to eat once a day, your support will also help them lift themselves out of poverty.



Sri Lanka



Vavi's story

Vavi, pictured above with her daughter Lakshani, lives in a remote village in the north of Sri Lanka. In the past, she was an active member of her community, and, working as a labourer, she earned enough money to provide for her children. But everything changed when she was diagnosed with leprosy at the age of 32.

In rural areas, many people like Vavi get their water from a communal well. But when Vavi's neighbours discovered she had leprosy, their fear of the disease was so great that they stopped her from using it.

Vavi's friends turned on her. It became difficult for her to find water for drinking and cooking, and it was even hard to keep clean.

Vavi was also mistreated at work. Although she was taking the cure for leprosy, she was still struggling with the side effects of the disease. Her employers were unhappy that this was preventing her from working as quickly as she had done before. Before long, she lost her job.

She felt desperate – would leprosy stop her from ever working again? What would happen to her children if she couldn't provide for them?





A turning point

The Leprosy Mission's partner in Sri Lanka, Kaveri Kala Manram (KKM), works with people like Vavi to help them heal from leprosy and live life to the full again.

A vital part of KKM's work is making sure that families affected by leprosy have enough nutritious food to eat and the opportunity to grow enough fruit and vegetables to sell, providing a good income. Rev Joshua, who heads up KKM, also brings people affected by leprosy together for monthly community meals, a wonderful way to learn more about food and nutrition.

Rev Joshua's team heard about Vavi and reached out to provide support to her family. Now, Vavi has a well of her own, so she and her children have easy access to clean water. She has also been provided with the plants to help her grow coconut trees and vegetables, as well as training to get the most out of her garden.

Now, her garden is bursting with life. "I gradually started gardening, planting a few greens around my home," Vavi told us. "Now it is like heaven on earth!"

Not only can she enjoy the beauty and produce of her garden herself; she can also sell what she grows. Today, Vavi feels more independent than ever, and will have a sustainable income for many years to come.

'The one who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.'

(2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

How you can help

Quiz time

By holding a Big Harvest Quiz to raise money or sharing these resources with your church, you can make sure that people like Vavi have everything they need to rebuild their lives, with plates brimming with nutritious food and a regular income.

You can stand with families like hers as they make a fresh start, free from leprosy. Your gift will truly be an answer to their prayers.

A gift of £30 provides 20 coconut trees. Your support will equip a person affected by leprosy to plant and grow coconuts, which can be eaten or sold to provide an income.

£86 provides a family with the plants, seeds and tools they need to start a small-scale home garden, where they can grow their own food. They will also be given food supplies for at least four months.

£200 will enable 100 families to learn about nutrition and how to grow good food, thanks to Rev Joshua's community meals and ongoing support from the KKM team.

Together, we can help more families like Vavi's thrive.

Pray

Join with us as we pray for people affected by leprosy and their families in Sri Lanka. As always, it's the poorest and most marginalised people who struggle with high prices and soaring bills the most. Will you stand with them in prayer as they hope for a brighter future?

Pray for wisdom for the country's leaders, as they look towards economic recovery and a more stable future for Sri Lanka.

Pray for Leprosy Mission partners like Rev Joshua and his team. Their dedicated work to find new cases of leprosy, break down stigma and help people lift themselves out of poverty is so vital for the communities they serve. Ask God for strength and protection for them.

Pray that many more lives like Vavi's will be changed through the provision of trees, plants and training that will give them enough nutritious food and a sustainable income.

The Leprosy Mission England and Wales
Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay,
Peterborough. PE2 5GZ
leprosymission.org.uk

Tel: 01733 370505
Email: post@tlmew.org.uk
Registered Charity 1050327

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