

January 24, 2020

PROJECT COMPASSION ENCOURAGES AUSTRALIANS TO GO FURTHER TOGETHER

Life is tough for the Philippine's 17 million indigenous people who face discrimination, disadvantage and displacement from ancestral lands.

Limited education, employment and unequal access to healthcare mean that preventable diseases, such as tuberculosis and measles are common - and the maternal and newborn mortality rate is high. Around 20 typhoons lash the Philippines each year, adding to the challenges faced by the country's most marginalised and vulnerable people.

In 2020, Caritas Australia, part of Caritas Internationalis one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world, will encourage all Australians to 'Go Further Together' to help communities around the world, during its annual awareness and fundraising campaign, Project Compassion.

Project Compassion launches on February 23 and runs for six weeks during Lent. Money raised goes to Caritas Australia's long-term development and emergency relief programs, which helps millions of people each year.

Thanks to the generosity of the Australian public, last year Caritas Australia reached 1.52 million marginalised people worldwide, including in Australia. In 2019, more than 1,000 parishes and 1,300 schools helped to raise \$10.7 million through Project Compassion.

"We encourage everyone to support Project Compassion which is now in its 55th year, so that we can continue to transform lives, strengthen the resilience of communities and contribute to peace and stability," Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia said.

"I'm humbled by the generosity of our supporters right across the Australian communities and the difference that makes in changing lives globally. As the new CEO of Caritas, I remember personally giving as a child to a Project Compassion box. Even back then I knew it had the power to change peoples' lives."

"We are all part of one global human family, supporting each other and particularly those most marginalised during difficult times. This year, despite the challenges in our own country, we invite you to be part of the Project Compassion journey towards creating a more just world, at peace and free of poverty."

Caritas Australia programs supporting the plight of the Indigenous Manide people in the Philippines are featured this year during Project Compassion in Shirley's story. Caritas Australia is assisting vulnerable communities in the Philippines to become architects of their own development, through a holistic development project which secures income, improves education and access to goods and services. When Shirley joined the Caritas-supported program, it became the turning point in her life. In partnership with the Socio Pastoral Action Centre Foundation Inc (SPACFI), this program strengthens the capacity of indigenous people to lead lives of dignity, grow in self-esteem and attain sustainable livelihoods. Nearly 1200 Manide people have benefitted so far.

To donate to Project Compassion or to learn how to host a Pancake Tuesday, Fish Friday or Water Challenge visit Caritas Australia's website, www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or call 1800 024 413.

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