



**Empower
women...
build
inclusion
now.**

5:1 Matching
Grant Approved

Australian
Aid

**YOUR GIFT IS WORTH
5 TIMES MORE!**

You can make a difference in the lives of other women in Nepal. The SPROUTS project works through Self-Help Groups, schools, and training of health care workers to move communities towards zero leprosy. Your compassionate prayers and support will remove barriers for women and help them find their voice within the community.

SPROUTS is the Strengthening Pathways for Economic Resilience through Sustainable Opportunities to Communities project. The project works to address the environmental, behavioural and economic factors that cause barriers for people with leprosy, lymphatic filariasis and other disabilities from engaging fully in their communities.

One of the key components of the project is the formation of Self-Help Groups that teach business skills and health improvement knowledge. These groups will be supported to develop independently and maintain growth in their

businesses.

Another component is improving health knowledge on leprosy and good hygiene. This will happen through education in schools, improving knowledge and skills in managing cleanliness, including during menstruation. Mental health awareness and counselling support will support students struggling with a leprosy diagnosis and discrimination.

Training health care workers will mean increased leprosy diagnosis and improved treatment and management. This will allow local health care workers to partner with The Leprosy Mission Nepal and expand active case finding activities.

The project will work with the community to understand the short- and long-term effects of severe weather events. Preparing for disasters and adapting through community led initiatives is a valuable way of creating inclusion and

cooperation.

Empowering women in all these areas is crucial. By encouraging women and other vulnerable and marginalised people to take on leadership roles, communities become more inclusive. This allows the knowledge and experience of the whole community to be heard. In turn, this means better outcomes for everyone, including those most at risk.

Your prayers and support will allow more women to gain dignity and the fullness of life.

Pray for the women in this issue of Keeping In Touch, both named and unnamed.

Pray for the participants in the SPROUTS project to grow and thrive. Pray for the staff and volunteers who are working towards zero leprosy, zero discrimination, zero disability.

Build communities of
inclusion by giving to
the SPROUTS project
[https://www.
leprosymission.org.au/
projects/sprouts-kit03](https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/sprouts-kit03)



Leprosy
Mission
Australia

Issue 3, 2025
**Keeping
In Touch**



International
Women's Day
March 8, 2025

**Your prayers
give momentum
and strength
for change!**



Radhika first joined New-SADLE as an artisan 27 years ago. The impact of that opportunity is still being felt today.

New SADLE is a not-for-profit organisation in Nepal, helping rehabilitate people affected by leprosy. Your support brings training and employment in the arts and crafts industry to people like Radhika. You empower them to change their lives.

Today Radhika is married with two children: one in high school, one with an eye on going to university and getting a degree in computer science. With her husband away for long periods of time with the Royal Guards, Radhika is left to support her family alone.

Radhika works hard, dyeing textiles using wax, a method known as Batik. These are then sold to compassionate supporters who love to buy beautifully made, fairtrade products. While this provides an income for people like Radhika, it does so much more. Radhika and her children are now able to think in terms of goals and dreams, not just survival.

For Radhika, her hard work led to being invited to be on the Board of Directors of ARNS. This is a new organisation, set up to support artisans. What a moment of joy this was for Radhika!

Over nearly three decades she has been able to support her family and improve their ability to support themselves. Now she can influence others to create lasting change for more young people, especially women.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8th is International Women's Day (IWD). This is a time to engage in positive action that intentionally and urgently addresses the barriers many women face in reaching equality in their community. From entry-level work placements to CEOs, women are underrepresented in many areas.

The theme for IWD 2025 is 'Accelerate Action'. According to data from the World Economic Forum it will take until the year 2158 to reach parity with men. This means women and girls are still facing barriers to education, professional life, and inclusion in decision making processes at all levels of society.

**INSIDE: Read the rest of Kamala's
story... and how you can help!**



Leprosy Mission Australia works tirelessly to address this, advocating and promoting opportunities for women to be included in decision making at all levels. Our aim for people affected by leprosy is not just to survive, but to reach their dreams. Not only to be cured, but to find inclusion, equality, and empowerment.

Radhika has worked hard to break down some of those barriers. She has not done that alone. We all have a part to play. Often it starts with being given an opportunity when it seems there was none.

Tirtha's life changed completely when she was given the chance to learn a new skill. A shy and timid woman, Tirtha, from Nepal, had little confidence in herself, especially as she and her husband were hearing impaired and non-verbal. Raising two children, her husband's income was not enough to take care of their family. So, Tirtha battled her nerves and lack of handicraft skills to forge a new path for her and her family.

Learning to sew and working alongside other women has given Tirtha's life new energy. Her job has given her family security. She can afford for her children to attend boarding school and pay for their expenses. Tirtha is now active in her family's decision making. She is also more involved in community activities and is especially interested in women's rights.

For women like Radhika and Tirtha empowerment is not just about their own ambitions. It is about the rights of all women and girls to be treated with respect and dignity. It is about being people who can

help spark lasting change. It is about bringing hope for all people to be included in their communities.



Tirtha's life has changed completely after she was given the chance to learn a new skill — sewing.

ONE BODY, MANY PARTS

Working together we discover the power of what Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, calls the Body of Christ. Once we understand that each person has a part to play in the world, we can see people like Radhika and Tirtha in a different light. Our prayers become richer as we pray not only for physical healing but that they may thrive. We suffer and rejoice with them. We feel their longing to be free from the pain of leprosy, stigma, and poverty. We celebrate as they discover and use new gifts and skills to create a better world for themselves, their families, and their communities.

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" (1 Corinthians 12:21). Our strength lies in our differences. Working together we create a greater whole.

Prayer Partners, producers like New SADLE, artisans who produce beautifully crafted items, The Leprosy Mission Shop team, the shoppers. Each of these (and more besides) take their part in the body, God at work to bring wholeness and unity.

What a blessing and inspiration Radhika and Tirtha are! As they were inspired so they inspired others. Their children and communities are stronger and better equipped for the future thanks to their hard work and your support.

The Leprosy Mission Australia works diligently to 'Accelerate Action' throughout the projects that you pray for and support. From ensuring Self-Help Groups are accessible to women, to running campaigns educating communities on the importance of women's inclusion in decision making processes. Thank you for being part of The Leprosy Mission Australia. Thank you for being part of the Body of Christ, empowering women like Radhika and Tirtha to have their voices heard and bring equality.

Pray for Radhika and Tirtha as they continue to shine a light in their communities. Pray that people will listen and be inspired to be part of building a better world for all.

Give thanks and pray for producers and artisans, working together to create beautiful products that allow people to have a sustainable livelihood.

Pray for The Leprosy Mission Australia Shop as they continue to work closely with producers and artisans to ensure they can offer shoppers quality products that are fair trade and make a difference in the world.



Radio saves lives, and so do you!

By Glen Coleman

What are your memories of radio growing up? For me, late-night reruns of The Goon Show with Spike Milligan shaped my humour and music taste. Recording Top 40 hits off the radio was a must. And I still enjoy listening to radio coverage of Test Match cricket.

Radio has kept me entertained and informed for years. Many around the globe still rely on it for entertainment as well as education and spreading the Word.

Radio also acts as "a portable public safety net during emergencies and power outages caused by natural and human-made disasters." It also connects underserved groups, including those living in poverty. (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/radio-day>)

Radio technology is over a century old. We hope new

technologies won't overshadow this tool that connects vulnerable people. But with new tech comes great potential. Consider podcasts for example. They allow us to share stories, challenge myths, and unite people. We spread knowledge, hope, and freedom.

There are around 4.1 million podcasts globally on nearly every topic. One such podcast is the Hidden Lives Podcast, created by The Leprosy Mission Australia.

This podcast shares stories of struggle and the tough path to dignity, hope, and freedom. It features real experiences of those affected by leprosy and how your support gave them a new lease on life.

Take Episode 2: Challenging Boundaries <https://hiddenlives.buzzsprout.com/2299918/episodes/14288905-02-challenging-boundaries>

**HIDDEN LIVES
PODCAST**



"At 25, Urmila has three children. After her husband passed away, she was broke. Traditions said women shouldn't work and needed their husband's support for decisions. When invited to join a Self-Help Group (that you help support) to learn about saving, Urmila initially declined. But eventually, she decided to push those boundaries, and her life improved significantly."

Pray for more opportunities to inspire others with stories like Urmila's. Pray that both old and new technologies can help bring truth and hope to light. Pray everyone can access radio and other communications to stay informed and safe. Pray all this will lead to a brighter future.

Bring hope and freedom to people like Urmila in Nepal through the SPROUTS project <https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/sprouts-kit03>

