

Friends of Kalangarai
Newsletter - December 2018

Thanks for your Support!

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support of the widows and their families served by Kalangarai. Your donations make a significant difference in their lives.



I have recently returned from India where my colleague, Chrisann Newransky, and I conducted a research study with Kalangarai (see article below). While we were visiting Kalangarai, we saw some of the destruction caused by Cyclone Gaja that severely affected the area around Nagapattinam on November 15th. Within days of the storm, the Kalangarai staff had assessed the damage to the widows' homes and determined that 650 widows were particularly severely affected and needed relief materials such as mosquito nets, bed sheets, clothes, rice, candles, etc. These supplies were distributed to the women by the Kalangarai staff and volunteers while we were visiting. Currently, the staff is working on the next phase of rehabilitation. Many of their houses need repair, especially new roofs. They have approached some individuals and organizations, including *Friends of Kalangarai*, for funds to purchase materials for the houses. If you can help out with a donation, please visit our ["How to Help"](#) page where you can make a donation by clicking on the Donate Button.

The Director of Kalangarai, Fr. Kulandai, and his staff are very grateful for the donations from *Friends of Kalangarai*. Before we left for India, Jane O'Rourke (*Friends* board member) hosted an Open House to raise funds for the victims of the cyclone and their children's education. About 40 people attended and a little over \$4000 was raised by those attending and others who could not attend but donated online. We appreciate your continued support of their programs which empower these most vulnerable but resilient women.

Warm regards,
Karen Kayser
President, Friends of Kalangarai, Inc

Photo: Cyclone survivor cooking outside her demolished house.





Empowering Women through Small Enterprises

By Chrisann Newransky, PhD, MSW

In early December 2018, Kalangarai welcomed a research team headed by Chrisann Newransky to meet with the widows and abandoned women to learn about their interests in further developing small enterprises to improve their economic situation. With four diligent students from the University of Central Tamil Nadu, we visited 6 self-help groups in different areas of the state, interviewing 74 women and facilitating 6 focus groups. The research aim was to learn about the strengths and resources available in each self-help group, as well as the perceived barriers and resources needed to develop individual and/or group enterprises. Although a full report will be shared with Kalangarai and donors in the spring, preliminary results show that the women have many ideas for building on current small enterprises and for starting new ventures. Not all, but many women would like to combine resources and efforts to work together in small groups on ventures. We hope the analysis of this data will be helpful to Kalangarai in planning its programs and applying for grants related to hands-on skills training or other resources related to small enterprise development.

This research was supported by a faculty grant from Adelphi University.



Research Assistants: Laxmi, Lourdurajan, Saranya, Vigneswaran, Fr. Francis

EVENT

Widows of Kalangarai: Stories of Empowerment, Hope, and Sustainability **Loyola College, Chennai, Photo Exhibit**

December 13-16

By Karen Kayser

During my sabbatical last spring, I collaborated with Professor Vijay Kumar from Loyola College (Chennai) on documenting the lives of the widows in Kalangarai's self-help groups. Dr. Kumar joined me again this December to take more photos and put them on exhibit at Loyola College. His students in visual arts edited and mounted over 50 photos. On the day of the opening of the exhibit, I presented a slide show and spoke about the widows' lives and the work of Kalangarai. The exhibit photos mainly focused on the empowerment of the widowed/abandoned women through self-help groups, and social enterprises. We also displayed photos of the recent destruction from Cyclone Gaja.

If anybody in the U.S. would like to host a photo exhibit, please contact us (kalangarai.friends@gmail.com).



Students Viewing Photos



Vijay & Karen discussing the photos.



Friends of Kalangarai is a U.S.A. non-profit that supports the programs of Kalangarai through fund-raising, education, and research. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization. *Kalangarai* is a non-governmental organization that supports the human rights of widows in India through community-based programs to enhance dignity, self-reliance and the well-being of widow-headed families in South India.

You can donate by check to Friends of Kalangarai, Inc

P.O. Box 5366

Louisville, KY 40255

Or online at <https://www.kalangarai-india.org/2010/12/>