



December, 2020

Friends of Kalangarai

Empowering Women Globally

Our mission is to support community-based programs working to enhance dignity, self-reliance, and the well-being of widow-headed families in South India

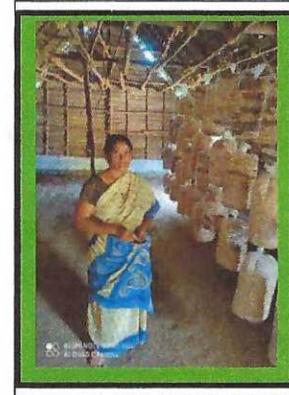
A Happier Future for Widowed Women in India

Mrs. Manjula's husband died 7 years ago, leaving her with two children to support. With assistance from Kalangarai, her daughter attended community college, completed a program in desktop publishing, and landed a job with a business in Nagapattinam. When learning about Kalangarai through her daughter, Mrs. Manjula joined one of their micro-credit, self-help groups (SHG) in her village. Since she knew how to read and write, the SHG asked her to take a leadership role. She is now president of her SHG. She regularly attends Kalangarai-sponsored trainings to raise her awareness of the rights of widowed women and build her skills in advocacy. Speaking through a translator she told us, "Because of meetings with other widows and participants in Kalangarai, we have learned what are the rights of widowed women—rights like wearing the bindi (colored dot worn on forehead; sacred symbol), putting flowers on, or wearing bangles. These are rights that women have but because we are widows we are refused of."

During this past year, Mrs. Manjula started a business in mushroom cultivation. Kalangarai was instrumental in connecting her to a governmental program for assisting vulnerable rural people to start businesses. Through the proprietor of a private company called SKT Agro Food LTD and subsidies from the government, Mrs. Manjula received training in mushroom cultivation and was provided a shed and seeds for growing the mushrooms. The private company markets the mushrooms. Mrs. Manjula states, "In my village there are three women benefitting from mushroom cultivation and every day I receive income from mushroom cultivation."

Mrs. Manjula describes her growth in self-confidence: "When the district collector came to visit my mushroom shed, I was able to speak to him without fear and hesitation. After seeing my strengths and abilities and seeing my house with a thatched roof, he said why don't you approach the government for a concrete house? So I have approached the ministry of housing. Soon I will have a concrete house."

Your donations through Friends of Kalangarai help to support women like Mrs. Manjula who with small micro-credit loans, skills training, and social support, make possible asset-building enterprises to improve their social and economic standing in society.



Mrs. Manjula in her Mushroom Shed



Mrs. Manjula's House

Friends of Kalangarai Virtual Holiday Brunch

On December 14th Friends of Kalangarai hosted a webinar with interviews with participants of Kalangarai programs and the director of Kalangarai, Indian cooking demonstrations, Tamil language lessons, and Indian dancing.

A recording of the program is posted on our website:

www.kalangarai-india.org

Building Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The widows' families lost income when India was in a lockdown; 780 widows were not getting any pension from the government. Even those who did receive a pension, did not have enough earnings to cover their expenses. Kalangarai came to their aid by providing rice and helped them to take advantage of governmental programs for which they qualified. Kalangarai didn't stop there. After the lockdown ended, they continued to run trainings and protected themselves by wearing masks and using sanitizers. Five self-help groups were doing collective farming and were able to buy a power tiller to prepare their fields for planting. Another 50 widows started training in mushroom cultivation.



Interested in being a Board Member?

We are seeking professionals with expertise in the following areas: microcredit, entrepreneurship, non-profit management, accounting, marketing, and fundraising. Individuals with a strong interest in global women's issues and social justice are especially welcome. Please contact Karen at kalangarai.friends@gmail.com with your interest. (More information can be found on the website)

Your donations will support the following:

- Supplies for 100 widowed women who are starting businesses in mushroom farming
- Mushroom Food Stalls in 2 towns
- St. Joseph's Community College Hostel
- Educational help to widows' children (school supplies, scholarships)

To make your donation

Online with a credit card, go to "donate" page at:
www.kalangarai-india.org

OR

Send a check made payable to: "Friends of Kalangarai"
Mail to:

Karen Kayser
2 Fresh River Valley Rd
South Dartmouth, MA 02748

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Friends of Kalangarai is a U.S.A. non-profit that supports the programs of Kalangarai through fundraising, education, and research. We are a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

To learn more about the programs, visit www.kalangarai-india.org