



# Tim Lee

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**Location:** Philippines



**What I do:** Improving the lives of families living in poverty in the Philippines by supporting Jigsaw Kids to become a sustainable organisation



**Empowering** people pushed to the edges of life to release their God-given potential

Dear friends,

It is wonderful to write to you from Jigsaw in the Philippines (although by the time you read this I will be back home in the UK).

It's a privilege to be with all the Jigsaw family face to face and to spend time visiting the ministry. Although I have been to Manila countless times I'm always overwhelmed by the poverty, exploitation, oppression and injustice that so many children and families live in. Yet when I see with my own eyes how God is using Jigsaw to be a light in the darkness, bringing God's love to the edges of society, I know there is hope through Jesus.

### Snapshots of Jigsaw sharing God's love at the edges

Today I am visiting the Jigsaw centre at a place we call Forestry. This is the name given by Jigsaw staff to a large, abandoned piece of wasteland dotted with old trees in the centre of Metro Manila. A place which is home to hundreds of squatter families. It is one of the most desperate, vulnerable and needy places in Manila. The homes are mostly makeshift shelters made of cloth and rubbish found abandoned around the city. It is a place consumed by drugs and alcohol. Those most at risk are the children, who spend their lives hungry, going through other people's rubbish, often at risk of abuse, with little or no hope for a safe and loving future. Jigsaw has been sharing God's love and building relationships within this community for eight years now.

No doubt if you were with me today in Forestry, you would be absolutely shocked that humans live like this. You would also be shocked to find that amid the poverty is a large white gazebo nestled between two trees. This gazebo, the Jigsaw Centre, is where people of all ages find security, significance, community, creativity and healthy boundaries. It is a beacon of hope in an otherwise desperate place.

If you came to Forestry on a Tuesday and Thursday morning you would see many young children at Jigsaw's 0-6 group playing, doing craft, chatting at circle time, listening to Bible stories, praying and receiving hot meals. On Wednesday and Friday you might see children in the 7-9 or 9-12-year-olds' club singing, dancing, playing games, learning to read and write as well as learning about Jesus. Another day you might see the centre full of youth from the Solid Rock youth groups, or young adults supporting each other through prayer and training in the 18-25s' Agape group. Other days you would see mothers sewing, praying and reading the Bible in the ladies' empowerment ministry. If you came on the third Tuesday of the month, you would see



*Jigsaw children and family centres: places of God's love for children to belong, plan, learn and to grow in faith, hope, love, well-being, identity and purpose*

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**

Jigsaw holding parenting seminars or education sponsorship meetings.

Much of what Jigsaw does is less visible, so you might not see the house-to-house visits where Jigsaw staff pray with and encourage families. You wouldn't see the children with disabilities team conducting therapy sessions with children in their homes, or the welfare team taking children to clinics and hospitals, carrying out counselling and so much more.

However, what you would see is God's hope shining through people's smiles, and faith in Jesus as Lord and King like a banner overhead, growing deep in the hearts of children, young people and adults. There is a long way to go but day by day and week by week, change is happening in this desperate wasteland and God's mission of transformation is gaining ground. I wish you could all see what I see in Jigsaw's eight children and family centres. I thank God that even though you can't see it for yourselves, you faithfully pray and support this work so it can continue. Thank you so much.

### Focusing on growing security

Before I arrived in Manila, I met with the director of Jigsaw Philippines in Kuala Lumpur and we spent five days in prayer and discussion, focussing on God's guidance for Jigsaw's work and ministry. Our main aim was to discuss how Jigsaw could bring long-term change to the context and lives of the children we work with in Metro Manila. We were led, through prayer and discussion, to focus on the issue of vulnerability.

God's ideal plan was for children to have mothers, fathers, families and communities to care, love and protect them. However, poverty often destroys these networks, leaving children vulnerable to abuse, harm and neglect. We felt led to develop short-term ideas to support parents and more long-term initiatives to bring about transformation of culture through children. It could seem insurmountable, but God can move mountains. We have decided to focus on three initiatives to reduce vulnerability and grow security:

- ▶ a parenting, family and community child protection advocacy programme,
- ▶ training older youth 18+ to be child protection advocates in the communities so that more children have a trusted adult they can talk to,
- ▶ integrate teaching about God's plan for children's security into Jigsaw's children and youth development clubs.

There is lots of work to be done but we believe that reducing vulnerability is what will bring lasting change. Please pray for God's guidance and provision as we continue to work to develop these plans and initiatives.

Thank you,

Tim

### Prayer requests:

- ▶ Please continue to pray that the mission and ministry of Jigsaw will bring transformational change through God's love for children living in extreme need and poverty, bringing new life in Jesus.
- ▶ Please pray for Jigsaw's goals to reduce vulnerability and grow security in children's lives through the new initiatives shared above.
- ▶ Please pray for the board and Jigsaw's leadership team: that God will guide them, give them wisdom and protect them as they govern and lead the work of Jigsaw.



Photo: Training for child protection advocates



## Empowering people pushed to the edges of life

I've been encouraged to hear recent mission stories from around my wider area of work. In South Sudan, communities have taken steps towards peace as pastors from different tribal groups reconciled, and my colleague Joan has shared a growing vision of a new tribe of peacemakers. Read more at [churchmissionsociety.org/empower](https://churchmissionsociety.org/empower)