

She was a slave who escaped to save her family's

FUTURE

She is a strong leader in her community. Someone others seek for advice, a loving wife and mother and a courageous woman. But Govindhama still remembers what it was like to be a slave. Every day, she and her husband shaped wet clay into hundreds of heavy bricks, enduring violent beatings and threats.

Govindhama's owner stole not only her freedom but also the opportunity to raise her children.

She could not send her children to school, and with no way to give them a bath in the kiln, her son Sakthivel and baby daughter Asha were consistently covered in mud from the bricks. But the most brutal abuse was to come: Govindhama feared that as soon as they could carry a brick or mould clay, her children would become slaves like their parents.

As the owner's violent abuse intensified, Govindhama risked her life to plan an escape, convincing her husband they must protect their family and run away. She and the rest of the labourers held at the kiln fled – and were quickly met by IJM investigators and attorneys who had been building a case against their slave owner.

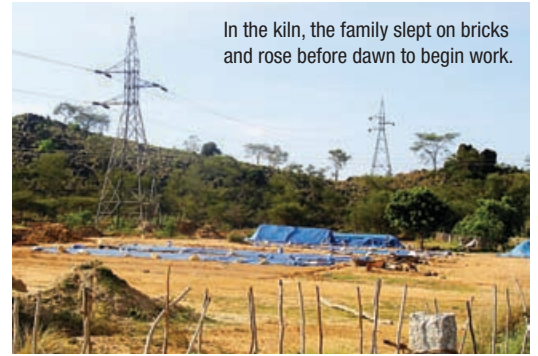
Govindhama bravely shared her story. IJM staff protected her and the other labourers from the furious owner and documented critical evidence of the crimes, so Govindhama and the others would be free.

Now, Govindhama is free to care for her family – and is changing the future for her entire community.

She has been elected to represent her village with the local government, to make sure their concerns are heard and their needs are met.

But this role is not what brings her the greatest joy. “What makes me happiest,” she says, “is educating my children.” Free from slavery, Govindhama is now free to build a new life for her family.

In the kiln, the family slept on bricks and rose before dawn to begin work.



Chennai, India—This March, IJM provided Govindhama in-depth training for her new role as a village leader.

With IJM's help, Govindhama has enrolled all of her children in school.



Your support helps IJM rescue families who are living in slavery.

Thank You.