

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024



Empowering people
to rebuild their lives



ACT FOR PEACE

The international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches
in Australia. Confronting injustice together through the global ACT Alliance.



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Act for Peace is the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Act for Peace is also a member of the Church Agency Network, the Emergency Action Alliance, Micah Australia and the ACT Alliance, a coalition of churches and faith-based organisations working together in more than 120 countries.

Act for Peace is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. We are committed to providing high-quality humanitarian, development and advocacy programs while working in a transparent and accountable way.

Act for Peace takes its duty of care seriously and always aims to provide the safest possible environment for vulnerable people. We welcome feedback, both on this report and in relation to our operations and conduct. Please direct any feedback or complaint to the officer responsible for complaints, via complaints@actforpeace.org.au or +61 2 8259 0800. Please see our complaints policy at actforpeace.org.au for more information.

Act for Peace acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

*Names throughout this report have been changed for safety reasons.

Act for Peace supports local partner The Border Consortium (TBC) to assist refugees from Myanmar living in camps on the Thai-Myanmar border.

In caring for humankind together
we're acting for peace in the world.

ACT FOR PEACE



Our vision

A world where everyone belongs.

Our purpose

To create, together, a world where people uprooted by conflict and disaster have a safe place to belong.

Mona* had to flee her home in Congo to find safety and is now an urban refugee in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Act for Peace backs local organisations to help families, like Mona's, to find a pathway out of poverty.



Our beliefs



WORKING TOGETHER

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (ROMANS 12:4-5, NIV)

We respect the God-given dignity of all people, celebrate diversity, understand that we are part of a larger whole. We believe we must treat each other with grace and share what we have, because a unified society is essential for sustainable peace.



PEACE WITH JUSTICE

“True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.” (MARTIN LUTHER KING JR)
“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (EPHESIANS 4:1-3, NI)

Our Christian model of peace is of people enjoying right relationships with God, each other, and our planet. We are called to live in peace with people of all traditions, sharing the gift of peace with those who are distressed, breaking down barriers that create fear, oppression and division – bringing renewal by fostering justice, equity and love for all.



THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLE AND PLANET

“Anyone who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit.” (PROVERBS 27:18A, NRSV)

We believe that peace on earth requires peace with the earth – we are committed to nurturing our earth just as it nurtures us. We recognise the grave threats faced by our planet, and the consequences for all people, and commit to act with respect and care as we adopt regenerative lifestyles and work to achieve ecological justice.

Our values

HUMILITY

We recognise that it's not all about us. We see others as equal to ourselves, value what we each bring to the table, seek first to listen, and learn, and to understand the limits of our own experience and perspectives.

COURAGE

We will be brave in the face of challenges, dare to be different when necessary, and use our voice to speak truth to power (for change in the world). We persist when the going gets tough.

CREATIVITY

We seek different perspectives and original thinking, model alternative policy and solutions, develop innovative programs, and share our learning to ensure we continue to provide value to our stakeholders in an environment that is constantly changing.

INTEGRITY

We live out our beliefs and values, are accountable, steward our resources mindfully and aim for high quality practice in all we do.



From the Chair

“We are grateful for the trust our supporters place in us to be their expression of peace in the world.”

Leigh Cleave
Chair of Act for Peace



LIST OF DIRECTORS FY24

Thank you to the Act for Peace Board for their contributions this year, and for working diligently throughout FY24 to provide leadership, strategic guidance and oversight to our work.

The Board is accountable for the performance of Act for Peace and aspires to excellence in governance standards. We are truly grateful for their contributions.

- Leigh Cleave**
Chair of the Board (from December 2023)
- Virginia Udy**
Former Chair of the Board (until November 2023)
- Alison Preston**
Director (Deputy Chair of the Board)
- Paul Nichols**
Director (Treasurer)
- Jamieson Davies**
Director
- Samuel Richards**
Director
- Oliver Slewa**
Director (resigned January 2024)

This year, we have been constantly reminded that, for many, the world is a place of chaos, fear and uncertainty, with more and more people displaced and made vulnerable by conflict, political unrest, and natural disasters.

As the Act for Peace Board, we acknowledge the privilege and responsibility of standing with partners and churches in many parts of the world to provide life-saving and essential support for people fleeing their lives and leaving their homes.

We realise that we can only support those displaced through the generous and sacrificial support of long-time, committed supporters around Australia, including individuals, churches, organisations, school communities, funding bodies and the government. We are grateful for the trust our supporters place in us to be their expression of peace in the world. For decades, many of our supporters have been giving to create a more just and peaceful world. Although many of our supporters have been impacted by the uncertain economic environment, their generous and sacrificial giving has continued. The 2023 Christmas Bowl Appeal result showed this generous and faithful support. In December 2024, we will celebrate 75 years of compassion and unity through this foundational appeal.

Act for Peace is the humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA), so together, we are committed to fulfilling our purpose as a vibrant and sustainable agency. Over the past year, we have sought additional opportunities to strengthen our collaboration and understanding of what it means to be an ecumenical expression of NCCA. In June, along with Alison Preston, Deputy Chair, I attended the 11th National Forum in Adelaide. This was an opportunity to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the National Council of Churches in Australia, deepen our ecumenical relationships and reflect on what it means to be “messages of hope in a complex world”.

In September 2023, Janet Cousens completed her time as Act for Peace CEO. Janet worked with Act for Peace for over 15 years, starting in 2008 in the International Partnerships and Programs team and then transitioning to the CEO role in 2017. The Board is thankful for Janet’s leadership and commitment to supporting displaced people as

those made equal in the image of God, as well as for building the leadership capacity of the Senior Leadership Team. While we commenced our executive search, the Head of Operations, Tricia Keys, stepped into the role of Interim CEO.

In February 2024, the board was pleased to announce Elijah Buol OAM’s appointment to the CEO role. Elijah came to Australia as a humanitarian unaccompanied minor in 2002 after living in many displaced camps as a child in South Sudan (then Sudan) before spending seven years in refugee camps in Uganda. He has a deep personal understanding of the issues, including displacement and forced migration. The Board looks forward to working with the CEO and the Act for Peace leadership team in 2025.

I thank the Board for their expertise and passionate engagement throughout this year. Two directors completed their service in FY24. In December 2023, Ginie Udy stepped down from her three-year term as Chair and will complete her term on the Board in August 2024. Ginie joined the Board in 2018, and her leadership and insights have been invaluable. In January, Oliver Sewa commenced a key role with the NCCA that required him to step down from his role as a Board Member. The Board nominations committee will begin recruiting two additional Board Members.

The ongoing displacement crisis continues throughout the world and conflict and injustice will continue to affect the poorest and most vulnerable people. This past year has been indelibly marked by the dire escalation in conflict affecting Gaza, Israel and Lebanon. As we grieve the utter human tragedy unfolding, we stand in solidarity with the displaced people of Gaza through our Palestinian partners and urge everyone to speak, pray and act for peace for all people across the region.

We are committed to working sustainably to create lasting change, recognising that we operate in a challenging environment both in our work and in how we continue to resource our mission. In 2025, our strategic focus will be investing in people, partnerships, and opportunities that transform lives and together find the courage to persevere until everyone has a safe place to belong.

Leigh Cleave
Chair of Act for Peace



From the CEO

“The vast scale and complexity of today’s global displacement crisis presents one of the most significant challenges in human history.

The plight of the 120 million people currently displaced mirrors my own story and drives my vision every day.

At the core of this crisis are individuals of equal worth to us, yet often not treated as such; individuals who seek to live safely, raise their families with dignity, contribute to society, be welcomed, and feel they belong.”

Elijah Buol OAM
CEO of Act for Peace



I began my tenure as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in February 2024, and it has been a humbling journey serving as both the message and the messenger.

Having been born and raised amidst conflict, I have lived by the grace of those who possess hope, kindness, compassion and humanity. These qualities define who I am today.

The plight of the 120 million people currently displaced mirrors my own story and drives my vision every day. Displaced individuals are more than statistics; they are real people with dreams, hopes and aspirations that can be fulfilled. It is our responsibility to offer a hand to ensure their safety and help them to realise their dreams and potential.

My vision is to support and collaborate with partners on locally led, sustainable initiatives that effectively address the needs and aspirations of those displaced by conflict and disaster, ensuring that those affected are the primary stakeholders. Forming partnerships with local communities is essential to collectively addressing the displacement crisis. In solidarity with local partners, we support initiatives that mitigate displacement and foster safety, dignity and a sense of belonging for those who are displaced.

Currently, our faith, compassion and hope for a safer world are being tested by numerous conflicts and disasters that have uprooted people globally. The vast scale and complexity of today’s global displacement crisis presents one of the most significant challenges in human history. At the core of this crisis are individuals of equal worth to us, yet often not treated as such; individuals who seek to live safely, raise their families with dignity, contribute to society, be welcomed, and feel they belong. These are doctors, teachers, students, farmers, business owners, parents and grandparents displaced by conflict and disaster, all with aspirations, hopes, skills, knowledge and faith.

Regrettably, there is a human tragedy behind the statistics: individuals like us who, through no fault of their own, have been forced to flee, torn from family and community, deprived of control over their lives, homes, lands and livelihoods. They are compelled to endure a temporary existence, sometimes lasting decades, on the margins of society in refugee camps or as internally displaced persons, or increasingly, in urban and rural settings.

In the face of these challenges, we must contemplate how to construct a global village that is unified through hope and compassion. How do we raise our humanitarian spirit to honour humanity? I believe the answer lies in the power of collaboration

and investing in hope and peace through our compassion. By working together to mobilise and share resources, we can expand and generate a positive impact for humanity.

In 2023/24 Act for Peace supported 26 projects in 16 countries and together with our partners, we have supported 142,758 people. This is a life changing achievement. Advocacy constitutes a fundamental and fully integrated element of Act for Peace’s operational framework.

Amid the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, we have consistently demonstrated solidarity with our regional partners, offering support and advocating for those displaced by conflict in Gaza. Collaboratively engaging with National Council of Churches (NCCA), and Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), and Micah, we have been actively promoting peace and lobbied Australia government and global partners for a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Palestine. Moreover, our involvement in the “A Safer World for All Campaign” underscores our commitment to global security and peace.

Additionally, we have strengthened our engagement with supporters and stakeholders, which includes enhancing our partnership, fundraising, marketing and communication strategies.

I express our sincere appreciation to the supporters who have contributed to shaping Act for Peace into a dynamic organisation, enabling individuals to rebuild their lives during these difficult times. I am thankful to our partners, funding bodies and governments for their continued cooperation, and we anticipate the ongoing growth of these partnerships.

I am grateful and excited to continue working closely with the Board, the NCCA, supporters, partners, ecumenical networks and stakeholders. My profound gratitude also to the Board, staff, and their families for their unwavering support, which has empowered us to dedicate ourselves to humanitarian service.

Looking ahead, we are committed to fostering an active, vibrant and interconnected Act for Peace that amplifies the voices of those displaced by conflict and disaster and walking alongside them. Our goal is to further embody our collective humanity and compassion. The strength of Act for Peace is anchored in the aspirations and hopes of its partners and those displaced by conflict and disaster, who yearn for a peaceful and safer world where everyone has a safe place to belong.

Elijah Buol OAM
CEO of Act for Peace



Our impact

OUR GOALS

What we're working towards:

- 1 Safety in exile**
Ensuring people live in safety, with dignity, while displaced.
- 2 A place to belong**
Helping uprooted people find a permanent place to belong.
- 3 Reduced displacement**
Working to reduce the number of people forced to flee their homes.

OUR CHANGE STRATEGIES

How we're making it happen:

- 1 Backing displaced people**
Working in solidarity with local partners.
- 2 Building unity**
Reducing division and creating a more compassionate society.
- 3 Transforming the system**
Advocating for a radically different response to the displacement crisis.



FY2023-24 SNAPSHOT

Act for Peace worked with and for 142,758 people around the world who are uprooted by conflict and disaster.

We backed 15 local organisations and joined forces to create lasting change, helping empower people affected by displacement to regain the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong.

WHO WE HELPED:

36,634
MEN

23,304
BOYS

57,939
WOMEN

24,881
GIRLS

3,872
PEOPLE WITH
A DISABILITY



15 LOCAL PARTNERS



16 COUNTRIES



26 PROGRAMS



142,758 PEOPLE
(PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS)

Konjit* with her youngest son at her home. She is a project participant of the Tesfa "Hope" project that uses a 'Graduating out of Poverty' approach implemented by Act for Peace local partner organisation Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC).



Acting for peace in the world with our local partners

Backed by our supporters, we address displacement through locally led programs and amplify the voices of people uprooted by conflict and disaster around the world.

We back and join forces with our local partners to build lasting change – driven by the community and for the community – helping people regain and retain a safe place to call home.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAMS

Ukraine
Hungarian Inter-church Aid

Türkiye & Syria
Act Alliance Partners – Christian Aid

The Horn of Africa
Act Alliance Partners – DICAC

Vanuatu
Vanuatu Christian Council

Tonga
Tonga National Council of Churches

AFRICA

Ethiopia
Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission

Kenya
Refuge Point

Zimbabwe
Christian Care Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe Council of Churches

MIDDLE EAST

Jordan
Department of Services for Palestinian Refugees

Palestine
World Council of Churches

Gaza
Department of Services for Palestinian Refugees
Near East Council of Churches

INDO PACIFIC

India & Sri Lanka
Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation

Indonesia
Church World Service Indonesia

The Philippines
National Council of Churches Philippines

Thailand
The Border Consortium

Myanmar
Myanmar Council of Churches

Pakistan
Community World Service Asia

Tonga
Tonga National Council of Churches

Vanuatu
Vanuatu Christian Council

Pacific
National Council of Churches Australia



Goal 1: Safety in Exile

PEOPLE LIVE IN SAFETY, WITH DIGNITY, WHILE DISPLACED.

This goal aims to ensure that displaced people have the following:

- Access critical physical and emotional support.
- Have control over their lives, leading activities that ensure their safety, dignity and rights.
- Advocate for change and help fix systems that cause violence, exclusion or abuse.

Programs

- Afghanistan: Enhancing girls' education
- Ethiopia: Sexual and gender-based violence and livelihoods for urban refugees
- India: Refugee health with return to Sri Lanka focus
- Jordan: Forsa (Opportunity) - Pathway out of poverty for Syrian and Palestinian Refugees
- Jordan: Multi-sectorial response to refugees, host communities and vulnerable groups
- Kenya: Self reliance
- Pakistan: Integrated health and education for displacement affected communities
- Palestine and Israel: Ecumenical Accompaniment Program
- Thai-Myanmar border: Karenni refugee camp management
- Vanuatu: Cyclone Kevin and Judy response
- Zimbabwe: WASH and protection for people internally displaced

The number of people forcibly displaced globally continues to increase at an alarming rate, reaching 120 million by May 2024.

This distressing figure is the culmination of a series of year-on-year increases representing the people displaced by persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations. Disasters and climate change also continue to force even more people into exile.

The World Bank estimates that 49 million people in East Asia and the Pacific will be forced to flee their homes due to climate impacts by 2050.



Emergency response team distributing food items, winterisation kits and medicine to those affected by the earthquake in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia, Syria.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Through long term, locally led partnerships, we continued to provide much-needed emergency support for families to live in safety with dignity around the world in the Philippines, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Jordan, Bangladesh, India, Tonga, the Thailand-Myanmar border and Indonesia.

Act for Peace is a member of the Emergency Action Alliance (EAA) – a collection of 15 Australian-based aid organisations – who come together to fundraise during major humanitarian disasters.

In 2023/24 emergency response efforts were focused on Gaza. Emergency responses also continued to support people uprooted by disaster such as the Türkiye and northern Syria earthquakes, the twin cyclones in Vanuatu, the Afghanistan earthquakes, the Horn of Africa drought and the conflict in Ukraine.

TÜRKIYE AND NORTHERN SYRIA

Syria was already deeply affected by the ongoing war and the economic collapse of the country when two earthquakes hit northern Syria and southwest Türkiye in February 2023, claiming over 23,000 lives, injuring thousands more and causing flooding in displacement camps, plunging the nation into further turmoil.

Our emergency appeal continued in FY24, as Act for Peace continued to work with ACT Alliance members on the ground to help people rebuild their lives.

Partners were able to distribute urgently needed meals, food kits, hygiene and dignity kits, as well as medical supplies to hospitals and shelters benefitting a total of 29,720 community members. They also organised rapid mental health and psychosocial support for 2,310 people.



Sarah Doyle / Act for Peace

Widespread damage to homes and infrastructure across Vanuatu in the aftermath of the 2023 twin cyclones.



DSPR / Act for Peace

Our partner's health clinic in Rafah treated 500 patients a day.

GAZA

Over the past year, the ongoing war in Gaza has been catastrophic. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and over 1.9 million people forcibly displaced.

Nearly all of the people living in Gaza lack access to shelter, food, medical services, clean water, education and income.

Act for Peace launched an emergency appeal, raising funds for the Near East Council of Churches (NECC) through the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) to provide life-saving assistance in Gaza. Act for Peace supporters responded generously, raising more than \$633,000 over the last year.

Act for Peace supported DSPR with planning for immediate and long term needs, coordinating

with ACT Alliance and advocacy for humanitarian access. NECC-DSPR continued to provide emergency relief including primary health and dental care, emergency cash support, medicine, hygiene kits and psychosocial support.

Their clinic in Rafah, in the south, was providing vital health support for over 500 patients a day until Rafah was invaded and the organisation had to evacuate their staff, equipment and medicines and pause their services.

They began providing services through mobile clinics and repaired and reopened a damaged clinic site in North Gaza to provide health care.

Since mid-May, the mobile clinics provided a range of services including stitching wounds, treating skin and bone injuries and dental services.

According to DSPR Executive Director, Nader Abu Amscha, staff risked their lives every day to provide life-saving support to the people of Gaza.

We continue to work closely with NECC-DSPR to plan for immediate and long term needs in coordination with ACT Alliance. Act for Peace is also committed to advocating for humanitarian access in Gaza.

“Some of our staff have been displaced eight or nine times – they are being chased from place to place. Each time they leave they lose more possessions, have less water, less food and get more sick.”

– Nader Abu Amscha, DSPR Executive Director



IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH HEALTH AND EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

In the Umerkot district in Pakistan, forced seasonal migration and displacement is widespread as the region is one of the worst drought-affected districts in Sindh province.

People living there have limited access to health and education services. Girls are less likely to be in school and women and children lack access to vital child and maternal health services. We support Community World Service Asia (CWSA) to improve health and education for these communities through a range of services.

This program focuses on ensuring women, children and people with a disability have improved access to health through neonatal and child health services, reproductive health services for women, expanded quality health awareness and outreach activities and establishing sustainable linkages between community organisations and health departments.

The program also helps improve the quality of education for 3,000 children across 15 schools

2023/24 highlights

- 16,561 community members (including 7,733 women and 6,981 children) received health care services, helping to prevent disease outbreaks.
- 2,240 women received antenatal and postnatal services, improving the health of pregnant mothers and their babies.
- 1,506 children under the age of five and 2,711 breastfeeding and pregnant women were screened for malnutrition.
- 417 community members learned about the importance of girls' education, helping to keep more girls in school.
- 31 teachers were trained on creating a positive learning environment, helping to keep more kids in school.
- 15 sports kits were given to schools, helping to encourage active lifestyles.

by creating child-friendly learning environments, establishing new facilities, and promoting the importance of education for girls.

Pakistan experienced a massive heatwave in May and June 2024, with temperatures soaring past 52 degrees Celsius in some parts of the country. A heatwave alert was issued for most of the country, including the Umerkot district.

Thanks to our supporters, CWSA was able to establish a heatstroke centre during the crisis, providing cold drinking water, awareness sessions and referring heatstroke patients to hospitals.

“Earlier, the system was to read a lesson from the textbook and instruct the children to learn it at home. Rote was the method, there was no emphasis on understanding.

Also, the students were never involved in the learning process. But now we invite the children to ask questions and play roles.”

– Ahmed, teacher



Ahmed is a teacher in Janhero village near Umerkot town. He was trained on creating a positive and inclusive learning environment to improve his teaching methods. He shared the training with his colleagues so now all four government teachers at the school are trained.

SUPPORTING VITAL WATER SUPPLY IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, many families who rely on farming for their income and food have been forced to move from their homes due to increasing droughts, storms, floods and other climate threats.

For families already struggling to survive, a climate-related disaster can be catastrophic, leaving them without access to clean water. Act for Peace is committed to working alongside communities to address climate displacement together.

In March 2019, with the economy already in crisis and farmers feeling the impact of years of consecutive droughts, Cyclone Idai hit southern Africa, impacting millions of people across Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. In the aftermath of Cyclone Ana (2021) and Cyclone Idai (2019) there were more than 710 families in Chimanimani and Mutasa districts who were still displaced.

Act for Peace works with local partner, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) to help empower people impacted by climate displacement to rebuild their lives. By providing access to clean water, strengthening community protection measures and building resilience to future climate-related disasters, we are helping them retain the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong.

Act for Peace works with local partner, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) to help empower people impacted by climate displacement to rebuild their lives.

Over the past year, the program has undertaken many initiatives aimed at improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the community.

This includes extending the piped water scheme an additional 1,200 metres, training health club members on good sanitation practices to create an open-defecation free community, training water committees to manage and maintain the water systems, starting sanitation action groups (SAGs) and training them to improve community sanitation and hygiene practices, and providing SAGs and health clubs with cleaning materials like soap and buckets in improve hygiene.

2023/24 highlights

- 50 families have access to safe, clean water, after the piped water scheme was extended 1,200 metres.
- 400 sanitation and hygiene kits were distributed to improve community hygiene practices.
- 20 water point committee members were trained to maintain and manage the water system, helping to ensure the community water source is sustainable for the future.
- 5 Sanitation Action Groups (SAGs) were started and trained in health and hygiene practices and ending open defecation.

When the community members who were internally displaced by the cyclone first relocated to the Runyayaro community, water was limited. People had to walk up to five kilometres to fetch water from a single bush pump. With the extended piped water scheme and multiple new taps, including at the school (pictured), now the community has easy access to safe, clean water.





EMPOWERING REFUGEES TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES ON THE THAI-MYANMAR BORDER

Myanmar faces one of the worst displacement crises in the world.

More than three million people have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict, and many of them have been displaced for decades. With no reliable access to education, food or employment, people who are displaced often become largely dependent on aid for survival.

Act for Peace works with local organisation, The Border Consortium (TBC), who has supported refugees fleeing the conflict in Myanmar since 1984. Act for Peace supports their work through strategy, governance, fundraising and advocacy for a refugee led approach.

The 'Lead from Within' program places refugees at the centre of decision-making in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, helping empower them to rebuild their lives. With tens of thousands of refugees arriving in Thailand since the military coup in 2021, and 70,000 already in the camps, backing refugee leaders to improve the camps is critical.

'Lead from Within' provides refugees with a dignified pathway to build their leadership skills and autonomy over the decisions that impact their lives. The program focuses on supporting refugee-elected camp committees. They provide training, decision-making and leadership within the camps, as well as advocacy on local integration. The camp committee is a professional body of refugees that allows for self-governance, making decisions about what aid is needed and how it is distributed.

2023/24 highlights

- 231 refugees employed in leadership roles including 95 women.
- 100% of roles are held by ethnic minority groups (predominately Karenni) and 41% of leadership roles are held by women.
- Over 20 refugee led organised activities were held to help improve social cohesion.
- 459 refugees received training on leadership and business skills.
- 97% participants reported an improved sense of safety and well-being.
- 28 people received mental health and psychosocial support through Karenni National Women's Organisation (KNWO).
- 35 people received social assistance including support for funerals and cultural festivals.

“When it comes to cases involving women, having another man investigate the situation may not always be appropriate.

So, there's a need for a courageous woman to take on this type of work.” - Saw Meh*



Saw Meh* is a security officer in the refugee camp where she lives on the Thai Myanmar border. She specialises in women's security, supporting women as an investigator into gender-based violence.



Goal 2: A Place to Belong

UPROOTED PEOPLE FIND A PERMANENT PLACE TO BELONG

This goal aims to ensure the following:

- Uprooted people lead initiatives that help build a safe, permanent future.
- Countries fairly share responsibility for supporting survivors of displacement.

Programs

- Sri Lanka and India: Refugee return and reintegration, Phase IV & V
- Gaza: Primary healthcare and vocational training for Palestinian families
- Philippines: Building disaster resilient communities

Everyone deserves a safe place to belong. But for many people forced to flee their homes due to conflict and disaster, their original home may no longer be a safe place to return to.

In regions experiencing prolonged conflict, drought, or other climate-induced disasters, people can be displaced for decades. That's why we are committed to investing in local organisations and joining forces to create lasting change.

Locally led, long-term partnerships are helping empower people to regain the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong with safety and dignity.

Over the past year Act for Peace has focused on programs that reintegrate displaced people in their home countries and building climate-resilience so communities can gain, retain, or return to a safe place to call home.

Chieftain Violeta is the first female leader of a tribe of about 150 families, born on the land in the Philippines. After two super typhoons in two years, their water systems were damaged resulting in a diarrhoea outbreak, which ended up taking the life of her daughter in 2022. Act for Peace supports the The National Council of Churches Philippines (NCCP) to ensure fewer people are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, climate change induced disasters and increased development.





“We are able to practice what we preach.

Love your neighbour, care for the abandoned, adopt the needy – so during eruptions, as an ecumenical group, we’re able to show the people that we are serious in what we are preaching.

We say that you love your neighbour, so you are our neighbours. Disaster knows no religion,” - Bro Lito



Vina Marjés Salazar / Act for Peace

Members of the Regional Ecumenical Council the Southern Tagalog Region Ecumenical Affairs Movement (STREAM). From left to right: Reverend Junwel, Reverend Edwin and Brother Lito, value the impact of working together in solidarity.

BUILDING DISASTER RESILIENT COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

The World Bank predicts that 49 million people in East Asia and the Pacific will be forced to flee their homes due to climate impacts by 2050.

Act for Peace worked with local partner, National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), to go beyond providing emergency relief in 2023/24 helping communities prepare for disasters. Awareness-raising, capacity-building, service provision and advocacy work was designed to empower communities to retain a safe place to belong.

This program supports community members who are at risk or affected by displacement – specifically climate-vulnerable communities, those affected by armed conflict, and indigenous groups in the Philippines who are affected by destructive development projects.

Strengthening the capacities of these vulnerable communities with locally led protection measures while promoting a rights-based approach was key.

Local communities are best placed to identify the risks of displacement and have the skills to reduce those risks and respond to climate displacement.

The program served to build the skills of communities and churches to support those most vulnerable to displacement, creating a culture and practice of community led disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Regional Ecumenical Councils (RECs) were trained in disaster risk reduction so they can assess the context and risk of communities who are vulnerable to displacement. It also ensured women and people with a disability are represented in both the program activities and community leadership, amplifying the voices of all community members.

2023/24 program highlights

- NCCP held a National Consultation on Disability Inclusion. 181 community leaders and members participated in Disaster Risk Reduction Mitigation workshops.
- 613 youth advocates participated in climate network activities.
- 1,469 volunteers and advocates increased their advocacy skills.

SUPPORTING SRI LANKAN REFUGEES TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND

Sri Lanka’s civil war officially ended in 2009, but the 26-year-long conflict forced thousands of Tamils to flee their homes, and many are still living in refugee camps in India decades later.

While peace has been restored in Sri Lanka, there are a range of challenges refugees still face to return home. Act for Peace has been working with local partners to help people return to their homeland in Sri Lanka.

Act for Peace works with the Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation (OfERR) and the Organisation for Elangai Refugee Rehabilitation (OfERR Ceylon) on a program known as SLRRRP – Strengthening the Sustainability of Sri Lankan Refugee Return and Reintegration. Sri Lankan refugees in India face a range of challenges to successfully reintegrate in their homeland. The economic crisis in Sri Lanka means many returnees are struggling financially and could be at risk of irregular migration – attempting to leave for Australia or other countries. Misinformation and a lack of information and confidence in the return process, as well as a lack of legal documentation, means many refugees are apprehensive or want to delay their return home.

The program supports refugees in 106 camps in Tamil Nadu, India, who are preparing to return to Sri Lanka, as well as refugees reintegrating in seven districts in North-East Sri Lanka. Support is also provided to people in return areas in Sri Lanka including internally displaced people (IDPs), host communities and returnees. Priority is given to those with the greatest need including, the elderly, single women, female-headed households, people with disability, children and those at risk of exploitation by people smugglers.

The SLRRRP program in India and Sri Lanka ensures refugees are supported with documentation, awareness on current situation in Sri Lanka, livelihood training and semi-permanent shelters. It also ensures children return to school and connects people with services and income opportunities once they return to Sri Lanka. Collectively this will support refugees to choose to live in peace in their homeland Sri Lanka.

January – June 2024 highlights

- 86% of refugees obtained their Sri Lankan citizenship.
- 95% of the total returnees received a Preparedness Passport and the supporting documentation required to return to Sri Lanka.
- 74% of the refugees learned about the current situation in Sri Lanka.
- 1,717 refugees were supported to obtain their essential civil documents.
- 512 refugees were assisted in obtaining their Sri Lankan Citizenship and Affidavits.
- 80% of returnees accessed government and other essential services.
- 100% of the returnee families received livelihood support and are now earning an income.
- 100% of children who returned to Sri Lanka were successfully enrolled in school.
- 50 awareness programs on child rights, child protection and child healthcare were provided reaching 1,043 community members.
- 35 motivational sessions were delivered for 646 people (164 men and 482 women including 5 People with Disabilities).



Aletia Dundas / Act for Peace

OfERR supported Selvarasa (right) and his wife Saththiyabama (left) and daughter Thanusha (centre) when they returned to Sri Lanka, by providing them with a toilet and helping them to start poultry farming.



Goal 3: Reduced Displacement

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FORCED TO FLEE THEIR HOMES

This goal aims to ensure the following:

- Communities lead initiatives to reduce the impact of disasters and other displacement drivers.
- Governments and the public take strong action to reduce conflict and climate driven displacement.

Programs

- Myanmar: Urban Rural Mission
- Pacific: PANZ Forum
- Indonesia: Disaster resilience in Sulawesi through enhanced adaptive measures 2 (DREAM), Phase 2 and 3
- Tonga, Inclusive disaster resilience, Phase 2
- Vanuatu: Disaster Ready phase 2
- Zimbabwe: Increasing food security for subsistence farmers through climate resilient conservation farming

We know that to reduce displacement, we need to work side-by-side with people facing displacement, to shape solutions together.

We go beyond providing emergency relief, to create lasting change – working together to create better futures. This year we continued to back our local partners in their work alongside communities in the Indo Pacific, helping them adapt, prepare for and become resilient to droughts and other disasters.

Development of a climate displacement strategy was a focus of this year which will inform future work and partnerships in this space.



In Indonesia we are supporting communities to become resilient to climate disasters.



CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT STRATEGY

Relocation can be traumatic, and communities facing climate displacement often turn to spiritual leaders and traditional governance systems for guidance and support.

Relocation has both positive and negative impacts on people's livelihoods and well-being with increased access to services but loss of access to traditional land and water.

Act for Peace is committed to addressing climate displacement through locally led programs and by amplifying the voices of people uprooted by disaster. To this end, Act for Peace scoped a new strategy document and planning tool to address climate displacement. The strategy considers how we can build policy and programming capability to reduce displacement for communities in the Asia-Pacific region increasingly affected by climate change.

Through a competitive tender process, Act for Peace engaged the Humanitarian Advisory Group to lead the strategy development. This process included hearing directly from communities with lived experience of climate displacement in Fiji, as well as leading consultations with donors and our long-standing funders.

The result is a clear strategy and planning tool to support practical needs and gaps in the sector. The new Climate Displacement Strategy 2024-2030 will become a key tool to guide priorities for programming and policy support.

Key findings from the community consultation

- Timeliness, communication and collaboration are critical.
- Communities, government, and external partners all have important roles to play in the relocation process.
- Communities should lead decision-making on relocations.
- Spiritual leaders and traditional governance systems are important for guidance and support as relocations can be traumatic.
- NGOs can support planned relocations through by raising awareness about risks, planning for livelihood changes, increasing inclusion and gender equality, and providing psychosocial support and services.



Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CbDRM) training in Tonga.

ENSURING NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND IN TONGA

When disaster struck Tonga in 2022, hundreds of people had to flee their homes to safety.

Act for Peace worked with the Tonga National Council of Churches (TNCC) to ensure no one was left behind.

After the 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano and tsunami displaced 706 people across four communities, the Government of Tonga declared the affected areas unsafe for habitation and the community members had to move to new temporary village locations.

Through the Kau He Lau (No-one left behind) program, Act for Peace worked with our local partner, Tonga National Council of Churches (TNCC) to go beyond providing emergency relief, to help communities prepare, respond and recover from disasters.

This inclusive approach ensures people with disabilities and other vulnerable community members are supported in all aspects of disaster preparation and response.

In FY24 Kau He Lau supported 101 displaced families with a livelihood restoration program, helping them to earn a reliable source of income through training on financial literacy, business skills and development and budgeting.

2023/24 achievements

- Local Village Emergency Management Committees (VEMC) were started in 10 remote communities and were trained to prepare and respond to natural disasters in a safe and inclusive way.
- Simulation exercise held so VEMC members could practice the skills they learned on activating the disaster plan during an emergency.
- Raising awareness of the importance of disability inclusion with church leaders so they are equipped to advocate for improved inclusive church and community activities and understand their role in ensuring the needs of vulnerable groups are met during disasters.
- Act for Peace and TNCC attending regional disability forums to improve best practice and knowledge sharing across the Pacific region.
- VEMCs trained in proposal writing so they can directly access small grants and funding.
- Community evacuation centres stocked with disaster relief supplies.
- Accessibility at community and church-owned evacuation centres improved.
- Displaced community members supported to restart their livelihoods so they can earn incomes to meet their daily needs.



HELPING COMMUNITIES IN VANUATU BE DISASTER READY

Climate change is a key driver of displacement for our Pacific neighbours.

Rising sea levels and increasingly frequent storms and extreme weather events are forcing people to flee their homes more than ever before. In 2023/24 Act for Peace worked with local organisation Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) on two programs focusing on disaster preparedness and prevention.

VCC supports the community to build resilience to the increasing number of disasters in the Pacific. Disaster READY 2.0 supports churches in Vanuatu to ensure they can respond and recover effectively, while a second program builds disaster resilience for people with disabilities.

Both programs are collaborative and inclusive, working in partnership with government agencies and non-government organisations as well as local disability community groups to ensure disaster preparation and response efforts include all vulnerable community members.

2023/24 highlights

- 8 communities have safer shelters for all with upgraded community evacuation facilities now disability accessible.
- 711 community members attended disaster risk management training or received psychological support through church activities.
- Churches are better equipped to respond to disasters through development of skills, procedures and collaboration including Anticipatory Action protocols and mapping community evacuation facilities via an app.
- Partnerships between churches and government for information sharing and collaboration during disasters were strengthened. AfP, VCC and church partners supported national response and recovery efforts for tropical cyclones affecting communities across Vanuatu.



“I was advised I couldn’t return home to my house because of its condition. VCC provided some iron roofing for my house to build a new home for me... when it’s fully completed then I will move there.”

– Kal

Act for Peace CEO Elijah Buol OAM (left) and Pastor Bernard Yalimiyau, General Secretary of Vanuatu Christian Council (right) meeting with community member Kal (centre) who was evacuated to the VCC Evacuation Centre in Port Vila during the twin cyclones in 2023.

COMMUNITY LED EARLY ACTION & RESILIENCE IN INDONESIA (CLEAR)

Climate change and climate-related disasters are placing millions of Indonesians at risk of displacement.

Act for Peace is committed to reducing displacement in Indonesia by backing local organisations and working alongside communities to shape solutions together.

In Indonesia, Act for Peace worked with local partner, Church World Service (CWS), to help communities prepare for disasters and ensure they can respond and recover effectively in 2023/24.

In the urban region of Makassar, the CLEAR program strengthens community resilience to prepare and respond to climate impacts through training and technical assistance to develop anticipatory plans led by the community.

The program also supports the community to access alternative livelihoods so community members have reliable sources of income to meet their needs.

CLEAR aims to...

- empower vulnerable communities with knowledge, skills and tools to understand and make informed decisions to manage risks, strengthen resilience, and adapt to the impacts of disasters and climate change.
- communities with government and local organisations to develop plans and improve access to risk information, forecasts, and early warning systems.
- support communities to start and expand small-scale, local climate change adaptation initiatives, providing alternative income sources so communities are more resilient to disasters.

“We coordinate with community organisations, youth groups, and health centres to conduct assessments and provide healthcare services.

“Health is the most critical factor. We also gather data on the number of people with disabilities, the elderly, women, and babies, as they are the most vulnerable.” – Bayu, KSB member



Almost every year, floods hit Makassar City. The Tamangapa district, members of KSB (Community-based Disaster Preparedness) are helping make sure the community is safe.

2023/24 highlights

- 822 boys and girls and 211 community members attended information sessions on the impacts of climate change and disaster.
- 175 people are active members of community disaster risk reduction teams and meet regularly to plan and implement community activities.
- 149 community members were trained in disaster risk management.
- 47 community members representing vulnerable people, disaster risk reduction teams, and village governments attended a two-day training on climate and disaster resilience.
- CWS staff joined other local and international NGOs in training on Anticipatory Action, to help strengthen early warning systems and better protect the community during the disasters.



Change strategy 1: Backing displaced people

WORK IN SOLIDARITY WITH LOCAL PARTNERS

This change strategy involves the following:

- Building partnerships that mobilise the knowledge, determination, and skills of displaced people to create change.
- Resourcing locally led initiatives that reduce displacement and create safety, dignity and belonging for uprooted people.

For people who have been displaced, being empowered with the skills and autonomy required to make decisions on the areas that impact their lives, is vital for promoting dignity and hope for the future.

We understand that local people know their community's needs and challenges best and work with local communities to create positive change – driven by the community, for the community.

Over the past year, this change strategy underpinned our work – both in the programs we committed to, and how those programs were implemented. We continued to focus on resourcing initiatives led by people facing or experiencing displacement and supported them to create sustainable lasting change in their communities.

“The most important thing for me is to see my children living a decent life and to provide them with everything they need in life.” - Samir*

Samir* is a Syrian refugee based in Jordan. He is a father of five children and his family receives food donations, financial, social, psychological and livelihood support.





PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY FOR PEOPLE IN JORDAN

Thousands of people from Syria and Palestine have sought refuge and safety in Jordan which now has the second-largest number of refugees relative to its population in the world.

Consequently, many of the families living in refugee camps in Jordan face challenges such as overcrowding, high unemployment rates and inadequate housing. With threats like domestic violence, child labour and gender-based violence, they are still without a safe place to belong.

To ensure refugee and host communities in Jordan have a safe place to belong, we partnered with the Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) to implement the sustainable “Forsa” (Opportunity): Pathway out of Poverty for Syrian and Palestinian Refugees program.

This program supported families with a pathway out of poverty by building their self-reliance and skills, to develop reliable sources of income and independence. Following a locally led approach, DSPR and community members managed the program, backed by advisory support from Act for Peace.

50 families (282 people) were enrolled in the program over an 18-month period, which concluded last financial year, with equal representation of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.

The holistic approach provided coaching, support and training for families on financial literacy, job application skills, gender equality and managing a small business together with some financial support as they established their income generating projects.

2023/24 highlights

- 50 people received grants to start businesses and assistance to register their businesses or work permits an additional 40 people were supported to find jobs or internship placements
- 40 families completed the program with two sources of income (one family member starting a business and one family member working)
- 98% of families have increased quality and quantity of daily meals
- 100% of families have at least one reliable source of income
- 78% of families have two reliable sources of income
- 98% of families have increased their savings to better provide for their future
- 83% of families report improved psychosocial wellbeing
- 97% of families with school-aged children are now attending school regularly

“...without the Forsa project...my situation would not have improved and my debts would not have been paid, and I would remain unemployed.” - Rima*



Rima*, a mother of six, has been living in Jordan for 20 years after fleeing Gaza in 2004. Three of her children have a disability and Rima struggled with isolation and the burden of raising her family. But everything changed when she joined the Forsa project. Rima was trained in sewing and now earns an income to provide for her family.



Change strategy 2: Building unity

REDUCE DIVISION AND CREATE A MORE COMPASSIONATE SOCIETY

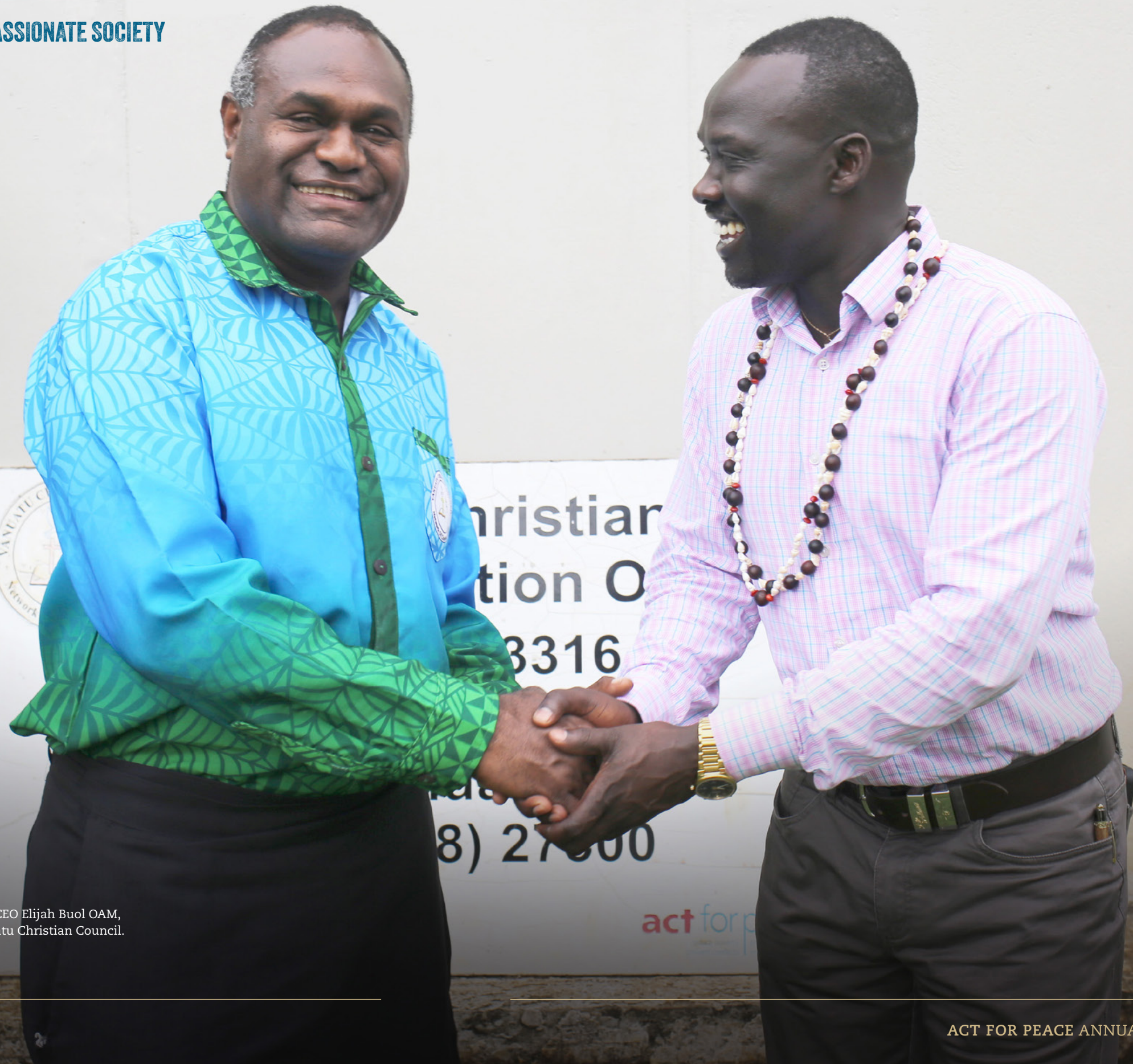
This change strategy involves the following:

- Tackling the underlying drivers of inequality and displacement by reducing polarisation and building empathy in society.
- Creating opportunities for people to positively influence those around them, so they act and vote in support of displaced people.

We are committed to standing in community with the countless people displaced by conflict and disasters, because together, we are stronger.

Over the past year, we created opportunities for young people to raise awareness through the Ration Challenge, empowering them to use their voice to act for refugees.

We also built solidarity across churches in the Pacific region, at a time when a unified approach is desperately needed to respond to increasing displacement.



Building solidarity through long term partnerships, Act for Peace CEO Elijah Buol OAM, meeting with Pastor Bernard Yalimayau, General Secretary of Vanuatu Christian Council.



RATION CHALLENGE

It's no wonder many young people feel overwhelmed and disempowered by the state of the world – displacement numbers are at a historic high with war, conflict and climate change forcing an unprecedented number of people from their homes. But there is always hope.

Act for Peace believes young people have an important role to play in building unity, reducing division and creating a more compassionate society. We empowered young people to take action through the annual Ration Challenge during Refugee Week in June. Hundreds of students took part through their schools and 2024 was also the first year the challenge was piloted in church youth groups.

Participants ate the same rations as a refugee living in Jordan for three to five days while raising money for emergency food, healthcare and life-changing support for those facing displacement due to conflict and disaster. 935 people signed up to take part, raising more than \$273,000.

Oakhill College in Sydney has been participating since the Schools Ration Challenge started and this year had over 100 students participate. Missions Director, Roxanne Leopardi, says the impact on students is significant.

“Joining the Ration Challenge is a powerful way for our school to make a positive impact on the lives of refugees and contribute to a more compassionate and equitable world.”

– Roxanne Leopardi, Missions Director



Students from Marist College with Act for Peace CEO Elijah Buol OAM.



Our CEO Elijah Buol OAM joins other humanitarian agency leaders in Canberra in March, meeting with Australian government representatives to campaign for a #SaferWorldForAll.

SAFER WORLD FOR ALL

Act for Peace joined other humanitarian agencies for the Safer World for All campaign, by Micah.

In the past year our CEO, Elijah Buol OAM joined other humanitarian agency leaders in Canberra (pictured) to meet with Australian government representatives in a unified call asking our nation's leaders to put the world back on track by:

- Increasing investment in Australian aid
- Supporting a fairer global economy
- Contributing to a safer climate future



Members of the PCPAN Network at the March 2024 meeting in Fiji.

PACIFIC CHURCH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Pacific Church Partnership Program (PCPAN) recognises churches and church-based agencies as important contributors to development in the Pacific and a significant source of social and cultural connection between Australia and the Pacific.

The PCPAN was established as part of the Pacific Church Partnership Program (PCPP) as a capacity-building, coordination, advisory and partnership-building forum for the Australian Government, Pacific and Australian churches and church-based aid and development agencies working in the Pacific region.

PCPAN engages Pacific and Australian churches, church leaders and representatives and government representatives on a variety of development and humanitarian needs including leadership, service delivery, gender equality, education, seasonal workers' welfare, climate justice and disaster response.

Act for Peace brings technical expertise in displacement, protection and disaster preparedness as well as longstanding experience working in partnership with National Councils

of Churches in Australia globally to strengthen the network and improve development outcomes in the Pacific.

PCPAN consists of 12 Pacific Seats including gender, disability and youth representation, and 10 Australian Seats representing the peak ecumenical church bodies, church-based aid and development consortiums, First Nation Australians, the Pacific Diaspora and DFAT. Collectively we're acting together to help people affected by displacement in the region to have a safe place to belong.

2023/24 highlights

- 29 members of the PCPAN Network from the Pacific and Australia attended the PCPAN Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, 19-21 March 2024.
- Act for Peace, National Council of Churches Australia (NCCA) and Pacific Council of Churches (PCC) successfully won a new PCPAN grant for FY25 to design the next phase of PCPAN.



Change strategy 3: Transforming the system

ADVOCATE FOR A RADICALLY DIFFERENT RESPONSE TO THE DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

This change strategy involves the following:

- Learning from displaced people, forming broad networks, and standing together for collective influence.
- Influencing regional, national, and global authorities to share responsibility, resources, and power equitably, and act on climate and conflicts.

Changing the system doesn't happen overnight, but through long-term partnerships and commitment to advocacy, transformation is possible.

We are committed to confronting human injustices and advocating for systemic change to address the issues that fuel displacement.

Over the past year, this focus has seen Act for Peace strengthen our networks and partnerships and implement programs across regions and partners to maximise outcomes and build on learnings.

ANTICIPATORY ACTION

When a disaster hits a community, their readiness to respond in an effective and timely way is critical to not only saving lives and livelihoods, but also to recovery. Anticipatory Action (AA) is an innovative model of early action to support disaster risk reduction. AA helps transform the system by broadening our networks and standing together for collective impact on displacement.

AA involves a series of actions taken to reduce the impact of a disaster before it unfolds, including distributing emergency cash and essential items to communities to alleviate loss and suffering and support effective disaster response.

In 2024 three AA pilot programs were undertaken – with Christian Aid (CA) in Bangladesh, with Church World Service (CWS) in Indonesia, and with Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) in Vanuatu. Another pilot program began the scoping and feasibility process through our partner the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP).

In 2023, CA conducted a planning process that involved mapping vulnerable groups, mapping cyclone shelters, reinforcing disaster management committee structures and considering the feasibility of group cash transfers. They also improved road access to shelters and provided first aid kits and other materials to mitigate the

environmental risks in coastal areas. When Bangladesh experienced a cyclone warning in 2024, CA was able to successfully enact their planned actions.

In Indonesia, CWS conducted a series of community training events, and in Vanuatu, VCC worked with humanitarian actors to develop AA mechanisms at the national level. NCCP in the Philippines began scoping and planning for their AA pilot which will begin in 2025.

In May 2024, 14 colleagues from four partner organisations (NCCP, CA, CWS and VCC) and Act for Peace came together for a shared learning event where they reflected on the integration of traditional knowledge in AA and discussed different approaches to Anticipatory Action in their contexts.

In Indonesia, our long-term partnerships are helping to address climate displacement.



Learning from our work

We regularly monitor and evaluate our projects to measure progress, track efficacy, be transparent and demonstrate results.

This allows us to be accountable to our supporters, partners and the communities we serve, as well as ensuring our work has the greatest impact possible, for communities and individuals affected by displacement.

As well as regular monitoring and evaluation, many of our programs are implemented with an approach that encourages learning across countries, partnerships and programs.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

This year the Forsa program (see page 32) was independently evaluated by the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Study. The evaluation found the program was effective, efficient and sustainable. Overall, a total of 72% of households graduated from the program, exceeding the expected target of 60%.

The program had strong financial management and timely service delivery, resulting in cost-efficient and high-quality interventions and managed to exceed goals within the budget and timeframe available, while serving a larger number of job seekers with lower costs than originally estimated.

Participants received sustainable benefits including, enhanced awareness of sustainable livelihoods options, improved quality of life and diversified income sources.

“Thank you for the opportunity and for putting together this training... this session has truly expanded my knowledge. I’ve picked up a ton of valuable insights that I’m excited to apply.” - Hina Gul Roy, CWSA

WALKING THE TALK

Walking the Talk epitomises Act for Peace’s commitment to strengthening a locally led partnership approach to programming.

Through supporting the strength of partners to amplify the reach and impact of their programs it enables us to live our organisation’s strategy.

This is achieved by:

1. Innovation and learning

Sharing learnings about evidence-based ways of working including the Graduation out of Poverty Approach, Community Based Protection and Anticipatory Action. We also learnt alongside our partners on topics such as gender equality, social inclusion and disability inclusion.

2. Agility and resilience in crisis

Supporting partners to address climate displacement risks through community-led solutions to strengthen disaster preparedness and resilience.

3. Resourcing locally led initiatives

Supporting partners to seek new and diversified funding opportunities and empowering them to take the lead in grant proposals, for their sustainable futures.

4. Meaningful participation and leadership

Conducting locally led research on meaningful participation and leadership and sharing the learnings of the research to have a broader impact.



Act for Peace staff and partners attending the Regional Humanitarian Conference in Bangkok, 11-13 December 2023.

2023/24 highlights

- 14 participants from four partner organisations and Act for Peace attended a shared Anticipatory Action (AA) learning event. Partners from Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vanuatu shared their experiences with AA and partners discussed learnings from program design, responding to ‘triggers’ for action, preparedness and planning for natural disasters.
- 29 Act for Peace and partner staff members attended disability inclusion training.
- Five people from five partner organisations were supported to attend the Regional Humanitarian Conference co-hosted by our partner Community World Service Asia (CWSA). This event included a workshop on climate-induced planned relocations facilitated by Act for Peace and a side event on Civic Space facilitated by CWSA. Participants were encouraged to think in new ways about addressing challenges and disasters, to advocate for context-specific solutions and to change the dimension of humanitarian action.
- Act for Peace developed a new strategy in consultations with communities and local partners to address the challenge of forced displacement due to climate change with the support of the Humanitarian Advisory Group. The new Climate Displacement Strategy 2024-2030 will become a key tool to guide priorities for policy, development, advocacy and programming to help affected communities.
- Business development support was provided to five partners: DSPR Jordan were supported to create a business development plan and identify key donors and priority investment areas; VCC was supported to apply for Canadian Government grant opportunities; Myanmar Council of Churches was supported to submit for a Direct Aid Grant proposal; OfERR Ceylon was supported to send a representative to a Sydney-based Impact Investment Conference to learn about emerging social impact financing; and DICAC Ethiopia was supported to successfully apply for grant funding from the Netherlands Government.
- To address the historic marginalisation of refugees, Act for Peace, the Kador Centre for Refugee Law and the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees teamed up to advocate for a change in international law to recognise refugees’ right to meaningful participation and leadership.



Our supporters


Our supporters have continued to partner with us in 2023/24 in caring for humankind.

Kind-hearted individuals, churches, schools and organisations continued to give, fundraise, campaign, and act for peace for those who needed it most.

This generosity has helped provide essential support to people who've had to flee their homes in search of safety.

 **19,657** supporters, churches, organisations and schools took action through Act for Peace this year.

 **\$4,523,624** given in donations and bequests to support communities around the world.

 **28,166** generous gifts recieved.

CHURCHES ACTING FOR PEACE

This past Christmas, thousands of compassionate Christians united for the 74th annual Christmas Bowl. Across Australia, people came together through church services and events and gave generously to provide life-changing support to people in urgent need around the world.

Through this powerful action, they raised almost \$1.8 million and showed refugees they are not alone or forgotten on their journey to finding a safe place to belong. Thank you to all the churches, individuals and community groups who took part!



Act for Peace staff member Stephanie Lenert sharing about the Christmas Bowl's impact at St Michael's Uniting Church in Melbourne.

HELPING TO CREATE A FUTURE WHERE EVERYONE HAS A SAFE PLACE TO BELONG

Nominating a gift in your Will provides a special opportunity for people to leave a legacy long into the future. A legacy of generosity and hope where families are helping create a world where everyone has a safe place to belong.

This past year, we have been deeply honoured by the incredible generosity of those who continue to make a long-lasting impact to help people who are displaced regain the peace that having a safe place to call home brings.

We are incredibly grateful to the following individuals and their families who not only supported the work of Act for Peace during their lifetimes but are continuing their legacies to care for humankind and act for peace in the world.

- Valda Williams
- Walter Prentice
- Kevin Bray
- Denis Klein
- H T Noske Estate as managed by Equity Trustees

FUNDRAISING YOUR WAY AT ACT FOR PEACE

Whether it's a birthday, personal challenge, a gift in memory, or an event, Act for Peace's supporters showed there's no limit in their creativity to fundraising in their own way for Act for Peace.

One of our incredible supporters, Craig Nielsen, completed a journey of a lifetime, spending three months walking over 2,000 kilometres from Parliament House Perth in Western Australia to Parliament House Adelaide in South Australia.

Craig embarked on the gruelling journey across the Nullarbor to bring awareness of the Palestinian struggle for peace and justice in the Middle East and to raise much-need funds for people in Gaza.

As Craig ascended the steps of Parliament House in Adelaide, his weary legs stumbled up the stairs due to exhaustion.

But he was buoyed by the claps and cheers from a massive crowd who turned out for the 20th rally for Palestinian human rights.

We're so inspired by Craig's perseverance and incredible commitment to creating a world where everyone has a safe place to belong!

"I thought so much of how people in Gaza were going through something that seems to have no end.

The fact is that my walk ended. Their nightmare still hasn't."

- Craig, on the steps of Parliament House.





Institutional donors

Act for Peace receives vital financial support from a range of institutional donors, which makes it possible for us to work together to reduce displacement and create a world where people uprooted by conflict and disaster have a safe place to belong.

Each year the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provides registered agencies, including Act for Peace, with a 'matched grant' under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP). This grant leverages the gifts provided by our generous supporters and represents strong linkages between the Australian government, our supporters and the work of our partners overseas. Through this grant and our supporters' gifts, in FY24 we were able to strengthen outcomes for communities in Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Pakistan, India, Thailand-Myanmar Border, Indonesia, the Philippines and Jordan.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the Global Mission Partners (GMP) in their contributions to the Australian NGO Cooperation Program in Zimbabwe that augmented our strategic partnership with The Charitable Foundation, where we were able to leverage pooled and efficient funding to deliver transformational agriculture

and livelihoods programs with our partner Christian Care (CC). We are proud to sustain our collaboration and shared commitment with the Australian Department of Home Affairs to deliver locally led solutions and refugee programs with our partner OfERR, supporting return and reintegration initiatives for Tamil refugees considering or preparing to return to Sri Lanka after the war.

Act for Peace is committed to the principles and the practice of humanitarian coordination and cooperation. We recognise the strength of partnership and sharing good practice and learning. Through our collaboration with The Church Agencies Network – Disaster Operations (CAN DO) we delivered vital humanitarian preparedness and response in the Pacific, through DFAT's Australian Humanitarian Partnership.

We also acknowledge the support of USAID in our work with the Tonga National Council of Churches as we continue to work together to increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in planning and responding to natural disasters and build the resilience of communities in Tonga.

THANK YOU TO OUR INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

- Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian NGO Cooperation Program, Australian Humanitarian Partnership and the Office of the Pacific
- Australia's Department of Home Affairs
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
- The Charitable Foundation
- Transform Aid International
- Global Mission Partners
- Jan de Voogd Peace Fund
- France's Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs



The team from our local partner in Ethiopia – the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission.



Financial summary

In 2023/24, Act for Peace continued to prioritise the effective management of our finances as a vital resource for fulfilling our mission.

Whilst recording an operating deficit of \$312K for FY24, this is less than half of the deficit incurred in FY23 and demonstrates our commitment to improve our sustainability and reduce costs. The shortfall was covered by our retained earnings. The rising costs of doing business, combined with significant changes in our operational landscape, and a growing proportion of funds being designated for specific projects and programs, prompted the Board to explore strategies for achieving financial sustainability in the medium to long term.

In order to reduce our continued budget deficit and improve our sustainability a decision was made to resize and reset the organisation, while maximising ongoing impact in pursuit of Act for Peace's charitable purpose and strategy. The most significant cost lever related to in-Australia costs which largely consist of salaries. A restructure occurred resulting in a reduction of 10 staff due to their positions becoming redundant. We are continuing the journey to improve our sustainability and reduce our deficit, and are now exploring new business opportunities and new operating models.

We continue to work ecumenically with trusted partners to deliver locally-led programs. We remain grateful for the continued engagement of our supporters and institutional donors who partner with us to ensure that the ever-increasing number of people affected by forced displacement have a safe place to belong.

INCOME

Overall total revenue was down 25% compared to FY23.

Public fundraising income was down 21% compared to FY23. Whilst we had strong support from the public for emergency responses including the Gaza appeal raising \$641K, it significantly reduced from the emergency funds raised in FY23 of \$1.37 million. The other most notable reduction was for our annual Ration Challenge. Due to the

declining performance of the Ration Challenge event with the lifecycle of this product, the decision was made to end the primary Ration Challenge campaign, focusing on the Schools Challenge whilst testing into the youth group space. In FY24 we saw some growth in our Gift for Peace program and our Bequest program.

Act for Peace is a recipient of the annual Australian NGO Co-operation Program (ANCP) grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and received a grant from DFAT for Pacific Church Partnership Advisory Network (PCPAN). There was a slight decrease of funding from DFAT in FY24 by 4.3% to \$2.27 million. Our other Australian grant income in FY24 represented the grants from the Australian Department of Home Affairs and Australian Humanitarian Partnership Program via Church Agency Network Disaster Operation. Our grants from other Australian and overseas institutional donors including USAID decreased in total by 36% to \$2.76 million.

Act for Peace recognised a loss in other comprehensive income from property revaluation.

EXPENSES

Overall, total expenditure decreased by 28% compared to FY23.

Reduced grant income led to reduced funding for overseas projects and program support costs by 32.6% compared to FY23 to \$6.35 million.

Total fundraising costs decreased by 29.8% compared to FY23 to \$1.31 million mainly due to the strategic decision to focus on core business and savings achieved across most of the fundraising channels.

The Accountability and Administration costs increased by 5.6% compared to FY23 due to the restructure and redundancy payouts in FY24.

Act for Peace managed the internal costs tightly to work within the planned budget despite the decrease in revenue and maintained adequate support to our overseas partners through funding to overseas projects and programs.

PROJECT FUNDING BY CONTINENT

AFRICA			
Country	Partner(s)	Project(s)	Amount \$
Ethiopia	1	1	127,007.83
Kenya	1	2	113,068.00
Zimbabwe	2	2	706,750.00
TOTAL			946,825.83

MIDDLE EAST			
Country	Partner(s)	Project(s)	Amount \$
Gaza	1	2	77,646.63
Jordan	2	2	276,871.17
Palestine	1	1	9,605.40
TOTAL			364,123.20

GLOBAL			
Country	Partner(s)	Project(s)	Amount \$
Global	Multiple	1	326,762.05
TOTAL			326,762.05

ASIA			
Country	Partner(s)	Project(s)	Amount \$
Afghanistan	1	2	102,934.68
India	1	2	452,593.99
Indonesia	1	1	174,933.00
Myanmar	1	1	34,051.00
Pakistan	1	1	304,577.00
Philippines	1	1	160,000.00
Sri Lanka	1	1	715,835.58
Thailand	1	1	164,020.00
Timor Leste	1	2	17,841.00
TOTAL			2,126,786.25

PACIFIC			
Country	Partner(s)	Project(s)	Amount \$
Pacific Regional	1	1	5,588.56
Tonga	1	2	539,687.30
Vanuatu	1	4	739,365.36
TOTAL			1,284,641.22

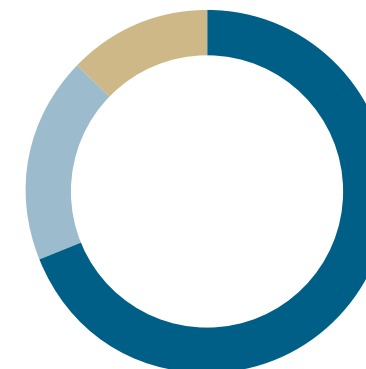
Resources are essential for building strong infrastructure and increasing our effectiveness and impact for people around the world who have been uprooted by conflict and disaster.

In the past financial year, 69.1% of Act for Peace's expenditure was used on our programs, advocacy, and community education work, while 18.39%

was spent on accountability and administration to ensure our programs and funds are used as effectively as possible, and fundraising made up 12.51% of our expenditure. For reference, in FY24 every \$1 Act for Peace spent on fundraising, we raised \$3.49 – resulting in more funds for programs to help the communities we serve.

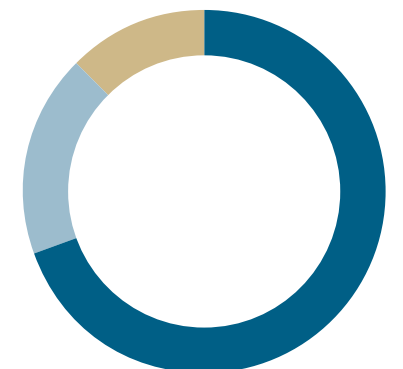
TOTAL EXPENDITURE

OUR WORK 69.1%
ACCOUNTABILITY & ADMIN 18.39%
FUNDRAISING 12.51%



EXPENDITURE ON PROGRAMS

OVERSEAS PROGRAMS 69.68%
PROGRAM SUPPORT 17.93%
COMMUNITY EDUCATION 12.39%





STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2024

REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME	Note	12 months to 30 June 2024 (\$)	12 months to 30 June 2023 (\$)
Grants revenue from contracts			
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade		2,274,124	2,377,168
Other Australian		2,497,594	3,385,000
Other Overseas		262,661	929,589
Donations and Gifts			
Monetary		4,332,458	5,566,642
Non-monetary		55,382	174,260
Bequests and Legacies		195,845	56,576
Commercial Activities Income		-	-
Investment Income (Loss)		534,594	973,170
Other Income		19,778	48,106
Revenue for International Political or Religious Adherence Promotion Programs		-	-
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME		10,172,436	13,510,512
EXPENDITURE			
International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure			
International Programs			
Funds to International Programs	12	5,049,139	7,831,720
Program Support Costs		1,298,818	1,589,986
		6,347,957	9,421,706
Community Education		897,736	1,340,202
Fundraising Costs			
Public		1,257,550	1,801,217
Governments, multilateral and private		54,170	66,670
		1,311,719	1,867,887
Accountability and Administration		1,872,597	1,772,698
Non-Monetary Expenditure		55,382	174,260
Total International Aid and Development Programs Expenditure		10,485,390	14,576,754
International Political or Religious Adherence Promotion Programs Expenditure		-	-
Domestic Projects Expenditure		-	-
Commercial Activities Expenditure		-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		10,485,390	14,576,754
EXCESS/(SHORTFALL) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE		(312,954)	(1,066,242)
Other Comprehensive Income			
Property Valuation		(179,125)	-
Total Other Comprehensive Income/(Loss)		(179,125)	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (LOSS)		(492,079)	(1,066,242)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 30 JUNE 2024

ASSETS	Note	12 months to 30 June 2024 (\$)	12 months to 30 June 2023 (\$)
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash equivalents	2	2,381,700	1,063,272
Trade and other Receivables	3	1,953,035	761,016
Other Financial Assets – (Payable to) Receivable from NCCA	4	4,103	31,482
Held for Sale	5	1,100,000	1,400,000
Total Current Assets		5,438,838	3,255,770
Non Current Assets			
Other Financial Assets	6	5,508,612	8,695,894
Property, Plant and Equipment	7	2,647,757	2,562,621
Total Non Current Assets		8,156,369	11,258,515
TOTAL ASSETS		13,595,207	14,514,285
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables	8	473,456	1,356,263
Contract Liabilities	9	2,478,461	1,652,628
Provisions	10	534,835	651,786
Total Current Liabilities		3,486,752	3,660,678
Non Current Liabilities			
Provisions	10	-	253,073
Total Non Current Liabilities		-	253,073
TOTAL LIABILITIES		3,486,752	3,913,750
NET ASSETS		10,108,456	10,600,535
EQUITY			
Reserves	11	9,382,711	9,554,948
Retained Earnings		725,745	1,045,587
TOTAL EQUITY		10,108,456	10,600,535

During the financial year, Act for Peace had no transactions in the Political or Religious Adherence Promotion Programs Category. The statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the Notes to and forming part of the accounts.

The Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the Notes to and forming part of the accounts.

The financial statements have been taken from the Act for Peace audited Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024. The full report is available on our website at actforpeace.org.au.



Directors' declaration

In accordance with a resolution of the Directors, the Directors of Act for Peace Ltd declare that:

- a) the attached financial statements and notes comply with the Corporations Act 2001, the Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and associated regulations, the Corporations Regulations 2001 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements;
- b) the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and the attached financial statements and notes give a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- c) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

We also report that:

- d) the financial statements show a true and fair view of the financial results of fundraising appeals for the year ended 30 June 2024 as required by the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991;
- e) the accounting and associated records of Act for Peace Ltd have been kept in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Regulations for the year ended 30 June 2024;
- f) money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year have been properly accounted for and applied in accordance with the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Regulation; and
- g) this declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the directors and is signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022.

For and on behalf of the Board

Leigh Cleave (Chair, Board of Directors)

Paul Nichols (Treasurer)

Dated this 17th day of October, 2024.



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Australia

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of Act for Peace Ltd

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Act for Peace Ltd (the registered entity), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial report, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the responsible entities' declaration.

In our opinion the accompanying financial report of Act for Peace Ltd, is in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- (i) Giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (ii) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2022*.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the registered entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's *APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

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Responsibilities of responsible entities for the Financial Report

The responsible entities of the registered entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards - Simplified Disclosures and the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as the responsible entities determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, responsible entities are responsible for assessing the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible entities either intends to liquidate the registered entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The responsible entities of the registered entity are responsible for overseeing the registered entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website (<http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>) at:

http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

BDO Audit Pty Ltd

BDO

Leah Russell
Director

Sydney, 21 October 2024



actalliance



Act for Peace is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The code is a voluntary, self-regulatory sector code of good practice. It aims to improve international development outcomes and increase stakeholder trust by improving the transparency and accountability of signatory organisations. Act for Peace is committed to full adherence to this Code. The ACFID Code of Conduct offers a mechanism to address concerns relating to signatories' conduct. Complaints against a signatory agency may be initiated by any member of the public and lodged with the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee.

More information about the ACFID Code of Conduct can be obtained from Act for Peace and from ACFID at: Website: www.acfid.asn.au/content/complaints
Email: acfid@acfid.asn.au Ph: +61 2 6285 1816



Act for Peace gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Act for Peace gratefully acknowledges funding from the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs for our Sri Lanka project.

Cover image: Negusnesh (left), community mentor through the Tesfa (Hope) program, with her mentee Tsehay* and her son in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Genaye Eshetu / Act for Peace

ACT FOR PEACE

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE *actalliance*

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