

# ACT FOR PEACE

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## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FY2022-2026

*“After we came home,  
I experienced boundless  
joy. Meeting my parents  
and other relatives,  
returning to our own house,  
our own country.”* DANIYEL\*

The international humanitarian agency of the National  
Council of Churches in Australia | ABN: 86 619 970 188

**ACT FOR PEACE**  
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
THROUGH THE **actalliance**



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On the cover: Daniyel\* fled Sri Lanka when he was 20 years old. The conflict had gotten so bad he feared being killed. He lived in a refugee camp in India for 12 years where he met his wife and his four children were born.

Act for Peace's partner, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees' Rehabilitation (OfERR), helps Sri Lankan refugees like Daniyel rebuild their lives in the home they've dreamed of for so long. Daniyel was able to return home to Sri Lanka with his young family, where he works as a fisherman and is able to earn his own income.

Act for Peace acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise 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.

Cover image: Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

\*Names throughout this document have been changed for safety reasons.

*"I was really sad to leave, it was really, really hard. It was like I took one heart with me because my children were with me, but one heart I left at home."*

JOURY\*

Joury\* and her family fled from the war in Syria to Jordan. Life there is hard and Joury can't afford to buy basic things for her children. Our local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), supports families like Joury's with urgently needed food rations, household items and medical care.





# WHY WE'RE HERE



Jamtoli refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh. The Rohingya crisis is an example of how division and othering is leading to more of us being forced from our homes each year. The camp is home to over 50,000 Rohingya people who've fled violence and persecution in Myanmar.

Act for Peace's local partner, Christian Aid, is providing life-saving assistance including access to sanitation facilities, COVID-19 preventative hygiene kits and medical care to people in the camps.

Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

**Founded by the Australian churches, and inspired by the example of Jesus, we are a diverse collection of churches, Christians and many other people, united by the belief that we are all human, and we should love our neighbours as ourselves.**

Yet right now, we live in a world of 'us' and 'them'. Divisions are deepening, conflicts are escalating, and climate inaction is placing lives in peril.

It means every day, more of us around the world are forced from our homes by violent conflict and disaster.

And when the world should be opening its arms, it's turning its back. Rejected and exposed in a divided world, people displaced by conflict or disaster are caught in a devastating limbo, facing restrictions and barriers at every turn as they seek safety and strive to rebuild their lives.

We must act now. Until we stand together, share resources and heal the divisions that drive people from their homes, more and more of us will be uprooted and abandoned.

**At the heart of our work is a powerful conviction: to create a just and peaceful society, we must work together. It's both the right thing to do, and the only thing that will work.**

This is why Act for Peace exists. To bridge cultural, political and geographical divides, to back displaced people to reclaim control of their lives and meet urgent needs. To create, together, a world where people uprooted by conflict and disaster have a place to belong. To act, together, 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.

*“After coming to Sri Lanka, I wasn’t afraid of anything. I could now show my children our own land, I could now show them a way. With their own land, they can do something.”* CHALANI\*

Chalani\*, Eleesha\* and Enosh\* (L-R) outside their family home in Sri Lanka. Enosh fled from the civil war in Sri Lanka to a refugee camp in India in 1990. There he met and married Chalani and they had four children. After almost 20 years, they were able to return home to Sri Lanka and settle back on their family land with support from our partner, OfERR.

OfERR assisted them in obtaining documentation and services, as well as livelihood training, so that they could finally make Sri Lanka home again. Enosh now works as a labourer and Chalani looks after their goats and vegetable garden, to supplement their food security and income.







## OUR STORY

**For more than 70 years, Act for Peace has brought people together to create a more just and peaceful world.**

As the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia we believe in a world where everyone belongs, and that to get there, we must work together. It's both the right thing to do, and the only thing that will work.

We were founded in 1948, by the then Australian Council for the World Council of Churches, to provide urgently needed aid to refugees and others suffering in Europe from the horrors of the Second World War. Leading this work was a Methodist minister from Victoria, Rev. Frank Byatt. His mission was to unify Australian Christians of all traditions to work together to put the word of the Gospel into action.

**“The evangel is complete only when the action of the Gospel matches the message of the gospel.”**

REV. FRANK BYATT, 1954.

In 1949 Rev. Byatt encouraged people to put an empty bowl on their Christmas dinner tables and to place a generous gift in it to “share your good dinner with hungry children in other lands”. Thus began the visionary Christmas Bowl appeal which is now supported each year by tens of thousands of people from a wide range of denominations.

Since these humble beginnings, our work has expanded in both reach and impact through projects with local partners, and advocacy with governments and others with power. In 2008, our name changed to Act for Peace, and today we work to reduce forced displacement across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

Working with others remains core to our DNA. We act to support uprooted people in their role as leaders, work in solidarity with long-term local partners, and leverage the strengths and reach of the global network of local ecumenical agencies of which we are a part. We're joined by thousands of churches and tens of thousands of other members of the public in Australia who share our values.

## 31st CHRISTMAS BOWL APPEAL

Sharing and the story of the feeding of the five thousand with 5 small barley loaves and two fishes was the theme of the 1980 Christmas Bowl Appeal. On November 26, the appeal was launched nationally with events in public places in all capital cities. Leaders from the 12 ACC member churches joined in launching this unique ecumenical appeal.

Right: The launching in the Perth Hay St. Mall.

Below: 'Feeding the 5000' in the Brisbane City Square and lower left: Children join in the sharing in Sydney Square.



And we work collaboratively as a member of local, regional and global networks and alliances, faith based and other, including the ACT Alliance, the Australian Council for International Development, the Australian Church Agency Network, and others such as the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, Micah Australia and the Emergency Action Alliance; all working together to combine resources, share expertise, advocate to governments and achieve greater impact.

Looking forward, this strategy aims to complement the knowledge, skills and expertise of displaced people and our local partners; respond to the growing global displacement crisis; and build on Act for Peace's unique expertise in order to make the most significant impact we can in the next five years.

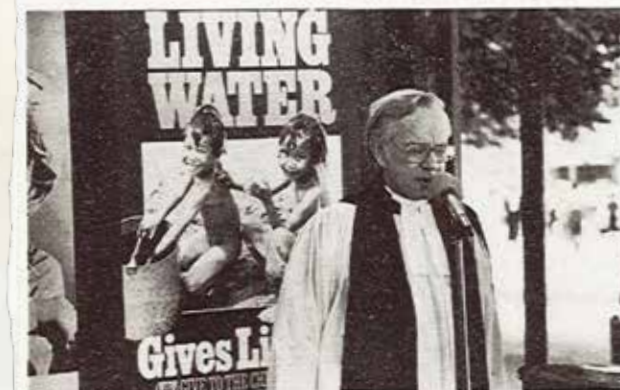
To do this we have sharpened our focus from working with all people affected by conflict and disaster to communities affected by displacement specifically. We have deepened our commitment to raising the voices of uprooted people and backing their leaders to scale up their impact. And we are increasing our efforts to find permanent solutions to, and address the underlying causes of, displacement by working collaboratively with others to build unity and transform unjust systems.

Delivering our strategy will require new ways of working, new ways of engaging civil society and resourcing our work and shifts in our role as we work together to ensure that everyone has a safe place to belong.

## 1984 Christmas Bowl



Intermission at the Marian Street Theatre's production of Blythe Spirit where the Turramurra Uniting Church organised a theatre party for The Christmas Bowl which raised over \$1,000. Pictured left to right are Rev. Don Erickson, Val Pitman, Margaret Ford, Jan Martin, Noelia Allering. Perhaps other parishes could arrange similar fund-raising events!



Dean Lance Shilton of St. Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney at the N.S.W. launching of The Christmas Bowl in Sydney. Preacher at the launching service on November 23, was John Denton.

From humble beginnings, Act for Peace has been bringing people together to create a more just and peaceful world for over 70 years. Clockwise from top left: Christmas Bowl founder Rev. Frank Byatt pictured with his family; The Christmas Bowl featured in the December 1983 edition of In Unity; The Christmas Bowl in the news, In Unity, March 1981.



# 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, NIV)

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.

Partnership remains integral to our strategy, based on our foundational Christian belief, and strong evidence from social science, that lasting peace can only be secured when people work together.

Janet Cousens, CEO of Act for Peace, is pictured here in Jamtoli refugee camp, Bangladesh, with Jamila\*.



*“This new strategy responds to one of the greatest crises of our times – forced displacement due to conflict and disaster, including climate change. It is driven by our core beliefs that all people are created equal and should be treated this way, and that people most affected by crises must be recognised as leaders in responding.”*

JANET COUSENS, CEO, ACT FOR PEACE



# 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.

Than\* fled to Thailand from Myanmar as a child, when his village was burned to the ground by the Burmese army.

Our local partner, The Border Consortium, supports refugees like Than through food assistance, leadership training to improve camp governance, and livelihoods training to help refugees earn an income - backing them until they can finally one day return home.





# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



**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.

**OUR STRENGTH:** 70 years' experience of working ecumenically with trusted partners to deliver locally-led protection policy, advocacy and programs.



**WHO WE ARE:** The international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

**OUR BELIEFS:** Working Together, Peace and Justice, People and Planet.

**OUR VALUES:** Humility, Courage, Creativity and Integrity.

## WHAT WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS

*(Our Goals)*

### Safety in Exile

*People live in safety, with dignity, while displaced.*

Displaced people:

- Access critical physical and emotional support (e.g. food, water, medicine, psychological support).
- Have control over their lives, leading activities that ensure their safety, dignity and rights (e.g. set-up businesses, access education and set-up community safety committees).
- Advocate for change and help fix systems that cause violence, exclusion or abuse (e.g. participate in decision-making forums, organise rallies).

### A Place to Belong

*Uprooted people find a permanent place to belong.*

- Uprooted people lead initiatives that help build a safe, permanent future (e.g. returned refugees provide each other with practical support to reintegrate after conflict).
- Countries fairly share responsibility for supporting survivors of displacement (e.g. governments provide asylum and services).

### Reduced Displacement

*Fewer people are forced to flee their homes.*

- Communities lead initiatives to reduce the impact of disasters and other displacement drivers (e.g. drought-resistant farming, cyclone preparedness training).
- Governments and public take strong action to reduce conflict and climate-driven displacement (e.g. Australian Government uses its influence to resolve conflicts, Australian public takes climate action).

## WHY WE'RE NEEDED

*(The Problem We're Tackling)*

We live in a world of 'us' and 'them'. It means every day, more of us are forced from our homes by conflict or disaster.

## HOW WE'RE MAKING IT HAPPEN

*(Our Change Strategies)*

### Backing Displaced People

*Working in solidarity with local partners.*

- 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.

### Building Unity

*Reducing division and creating a more compassionate society.*

- 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 (e.g. by taking the Ration Challenge).

### Transforming the System

*Advocating for a radically different response to the displacement crisis.*

- 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.







Joel Pratley/Act for Peace

## OUR WORLD TODAY

**Right now, conflict has displaced more people than at any time in human history.<sup>1</sup>**

Driven from their homes by violence, persecution, human rights abuses and an increasing number of conflicts, in 2020 over 82 million people were displaced within their own country or had fled as refugees to another country to seek safety.<sup>2</sup> The sheer scale and complexity of the global displacement crisis today poses one of the greatest challenges in human history.

Behind the numbers lies a human tragedy: people like you and me who, through no fault of their own are forced to flee, separated from family and community, stripped of the authority they had over their lives, of homes, lands and livelihoods. People forced to live-out a temporary existence, sometimes for decades, on the fringes of society in camps for refugees or internally displaced people, or, increasingly, in urban and rural areas.

In 2020 alone, another 30 million people were displaced by natural disasters, including cyclones and floods, a figure that continues to rise each year as the impact of climate change increases.<sup>3</sup> While these disasters are considered 'natural events' they are often the result of human failings; major corporations who lack respect for the environment, and governments who fail to curb carbon emissions, and invest in disaster preparedness and response and build climate resilient infrastructure.

Climate change is one of the gravest crises of our time and displacement is one of its most devastating consequences. Refugees, internally displaced people and those who are stateless<sup>4</sup> are often on the frontlines of the climate emergency, alongside those of us living in environments affected by sudden disasters or the slow but devastating effects of climate change. Many live in climate 'hotspots' and lack the resources to adapt to an increasingly hostile environment. The domino effect of disaster upon disaster often leaves already impoverished communities no time to recover.

The impact of displacement is disproportionately felt by many lower-income nations struggling to care for their own communities due to conflict within their own borders, the damaging impact of disasters, and the economic and health crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### OUR GLOBAL HUMANITY

At the heart of today's global displacement crisis lies a story of people who are of equal value to ourselves, but often not treated that way; people who want to live their lives in safety, raise their families with dignity, contribute to society, be welcomed, and feel like they have a place to belong. Doctors, teachers, students, farmers, business owners, parents and grandparents who have been uprooted by conflict and disaster. People with skills, knowledge and faith.

**It is imperative that we recognise their humanity and collaborate together to address this injustice.**

Some receive the heartfelt welcome of host communities, the protection of governments who generously host them, and experience the compassion of those around the world who share their resources and join them in taking action. Others are shunned, denied aid and resources to adapt and recover, with governments restricting their movements and access to work, housing, healthcare and education. Some are used as scapegoats for political gain.

Throughout history people have migrated. It's part of what it means to be human; to explore the world and to seek opportunities. It's also critical for our survival – being able to escape harm's way and find a safe place to belong. Limiting the mobility of displaced people and their ability to help themselves, whether by restricting resources, preventing them seeking asylum or by robbing them of the opportunities to rebuild their lives, is unjust.

While some of us prioritise the wellbeing of others; for some the politics of fear, greed and power get in the way, sustaining conflict, allowing inequality to grow, and providing justification for controlling or turning away those in need.

Globally, the number of people displaced is increasing but solutions to end displacement are not being found fast enough, leaving tens of millions in limbo without a permanent solution. The drivers of the displacement crisis are complex, interconnected, and exist at local, national and global levels. Our strategy responds with three overarching goals to provide safety in exile, prevent further displacement and secure permanent solutions. These goals integrate with three change strategies, and progress in one of our change strategies will have an impact on all three of our goals.

Peace is at stake, and we have before us a test that will define the generations to come. We believe we can and must back those who are forcibly displaced, share responsibility for strangers and our neighbours, build unity and work together for the common good. Lasting peace depends on our commitment to work together for justice in love, for one another.

**This is a crisis we can do something about.**



Fares, Executive Director of our local partner in Jordan, DSPR, with food rations provided to Syrian refugee families. DSPR also supports refugees with access to hygiene kits, psychosocial care, and livelihood training so they can earn an income.

**"It's so important to welcome refugees as they have no other place to go. This includes providing people with practical support, as well as meeting their emotional needs. The most important thing is that people know you are standing beside them during their darkest hour."**

**FARES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DSPR, OUR LOCAL PARTNER IN JORDAN**

1. 2020 is the 19th year in a row that conflict-induced displacement has increased. UNHCR Global Trends in 2020: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/figures-at-a-glance.html> 2. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/climate-change-and-disasters.html> 3. On average, 24 million people were displaced each year between 2008 and 2020 according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. 4. A stateless person is person who is not recognised as a citizen by any country.



# WHAT WE'RE WORKING TOWARDS (OUR GOALS)



Faith\* is a Somali refugee living with her family in Addis Ababa having fled violent conflict in her homeland. She receives help with medical care from our local partner, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC). DICAC supports the most marginalised urban refugees to live with safety and dignity, including providing care for women and girls who have survived gender-based violence, for people living with chronic illness or disability, and for those who need specialised medical care.

*"I hope – not for me only,  
but for all refugees – that [people]  
will consider our condition and  
see us with kind eyes."* FAITH\*

Martha Tadese/Act for Peace

## 1. SAFETY IN EXILE

**Every person who is forcibly displaced should be able to live in safety, with dignity and respect for their rights.**

Globally, as the number of people forcibly displaced rises, the prospect of safe and lasting outcomes are falling. More refugees, and people displaced within their own country, are finding themselves highly vulnerable while trying to survive in camps, or on their own in urban or rural environments. They may be separated from family and community, without leaders or a government to protect them, and vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Most require urgent humanitarian assistance in the form of food, water, shelter and access to healthcare. They also need protection, particularly if exposed to gender-based violence, child abuse, neglect, or harassment, intimidation and violence from within and between different communities, and from armed groups and authoritarian governments.

Countries and communities which host refugees and internally displaced people are often overwhelmed and unable to provide emergency relief services without effective international support. Act for Peace joins with others to support immediate emergency response, saving lives and alleviating suffering. We partner with local agencies, collaborating with their efforts to support uprooted people seeking assistance; local partners are on the ground for the long term and are best positioned to understand the needs of the community around them.

When people begin to recover from the immediate shock of displacement, access to education, psychosocial support, systems for coordination, camp management, and governance become priorities. People experiencing displacement must be meaningfully engaged in decision making and should lead efforts with their community leaders, to address their own needs. Doing so recognises their humanity, benefits their recovery by providing an opportunity to regain control over their lives, and provides the dignity that comes with being more self-reliant. People experiencing

displacement also best understand their own needs and are motivated to help themselves so should play an active role in designing and delivering projects aimed at helping them.

In large-scale displacement situations, host governments – who are often affected by conflict and poverty themselves – often turn-back refugees seeking asylum at their borders, confine refugees to remote camps, or prevent refugees in camps and urban areas from accessing work, healthcare, education and other services. Access to work, education and healthcare may be restricted to deter other arrivals or to prevent government services from being overwhelmed. Those without rights or citizenship in a host country are unlikely to be able to fully integrate. These restrictions are the root cause of much of the harm experienced by uprooted people after the initial injustice of being forced to leave their homes.

### Our Priorities:

- Resourcing local partners providing life-saving emergency support to displacement affected communities to meet basic needs like food, clean water, health and psychosocial support.
- Working alongside displaced people and those at risk of displacement to support community-based and locally-led efforts to reduce violence, exploitation and other human rights abuses.
- Advocating for access to government services for displaced people, and for governments to provide asylum, protection, and remove harmful restrictions on displaced people.
- Collaborating with local partners and other organisations to strengthen the self-reliance of vulnerable displaced people, including people living in extreme poverty and with disabilities.



Our partner, OfERR, helps Sri Lankan refugees like Daniyel\* and his family with preparing to return home from India; to get the documents they need to prove their identity, reclaim their land, and access essential government services like hospitals and schools, and with livelihoods support once they return, so that they can build their new life together.



Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

*“When we didn’t know what to do and how to cross our hurdles, OfERR pulled me up by my hand. Because of that help, me, my wife and our four children are well settled.”* DANIYEL\*

## 2. A PLACE TO BELONG

**For uprooted people, governments recognise three main ‘durable’ solutions; to return home, integrate into the host community, or resettle elsewhere.**

For most displaced people, the preferred solution is to return home. For many displaced by disasters, that is possible, but support is needed for post disaster recovery and rebuilding. For refugees and people internally displaced by conflict, it’s a different story.

Conflict and persecution may persist, so returning home may not be possible. Whilst some host countries have opened their arms to refugees, many have felt overwhelmed, with governments opting to restrict refugee access to services and resources, and prevent refugees accessing citizenship, often as a way of deterring new arrivals. Effectively, this means displaced people cannot permanently integrate in a host country and face serious restrictions while waiting to return home or find an alternative place to belong.

### Our Priorities:

- Joint advocacy to influence governments, UN agencies and others to expand the choices and solutions available to displaced people.
- Continuing to improve models for refugee return and reintegration, which provide opportunities for refugees to make informed decisions about staying, returning home, or moving elsewhere through analysing risks, challenges and opportunities, and helping refugee better prepare for the future.
- Ensuring opportunities for displaced people, and those at risk of displacement, to meaningfully engage in the development and implementation of solutions.

## 3. REDUCING DISPLACEMENT

**Given people should not be forced to leave their homes in the first place, it is essential to understand the intersecting factors driving displacement and take action to reduce the pressures that compel people to leave their homes.**

Key drivers of forced displacement in conflict and disaster situations include lack of access to basic resources such as food and clean water, environmental degradation and climate change, and lack of government protection from discrimination, oppression, violence, and other human rights abuses.

To prevent whole communities having to move in order to survive in the future, governments must invest more to help communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. In each context, uniquely adapted solutions are required.

### Our Priorities:

- Improve resilience by working with partners and communities in disaster prone areas to better prepare for disasters, and to adapt and/or mitigate the effects of climate change which may drive displacement such as diversifying livelihoods and climate resilient farming.
- Advocate for increased government action to better prepare for, and respond to, disasters and climate change.
- Pressure governments and those with power to address the root causes of displacement such as violence, discrimination, conflict, including inequitable distribution of resources.

Every year, communities in Vanuatu face the threat of tsunamis, cyclones, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Our local partner, the Vanuatu Christian Council, supports church leaders to learn the skills they need to help their communities. When disaster strikes, communities are equipped with life-saving knowledge from disaster planning and cyclone simulation exercises, and know how to access first aid and essential supplies.



Act for Peace



# HOW WE'RE MAKING IT HAPPEN (OUR CHANGE STRATEGY)

## 1. BACKING DISPLACED PEOPLE

Every day, people affected by displacement play extraordinary roles as leaders, counsellors, health workers, educators, organisers, activists, peace negotiators, protection actors, first responders, and ultimately in finding solutions to end their own displacement.

Host communities also play essential roles, providing food, shelter, and access to services. Often, affected communities know what they need most.

We believe that the agency and contribution of uprooted people must be central in all efforts to address the injustice of forced displacement. More importantly, we recognise that for people who are forcibly displaced, being able to regain some measure of control over their lives is essential both for the restoration of their dignity, and as a matter of justice.

Accordingly, we continue to prioritise relationships based on mutuality. In this strategic period we will increase resourcing for initiatives led by people experiencing displacement that specifically increase their ability to influence change at the local, regional or global level. We will review our own role in creating change, ensuring that the way we work helps increase equity for all voices.

We deliberately seek to champion the work of displaced people, get behind the initiatives they launch, ensure their efforts are visible and recognised. This approach will ultimately result in more relevant, effective, and lasting outcomes.

### Our Priorities:

- Resource work that gets behind and supports displaced people's participation and leadership of people affected by forced displacement in developing and delivering short and long-term solutions.
- Collaborate with partners to enhance community efforts to reduce violence, exploitation and human rights abuses for people experiencing displacement.
- Ensuring people with lived experience of displacement inform research and advocacy for stronger systems to protect and assist people impacted by displacement.
- Mobilise churches, supporters, and the Australian public to give and fundraise to increase resources for locally-led initiatives helping displaced people.

*"I practice my medical profession here among the refugees. I am very happy because I am doing my work among my own country people. There is an opportunity to serve my own people and help them to maintain their health."*

DR. NADAREJAM, OFERR,  
OUR LOCAL PARTNER IN INDIA

Dr. Nadarejam was studying medicine in Sri Lanka in 1990 when the civil war broke out and he was forced to flee to India. Whilst living as a refugee in a camp in Tamil Nadu, he joined the medical unit of our local partner, OfERR, and has been working for them ever since. Having completed his medical degree back in Sri Lanka, he works in the camps in India, visiting them regularly to provide medical screening days, home visits and support for pregnant mothers.



Eden is one of thousands of Ration Challenge participants who have raised millions of dollars by being sponsored to eat the exact same food rations that Syrian refugees in Jordan receive for a week. Each year, participants send a powerful message to refugees that they are not alone and by sharing their experience with others they highlight our common humanity and help to create a more compassionate society.





## 2. BUILDING UNITY

**The health of a society is strongly correlated with the level of trust within it. Trust is decreasing in many societies today, and with it comes division, polarisation and a lack of empathy and compassion for the 'other'.**

These attitudinal shifts are enabling decreases in international aid budgets, inadequate sharing of responsibility for the refugee crisis, climate inaction, and in many cases, they are fuelling conflict itself.

As a Christian organisation that promotes unity through churches and Christians working together with others, we believe that lasting peace can be achieved. Achieving lasting peace requires us to respect one another as equal in value, share the strengths we each bring to the table, recognise our inter-connectedness, and work together to break down the inequities that create barriers to achieving justice for all.

It requires us to care for one another as we would care for ourselves. And it requires

us to share what we have so that no one goes without. In short, this vision for unity requires action against discrimination, persecution and fear.

For more than 70 years, Act for Peace has worked ecumenically to establish trust with others through our endeavours to build peace, with justice, for the common good. We work to develop understanding between those of different cultures, faiths and world views, which enhances unity, enables better cooperation, creates the foundations for a just and lasting peace.

When society has more empathy, more understanding, less 'us' and 'them' more people take action and government policies become more humane. In this strategic period, we will continue to create opportunities for people to reduce division and polarisation within their sphere of influence to create a more compassionate society. We will continue to create and contribute to opportunities for multiple actors in society to come together to share what they have with a common focus on ending displacement.

### Our Priorities:

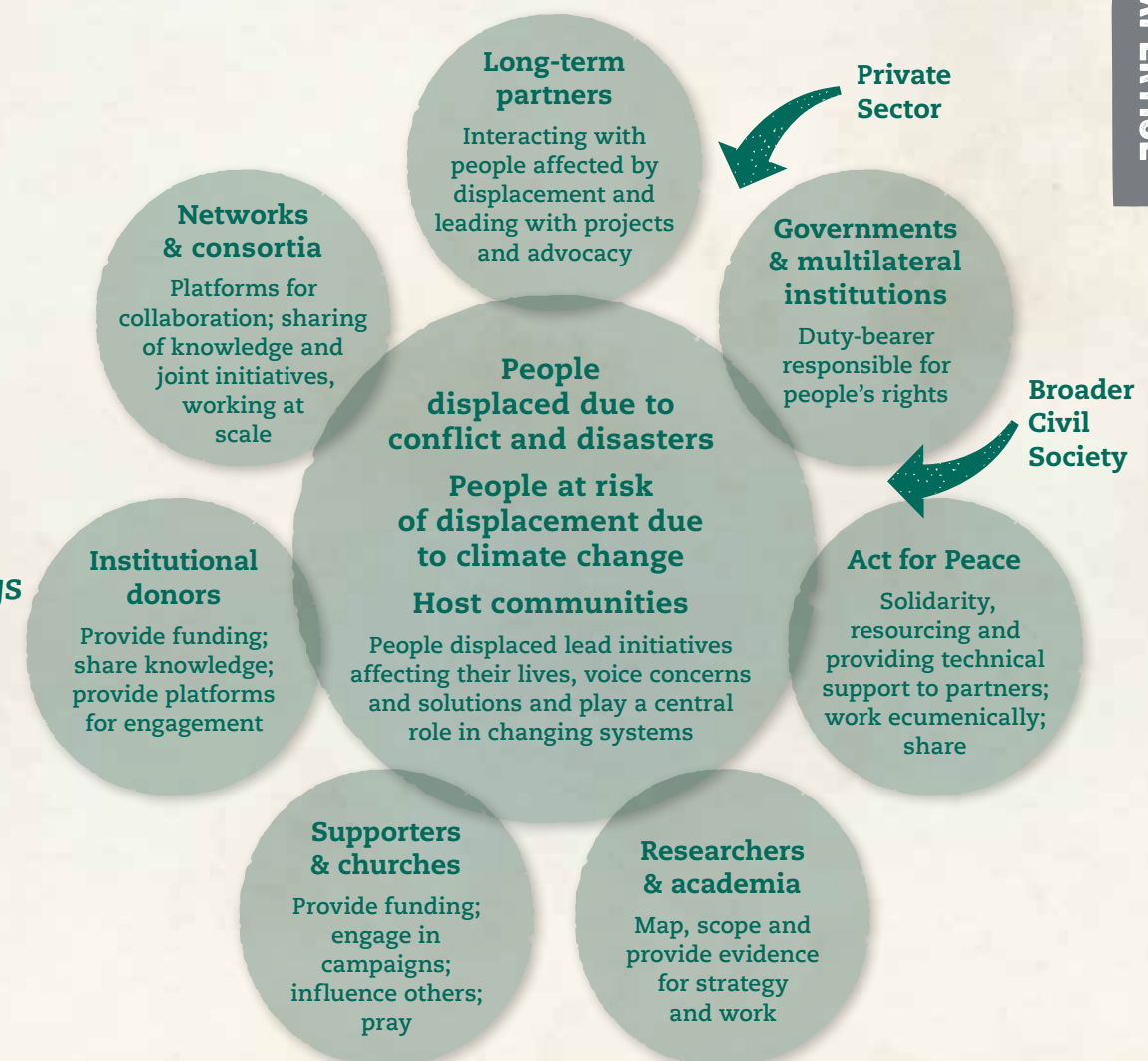
- Continue to strengthen partnerships with ecumenical agencies, civil society, and displaced people's organisations.
- Invest in research and build our capability to deliver successful behavioural and attitudinal change interventions.
- Provide greater expertise, resources, and opportunities to bring together the right actors for change.
- Strengthen regional and international collaboration – of displaced people's organisations, civil society, and governments – to prevent displacement, ensure adequate responses to displaced people and find solutions for them.

- Develop opportunities for our supporters to increase levels of empathy and compassion in the people around them, particularly those marginalised due to displacement, and measure shifts in attitudes created by supporter initiatives creating empathy and compassion in society, such as the Ration Challenge.

We work with a vast array of actors, collaborating as required for specific initiatives, recognising that we each have a role in addressing the harm caused by displacement. Actors may be local, national, regional, or global in focus and come together in different configurations. Central to all collaboration is engagement with people directly affected by displacement.

## OUR APPROACH TO COLLABORATION

*Our approach to collaboration places the leadership of displaced people at its centre, acknowledges the important contribution of different actors to solving the displacement crisis, and brings them together for maximum impact.*





### 3. TRANSFORMING THE SYSTEM

**Today, more people are forcibly displaced than at any other time in history and the pressures on the systems, structures and arrangements developed to prevent, respond to, and find solutions for displaced people are immense.**

Consequently, more people are displaced for longer periods of time, many are being displaced multiple times, and many are being deprived of their rights during displacement. Without appropriate access to daily necessities, opportunities to rebuild their lives, and protection, people are more likely to take extreme risks to find safety, including crossing dangerous oceans in unseaworthy boats, and taking on unsafe paid work.

Addressing the situation requires tailored responses, such as advocacy to denounce serious government failures to provide protection and solutions, working collaboratively with allies to secure changes in law, policy and procedures, or persuading decision makers and others with power to act, such as mobilising law firms to provide pro-bono legal services.

We need to work together to influence governments and global organisations to strengthen the protection of people affected by displacement through legal mechanisms, cost sharing initiatives and national, regional and global frameworks that reverse this trend and provide the foundations for better global management of displacement, with more predictable and equitable ways of sharing the responsibility for the people who are most affected.

#### Our Priorities:

- Influencing regional, national and global authorities to share responsibility, resources and power in a more predictable and equitable manner.
- Fulfil our pledges at the Global Refugee Forum to ensure for the meaningful participation and leadership of refugees and to find solutions for displaced people.
- Contribute to strengthening and/or developing protection systems at the local, regional and global levels to better protect the rights of displaced people.
- Catalyse joint action to shift decision-making power and resources to displaced people, enabling them to meaningfully engage in decisions affecting their lives.
- End unjust and harmful restrictions placed on refugees and internally displaced people.
- Mobilise supporters and the public to take action that influences decision makers to strengthen the protection of people affected by displacement.

Act for Peace worked on the legal pledge that was announced by Julie Mayerhofer (pictured far right), interim co-director of the Global Network for Public Interest Law, at the Opening Plenary to the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019. Many refugees live in countries where they have no recognised legal status or representation. For them, this pledge could be life-saving.







## OUR EXPERTISE, OUR INTERNAL COMMITMENT

Act for Peace has been working with communities affected by conflict, disaster and displacement for over 70 years. We remain committed to our own journey of transformation as we listen, learn and provide our own vital contribution to a world where people uprooted by conflict and disaster, find a place to belong.

Martha, who has become a conservation farmer through the training program of our local partner in Zimbabwe, Christian Care, shares her story with Hannah Montgomery from Act for Peace. Martha says: "Conservation farming is really good for women, especially widows. Being part of the conservation farming program has empowered me so much."



In the period of this Strategy, we are committed to:

- **Walking Our Talk:** Living-out our commitments, beliefs and values in the way we work to achieve change with others.

We are specifically committed to changing our way of working to ensure we play our part in backing displaced people, building unity and transforming systems. We will:

- **Research, Learn and Innovate:** Ensuring our knowledge, research and services are evidence-based, informed by people experiencing displacement, and provide real value to displaced people, local partners and others. Ensuring we continue to look outside of the box, to think in new ways and to develop solutions that can be built to scale.
- **Mobilise People:** Having highly motivated, skilled and experienced staff that are agile, innovative and well-networked, and ensuring they have the support required for collaborative action for greater impact.
- **Transformative Resourcing:** Securing resources that contribute to sustainable outcomes for Act for Peace and our partners.
- **Developing Expertise:** Specialising in services that add value in displacement situations.





“Together, we are helping people. We are serving human beings. We are helping the most vulnerable. We are saving lives.”

FRED, DUTY FACILITATOR FOR DICAC, OUR LOCAL PARTNER IN ETHIOPIA

## DEVELOPING AND UTILISING OUR EXPERTISE

Act for Peace has decades of experience in working with our local partners to provide projects and advocacy that promote the agency and protection of people displaced by conflict at local, national, regional and global levels.

And for over a decade we’ve collaborated with local partners in the Pacific and Africa developing climate adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction programming.

As technology and communications continue to expand our reach and ability to collaborate, we will focus on expanding our collaborative capabilities for change.

We will continue to develop and hone our services to local partners and people experiencing displacement, and engage in collaborative and innovative initiatives that enable each other’s strengths to be combined for greater impact.

Our immediate priority is to continue developing our expertise in the following:

### Connecting Actors to Find Solutions:

- Expand our strategic engagement with networks and initiatives led by people affected by displacement.
- Engaging in research and mutual learning that informs improved engagement of people experiencing displacement in the design and implementation of solutions.
- Strengthen our capacity to develop innovative initiatives that mobilise and combine the strengths of our diverse organisations for even greater impact.
- Provide opportunities for our supporters to engage with our partners to deepen understanding and promote giving and action.

### Displacement Solutions:

- Strengthen our expertise in locally-informed climate and disaster displacement practices to better support local partners and communities working to prevent and manage climate-related displacement risks.

- Develop our effective model for *refugee-led return preparedness and reintegration*, enabling refugees to voluntarily return home in safety and dignity, and engage in research, learning and advocacy to promote better global policy and practice.
- Developing an evidence base and advocacy strategy around expanding choices and solutions available to displaced people, and address barriers that prevent the resolution of protracted displacement situations.

### Locally-led Protection:

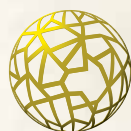
- Build on the expertise we’ve gained since 2008 in supporting local partners and community groups to strengthen the effectiveness of community-based protection initiatives to address rising violence, exploitation and human rights abuses in refugee, internal displacement and disaster situations.
- Support research and develop an evidence base for locally-led protection.
- Further develop and utilise our expertise in effective methods for safeguarding and inclusion of people who are vulnerable due to their circumstances, particularly to prevent harm and guard against discrimination, marginalisation, sexual abuse and child abuse.
- Explore opportunities to better integrate psychosocial health and leverage faith in building community resilience.
- Explore ways to improve our ways of working to address power dynamics.

### Protection Policy and Advocacy:

- Build on our expertise in developing effective protection systems, policy, and practice to address systemic challenges at the global, regional, national and local levels.
- Build on our ability to strategically engage with networks and mobilise collaborative action using a ‘whole of society’ approach.
- Strengthen our ability to engage in initiatives led by people affected by displacement to further protection focused advocacy outcomes.

Our local partner in Ethiopia, DICAC, provides access to health services for refugees who have moved to Addis Ababa for health concerns that cannot be treated in rural camps. The support provided includes assistance with medical expenses, emergency transport, supplementary food and housing.





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The international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia  
Act for Peace, Locked Bag Q199, Queen Victoria Building, NSW 1230  
[www.actforpeace.org.au](http://www.actforpeace.org.au) | 1800 025 101 | [info@actforpeace.org.au](mailto:info@actforpeace.org.au) | ABN: 86 619 970 188

**ACT FOR PEACE**  
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
THROUGH THE **actalliance**