

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia  
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**ACT FOR PEACE**  
 CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
 THROUGH THE COURAGE



**BRINGING YOU A MESSAGE FROM THE FIELD**  
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Following large-scale violence in Sri Lanka against the Tamil community in 1983 and the subsequent civil war, over 100,000 people were forced to seek safety in India. They have been living as refugees for decades. While the Tamil Nadu government provides people with some basic services, refugees still struggle to survive. Conditions in the camp are often poor and crowded, their freedom of movement is restricted and their access to jobs and livelihoods are limited.

The war ended 10 years ago but almost 70,000 refugees remain spread across 107 camps. For many, the concerns of safety, lack of documentation, how they will earn a living and where they will live, and access education have been barriers to return. To overcome these issues, Act for Peace's local partner, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation

(OfERR) in India helps refugees prepare to return home by providing a 'Preparedness Passport'. This passport contains all the information about how to get the correct documentation and a checklist of what they need to do before returning.

On returning to Sri Lanka, OfERR assists returnees with accessing their land and providing building materials for temporary shelters. OfERR also helps with securing livelihoods in agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry as well as helping them access government services such as health and education.

This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs and Act for Peace. Act for Peace gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Home Affairs**

**PLEASE PRAY:**

- For increased confidence for refugees who wish to return to Sri Lanka, with the support of OfERR.
- For refugees still facing limited freedoms in India's refugee camps.
- For the staff at OfERR to continue to guide and support refugees on their journey home to Sri Lanka.

Dear Friends,

My name is Dasini\*, I own a shop here in Sri Lanka. I live with my husband, two children and my father.

In 2006, when I was just 14 years old, I had to flee to India. I remember I was scared to leave home and that I didn't know what to do! My neighbour came to my house; only then did I realise the urgency and I started running. I still think of those moments today. I went to India with my aunt and grandmother, who raised me.

Life in the refugee camp in India was tough because we could not move around freely, getting permission to go outside the camp was difficult. Our house in the camp was only ten-by-ten feet, with thin walls, so we could hear everything happening around us. Access to water was challenging and scarcity of these precious resources would cause fights. Everything in the camp was difficult, even getting to school.

While I was in the refugee camp in India, I became a teacher and worked with the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR) and was able to earn an income, before finally being able to return home to Sri Lanka in 2010. When I moved back home, I met my husband. Together we opened a small shop attached to our house, even with our shop and my husband working as a labourer we had trouble earning enough income.

Our dream was to extend our shop one day, but we knew it would be a very difficult thing to do. OfERR assisted us by providing a business plan and financial literacy training, they also paid for stock to expand our shop. With their help, we have increased our income and were able to clear and level our land in order to build our own house. Now we can also pay for extra classes for our children, and we are managing our daily living expenses more easily.

I am also part of the Welcome Group of OfERR, where we assist newly arrived returning refugees in Sri Lanka. I know the process of returning, so I can help support others through this. Thanks to your support we can continue to help refugees return with more confidence and support when they arrive. From my experience I know how important this is, and I am so happy to be sharing my experiences with others.

Thank you,

Dasini



Dasini is seen in her shop which is attached to her house in Sri Lanka.