

ELINK

YOUR ACT FOR PEACE SUPPORTER MAGAZINE

WINTER 2019

COMPASSION ACROSS BORDERS

You responded to the people of Zimbabwe when a deadly cyclone tore through their community and supported them while they rebuild their lives.

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update

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

The international aid agency of the National Council of
Churches in Australia.
ABN 86 619 970 188

EMERGENCY UPDATE: CYCLONE IDAI

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES, SOLIDARITY SHINES

On the cover: Priscilla with her harvest which she grew using new techniques she learned through the Conservation Farming program.

Cyclone Idai left a trail of death and destruction when it tore through parts of Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in March. Your response ensured our local partner was able to assess the needs and deliver aid to people who needed it most.

When Cyclone Idai struck, it took the lives of 560 people in Zimbabwe alone. Thousands were left homeless, with stocks of food and fields swept away. Your generous gifts are working to meet the needs of vulnerable families whose homes were destroyed and whose lives were turned upside down by the storm.

Without support, Ndaizevi couldn't imagine how her family would have survived after the cyclone. A poor rural farmer from the Bikita district, Ndaizevi's home and crops were wiped out, and she didn't have enough food to feed their three children.

With your help, our local partner, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, was able to provide Ndaizevi and her family with emergency food, including 50kg maize meal and 5kg beans.

With enough food to last them for the month ahead, the hard work of rebuilding can begin for Ndaizevi and her family.

"I am very happy to receive food. We now have enough to eat and I can use my income to buy concrete to rebuild. I am looking forward to another life," says Ndaizevi.

Our local partner passes on their thanks for standing with the people of Zimbabwe while they mourn their losses and begin the long process of recovering from disaster.



Zimbabwe Council of Churches/Act for Peace

Ndaizevi holds a bag of beans at a food distribution in the Bikita district, Zimbabwe. With your support, on this day 30 families received food parcels, which included 50kg of maize, 4 litres of cooking oil and 5kgs of sugar beans.

YOUR IMPACT

What your gifts are bringing to families devastated by Cyclone Idai.

WATER ACCESS

You helped to provide water purification tablets and buckets so families can get the clean water they need to survive

EMERGENCY FOOD

With crops and farms destroyed, starvation was a real threat. You provided 160 families with food rations, including maize, oil and beans, ensuring they have enough to eat while they recover in the months ahead.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Thousands were left homeless by the storm. You helped provide families who had lost their home with temporary shelter and warm blankets.

BUILDING MATERIALS

You provided 800 bags of cement for 160 households to help families with the long process of reconstructing their homes and rebuilding their lives.

SUPPORTING FARMERS ON THE FRONTLINE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In Zimbabwe, crippling drought and the recent cyclone is pushing farmers to the brink. Your support is helping to build the resilience of farmers through a program called Conservation Farming, equipping them with the skills, tools and training they need to thrive.

You might remember the letter we wrote to you in May, sharing the change that Conservation Farming can bring to farmers like Priscilla (pictured on the front cover).

Before joining the program, Priscilla wasn't able to grow enough to feed her family and survived by begging for food.

But five years later, Priscilla and her family are thriving, and Priscilla shares her farming knowledge among friends and neighbours.

"I teach many people in my community what I have learnt through conservation farming. I do it so that people get the assistance that I got so that everyone benefits," says Priscilla smiling.

This innovative method of farming increases crop yields for farmers, reduces their dependency on food-aid and gives them a better chance in the face of climate-related disasters, like Cyclone Idai, which are expected to increase in both frequency and intensity in the years to come.

"I am very proud because now I can look after my family," says Priscilla. *"My message to the people in Australia is that I really thank them for their support. May they continue to support us, so that we get more knowledge through the training workshops."*

Hope, 13, eats a bowl of sadza, a type of thickened porridge made from grain common in Zimbabwe. Since joining the Conservation Farming program, Hope's mum Priscilla is able to provide enough food to feed her children and earn an income so they can go to school.



YOUR GIFTS ARE HELPING TO REACH MORE FARMERS WITH CONSERVATION FARMING, FREEING FAMILIES IN ZIMBABWE FROM HUNGER.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LOCAL PARTNER



"When disaster strikes in faraway places, it is only the solidarity of humanity everywhere that makes bearing with the effects of such disasters possible.

The gifts sent from Australia will go a very long way in helping people find new places they can call home; children will be able to go back to schools; destroyed clinics will be repaired; and people who've been traumatized will find counselling.

For the victims of disaster, the knowledge that they are not alone, but have people far away who are driven by compassion and want to help, is indeed love that crosses borders. A small gift given by a person in Australia touches many women, children and communities in a profound way."

– Dr Rev Mtata, Zimbabwe Council of Churches

AUSTRALIA INSPIRES GLOBAL ACTION FOR REFUGEES



The Ration Challenge started six years ago when 100 dedicated people in Australia got behind an idea to eat the same rations as a refugee for a week to raise money and awareness. Since then, more and more people have been inspired to take part, and today the Ration Challenge has become a global community for action on refugees.

Since it started, thousands of people in Australia have come together each year during Refugee Week to live on rations and raise vital funds and awareness to support refugees and other communities affected by conflict and disaster.

Now the idea has caught on overseas too. Inspired by the success of the challenge in Australia, likeminded organisations partnered with Act for Peace to bring the challenge to the UK and USA in 2019. In total, 42,000 people signed up to take the challenge around the world this year. Being a part of it was incredibly motivating.

In a society that feels increasingly divided, people around the world taking the Ration Challenge sent a message of solidarity to refugees that we stand with them, united.

SHOWING REFUGEES THAT WE CARE



41,689

people signed up worldwide



\$4.8 MILLION

raised by those taking part



enough to feed

17,518 REFUGEES

for an entire year



Adrian, a Ration Challenge participant from Sydney, sits with his week's worth of rations. "I don't need to know refugees personally and they don't need to know me," says Adrian. "But they need to know that there are many of us who care."

Malak and her children fled terrible violence in Syria and have been living as refugees in Jordan since 2013. Life in Jordan is hard for Malak and her family but knowing that there are people in Australia who care about her situation gives her great hope.

"Our financial situation is difficult and we have a great shortage of supplies for the house. We thank everyone who is participating in the challenge and helping us in any way that they can," she says.

Malak, a mother of three, sits with her ration pack containing a month's worth of food for her family.



RATION CHALLENGE WORLDWIDE



United States of America
United Kingdom

Since 2014, more than 81,600 people have signed up to take the challenge raising more than \$14.4 million. Thank you!



Karen McGrath/Act for Peace



Australia
New Zealand

Sahib and Omar, best friends, smile outside their apartment block in Talbiah refugee camp on the outskirts of Amman, Jordan. They are two Syrian children being supported with food rations and education thanks to funds raised through the challenge.

NEVER TOO YOUNG TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For the second year in a row, thousands of passionate students and teachers across the country took up the schools version of the Ration Challenge (a three or five day version of the challenge with educational resources and lesson plans).

Students said that, while it was tough, taking the challenge empowered them to raise their voice on an issue they care about and make a real difference to people's lives.

"The Ration Challenge is a wake-up call – it's one small thing you can do that can help widen your perspective and create meaningful conversations with your parents, friends, grandparents and the wider community," said Jemima, Head Girl at Oxley College.

As well as developing empathy for others, the challenge helps to engage students to learn and talk about global issues.

School teacher Chris Goodman said, *"The Ration Challenge is a wonderful way for children to learn about the wider world. It pushes kids out of their comfort zone and also brings together a real sense of community as students share their Challenge with those around them."*



Joel Pratley/Act for Peace

Jean and Ella from Fort St High in Sydney stand with a ration pack. Jean says, "I'll never fully experience all that refugees go through, but this small act helped me understand just one part of the struggle."

SPEAKING UP FOR A JUST PEACE

Under Israel's occupation, Palestinian people face daily harassment, demolition orders on their homes and restrictions on moving around. Since 2002, Ecumenical Accompaniers have been providing protective presence to local communities in the West Bank, documenting human rights violations, and gathering eyewitness stories – stories that they bring back to share.



"Visible in our vests, we walk alongside Faraj, a Palestinian shepherd. His grazing fields, crucial to his livelihood, are less than a kilometre from the Israeli settlement of Susya. Despite the ongoing and unjust harassment he experiences, this shepherd is determined to remain on his land."

ADVOCATING FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS IN THE WEST BANK

Aletia spent three months helping to keep communities safe in the West Bank. Now she uses her firsthand experience to open people's hearts and minds to what Palestinians are going through and advocate for a just peace.

"During my three months as an Ecumenical Accompanier (EA) providing protective presence, I walked alongside shepherds, activists and school children, all of whom were seeking to have their basic rights observed.

Now that I'm home, an important part of what it means to be a returned EA is advocacy; speaking up about what I saw in order to help people in Australia understand, on a human level, what it's like living under occupation.

In Palestine, I was stationed in the South Hebron Hills. Once a month we rose at 3.30am to monitor the treatment of Palestinians travelling into Israel through the Maitar checkpoint between 4am - 7am. Because work is difficult to come by in Palestine, people will go to great lengths to find work in Israel, even if it means waking in the dark and staying most of the week away from their family.

Under the current system, Palestinians experience a number of everyday injustices. Their basic rights to decent work, education, healthcare and access to land are all limited.

Shortly after returning, I visited my Federal Member of Parliament, Anthony Albanese, to talk to him about what I witnessed. Anthony invited me to speak at a Labor party event where Bob Carr was introducing and promoting a proposal to recognise Palestine.

I thought the best way to humanise the experience for people who were interested in workers' rights was to talk about the daily challenges Palestinian workers face due to the numerous checkpoints, which restrict people's movement and access to work.

It was really encouraging to hear that Bob Carr's influence, and perhaps my human interest story, led to the Australian Labor Party's commitment to recognise Palestine."



Palestinian workers line-up for the brutal 'morning commute' in Bethlehem, where they will queue for hours at a checkpoint monitored by Israeli soldiers. Limited employment opportunities in the West Bank mean thousands of Palestinians pass through this checkpoint each morning during the early hours to get to work in Israel.

Peter Morgan/Act for Peace

SUFFOCATED BY CHECKPOINTS

"My name is Imad* and I have a store in the marketplace in Hebron, Palestine. Hebron is an important city for many religions because the prophet Abraham and his sons are buried here. Sadly, it is also a divided city - there are 200,000 Muslims in this city and 600 Israeli settlers.

The occupation and security restrictions make it very hard for us to make a living. There is a lot of harassment and pressure from the settlers to push us out. But I am 55 years old, where would I go? I have been doing business here for many years, and it is my home.

The Israeli army closed our main shopping street, Shuhada Street, in 2002 for 'security reasons'. For the streets that are still open, the Israeli soldiers use the checkpoint turnstiles to stop people coming into the

marketplace. Sometimes, the soldiers make customers and suppliers wait for a long time just to enter.

The soldiers seem to hope that the customers will get fed up and walk away. People say they feel threatened when they come and buy from us. These days, most people shop elsewhere where they feel more safe and secure. It is very hard for us, and we try to stay steadfast and live each day in peace.

We are grateful to the Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) that come from all over the world to monitor the situation and try to keep things calm. When customers and suppliers can get through the checkpoints, we in the market can make a living.

They help us here and it is a comfort to know that when they return home they tell people all over the world what is taking place in Hebron."

ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAM IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Every day, persecution and human rights abuses destroy people's lives and fuel conflict in the Holy Land. By taking part in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), dedicated volunteers spend three months being a protective presence for families living under occupation.

Their life-changing work includes monitoring checkpoints, accompanying children to and from school, reporting any violence or harassment and supporting acts of nonviolent resistance alongside Palestinians and Israelis.

Are you a passionate and caring person who is committed to protecting people's rights? To learn more about how your presence can help prevent injustice in the Holy Land, please visit www.actforpeace.org.au/EAPPI, email us at eappi@ncca.org.au or call us toll-free on 1800 025 101.



Ayesha, a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, sits with her daughter in their tent in Jamtoli camp after receiving a dignity kit containing reusable sanitary cloths, underwear and soap.

BUCKETS OF DIGNITY



By Ruthann Richardson,
Head of Fundraising

Women and girls in refugee camps often lack access to basic hygiene – including sanitary pads, clean underwear and decent washing facilities. “Buckets of Dignity” are helping Rohingya women and girls maintain their dignity, at a time when many other things feel lost.

I want you to think, just for a moment, about periods.

And I'd like you to consider what it would be like to get your period, whilst living in a crowded refugee camp: sleeping in a tent, sharing a toilet with hundreds of people, and without any way to access sanitary pads.

This is the situation facing thousands of Rohingya women and girls who are living as refugees in Bangladesh.

You did it!

On May 28, International Menstrual Hygiene Day, we launched a 28 day campaign to provide 'Buckets of Dignity' to 3,000 Rohingya women and girls. Thousands of people chipped in and reached well over the target. Thank you!

Target: 3,000
Reached: 3,830 buckets

When brutal violence erupted in Myanmar in August 2017, more than 745,000 Rohingya people were forced from their homes and across the border.

In an emergency situation like this, where resources are stretched to meet the sheer scale of the need, female hygiene is often overlooked. Women and girls lack access to even basic hygiene.

Without access to sanitary pads, women and girls are often forced to resort to using unsafe materials, such as strips of old cloth, to manage their periods. This can result in infection, shame, embarrassment and isolation.

I can't imagine what this would be like.

All images: Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

WHAT'S IN A BUCKET OF DIGNITY?

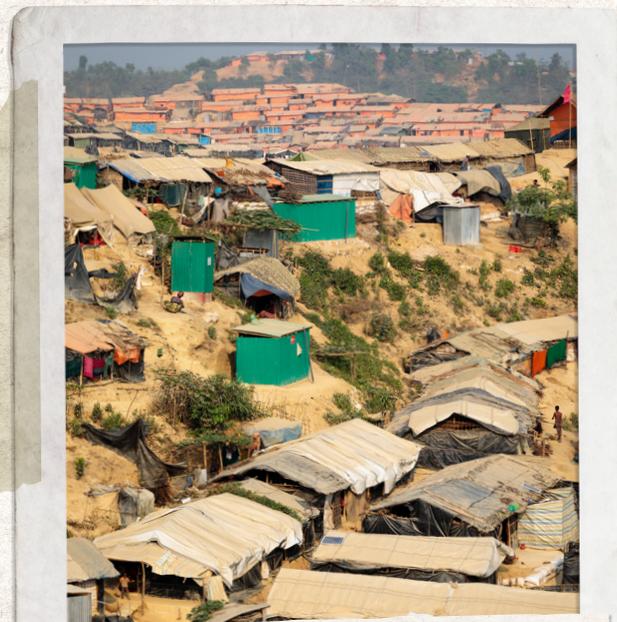


Thanks to your support, our partner in Bangladesh, Christian Aid, are distributing dignity kits. The kits contain simple but essential items including underwear, reusable sanitary cloths and soap. The bucket acts as a basin, so women don't have to use the shared washrooms and can clean their sanitary cloths, hygienically and in private.

"Without these items, we have to use old clothes during the days of menstruation. We have to wash them secretly and cannot dry them in the open," says Shehnaz, a Rohingya refugee.

Without these kits, women and girls face enormous challenges in managing their periods, safely and with dignity.

You're helping to ensure that for women who've suffered unimaginable horrors and continue to face hardships, one of their most basic needs is met. Thank you.



Latrines (the green structures) dot the crowded hillsides of Jantoli refugee camp. The sprawling camp, with makeshift bamboo and tarpaulin tents and shared latrines, offers little privacy and few facilities for women and girls during their period.



Fatima, a young Rohingya refugee, stands outside her tent in Jantoli camp.

As well as Dignity Kits, your support is helping to provide urgent medical care, shelter and blankets to Rohingya families in Bangladesh whose lives have been turned upside down by violence.

YOUR ACTION, YOUR IMPACT

EXTENDING A HAND OF COMPASSION

We can achieve much more together than we can alone. We spoke to some inspirational Act for Peace supporters who have brought friends, family and neighbours together to make a difference to people facing conflict and disaster in new and unique ways.

MARKING A SPECIAL OCCASION

When Jocelyn Chey was planning her eightieth birthday, she wanted to do something a little different.

"I didn't want to have a big party, though I thought it was an anniversary that I would like to mark, and my friends would appreciate being able to participate," she told us. So she decided instead to commission a piece of music that would "express the hope for an end to the violence that has characterised much of the last eighty years of world history."

Jocelyn invited friends and family to attend her local church, Saint Luke's Anglican Church of Mosman, where they were invited to give to communities in urgent need around the world through Act for Peace.

Jocelyn hopes that "A lot more people will be inspired to think this way, that you can mark an anniversary or occasion by inviting people to make a donation."

OFFERING A HELPING HAND THROUGH CRAFT

For ten years, Selma Campbell, her daughter Heather Maddy, and her granddaughter Angela, have been giving their time so that others around the world can enjoy the same safety and dignity that many living in Australia may take for granted.

The three generations of women come together every week to make craft and jewellery from donated materials that they then sell to raise funds for the Christmas Bowl and other causes.

"It's very rewarding to spend a few hours a week raising funds to help those that are not as fortunate as we are. So much can be achieved if we all contribute, even if only in a small way."

When Selma, Heather, and Angela raise a significant amount of proceeds from their craft sales, they then send this to communities in need around the world through Act for Peace.

Selma told us: "I believe everyone should have access to clean air, clean water and sanitation. Additionally, we should all share the responsibility to make this a reality."



Jocelyn (second from left) stands with musicians at the recital of the piece "To Mend Broken Crystal" on her eightieth birthday.

The Gift that money can't buy

The birth of a baby is a precious and exciting time. For women living in remote communities in Pakistan however, the journey to motherhood is often a dangerous one. But through Gifts for Peace, women in rural Pakistan are receiving safe delivery kits, helping to ensure a safer childbirth for mums and babies.

It seems so simple: a little kit that contains a plastic sheet, gloves and disinfectant. But these basic items – in the hands of women living in remote communities in Pakistan – can help a skilled birth attendant deliver a baby safely.

In Pakistan, 60% of the population live in remote rural areas where it is difficult to access a doctor. Most births take place at home, without clean equipment or a trained midwife. Birthing in an unsanitary environment can cause multiple infections and puts the lives of both mother and baby at risk.

By giving a friend or family member a safe delivery kit Gift for Peace, they'll be helping to keep a woman and their newborn safe during delivery, and you'll be bringing a smile to the face of your loved one through this meaningful gift.



"My newest baby was born with the help of a lady in my village who took part in safe delivery training funded by Act for Peace. If women are trained in safe delivery and provided with delivery kits we are less likely to get infections which puts both mother and baby at risk." Leyla, Southern Pakistan.

How your Gift for Peace works



Choose a gift



Your loved one receives a card and magnet



Their gift makes a lasting difference



Giving a meaningful gift and a brighter future

Safe delivery kits include items such as soap, a sterilised blade and a plastic sheet for the woman to lie on when giving birth.

With a Gift for Peace, you'll help ensure a woman in Pakistan can have the safe birth she deserves, and give a kind and thoughtful gift to your loved one.



Christmas Bowl



Create a future filled with God's love



It was a Christian calling, a simple act, and a lasting legacy.

As a Christian, Rev. Frank Byatt believed he had a responsibility to share his good fortune with our brothers and sisters in need around the world. That's why on Christmas Day in 1949, he put a Bowl of Remembrance on the dinner table and asked his family to place a generous gift in it to 'share your good dinner with hungry children in other lands.'

Throughout our lives, tens of thousands of us have followed Frank's example; sharing God's love with our brothers and sisters in urgent need around the world, through our gifts to the Christmas Bowl.

For more information or for your guide to leaving a gift in your Will to the Christmas Bowl, please call Andy on 1800 025 101 or visit www.actforpeace.org.au/bequests

"Leaving a gift just seemed like a natural extension of our faith."

Dr Clive Ayre

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