

HELINK

YOUR ACT FOR PEACE SUPPORTER MAGAZINE WINTER 2022

UNITING FOR UKRAINE

Together we have raised more than \$1 million for Ukrainians forced from their homes, providing essential aid to families in exile.

BACKING REFUGEES IN KENYA

Supporting people who have fled violence to rebuild their lives and create the futures they want for themselves.

RATION CHALLENGE 2022

Bringing emergency food, healthcare, and life-saving support to the people who need it most.

FACING UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Working with communities to tackle climate-driven displacement.

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

The international humanitarian agency of the
National Council of Churches in Australia

ABN 86 619 970 188



Antti Yrjönen / FCA

Daryna* plays with her mother at an aid station at the Ukrainian-Hungarian border where our local partner, HIA, is assisting Ukrainian refugees.
*Name changed for safety reasons.

EMERGENCY UPDATE

COMING TOGETHER TO SHOW THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE THEY'RE NOT ALONE

On the 24th February, Russian troops invaded Ukraine. Together, we've made supporting the innocent families uprooted by this crisis a priority ever since.

The war in Ukraine has created the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II. More than 13 million Ukrainians are reported to have fled their homes, with over five million refugees who have left for neighbouring countries and eight million people displaced inside the war-torn country itself.

In May, the latest figures from UNHCR showed that the Ukraine crisis has contributed to a grim new global

milestone, with more than 100 million people now displaced from their homes – more than ever recorded before.

This time of division can feel overwhelming, but amidst the chaos, we've seen the global community come together for Ukrainians forced to flee their home.

Here in Australia, Act for Peace partnered with other leading international aid charities, the ABC and the Federal Government in a combined effort to support Ukrainian families, through the first ever joint Emergency Action Alliance (EAA) appeal.

As part of this new initiative, modelled on other successful coalitions around the world, we partnered with 14 Australian-based member charities – including Oxfam, Save the Children Australia, Caritas Australia and Australia for UNHCR – to create a single, simple way for Australians to donate to the relief effort, and to ensure those funds are used effectively on the ground.

The coalition has so far raised \$28 million in total, of which, together,

COVER IMAGE: Masha and her family fled the war in Ukraine and received aid at a shelter on the Hungarian border where our local partner, HIA, is supporting refugees.

Act for Peace staff and supporters have raised more than \$1 million to send to our ACT Alliance partner on the ground, Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA).

In the first three months of the crisis, HIA was able to reach 102,590 people, providing them with emergency access to basic food and non-food items, information, shelter, hygiene and health support, protection, and links to transportation services.

Together, we have been standing alongside Ukrainian families, providing them with the practical and emotional support they need, showing them that they are not alone.

In an update at the end of May, HIA's Response Director Giuliano Stochino told us: *"The difficulty for people is to accept aid. We're talking about an extremely proud society. And our main task is to provide help in the most dignified way possible."*

HIA has implemented a cash program which gives displaced people a monthly fixed amount they can spend on what they need most. Similarly, HIA provides local shelters and small organisations with grants to give them the flexibility to buy what they need - from food to washing machines - for the people they're housing.

As the crisis continues, people's needs are changing. HIA is now working on a program for people returning to liberated



Daniel Fekete/HIA

Our ACT Alliance partner on the ground, HIA, have distributed more than 700 tonnes of aid to families displaced by the war.

areas, such as Kyiv, to help them return as safely as possible. HIA is also setting up child wellbeing centres to help families manage the trauma they've experienced. These community-based centres will bring displaced people and host communities together by focusing on simple activities, such as football or childcare, as well as therapy for children and their caregivers.

Guiliano added: *"I think that in the coming months people might be getting, let's say, bored with the situation in Ukraine. And what the people in Australia can really help with is to not stop talking about it. This should not be a forgotten crisis. I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to work together. [This] really is an amazing opportunity for all of us around the world to come together as one."*

WITH YOUR SUPPORT OUR LOCAL PARTNER, HIA, HAS BEEN ABLE TO:

- Send more than 700 tonnes of aid to Ukraine to meet immediate needs like food, hygiene, blankets, emergency lamps, cookers and bedding
- Support over 250 shelters in Ukraine for internally displaced people
- Provide psychosocial services to help people manage their trauma
- Give flexible small grants to support local organisations and cash assistance to help individuals pay for the things they need most
- Provide urgent support for refugees arriving into Hungary and longer-term accommodation
- Establish a new centre in Budapest to help refugees – including unaccompanied children, people with disabilities and the elderly – to integrate with their new community through aid, social work, accommodation, employment, vocational training and a community space.

SUPPORTING AFGHANS UPROOTED FROM THEIR HOMES

Since August last year, Act for Peace supporters have raised \$436,000 to help our local partner, Community World Service Asia (CWSA), provide emergency aid and assistance to the most crisis-affected Afghans.

Since the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan has endured a deepening humanitarian crisis, with 95 per cent of households now without enough to eat. For families forced to flee their homes, your support has helped them to feed themselves and to get through the harsh winter in safety and with dignity.

In Afghanistan, 525 households in Nangarhar province have received emergency cash payments, essential medicine, and shelters for winter. More than 5,000 people have been able to access medicine for illnesses like malaria, diarrhoea, and COVID-19 symptoms. In the coming months, CWSA will extend this vital cash assistance program for another 710 households in Laghman province too.

In Pakistan, newly arrived refugee families – in fear for their lives, unable to speak the language and without documentation – have struggled to get help. CWSA has been able to identify 253 of the most vulnerable Afghani refugee households and support them with emergency cash payments. Families have been able to buy essentials like food and prioritise the health and educational needs of their children.

Ziba* is one of those children. Paralysed on her right side since birth, she requires regular physiotherapy. The day her family fled Afghanistan she was due to go to her usual appointment. "I never thought we would miss it due to leaving the country", shared Ziba's concerned father. In Pakistan, the family barely had enough money to eat, let alone for other expenses. With support from CWSA they have been able to pay for food and to plan to continue Ziba's physiotherapy at a nearby hospital.

Thank you for helping to make this possible. Together, we will continue to support CWSA as they create a safe place to belong for uprooted Afghan people.

On 22 June, a powerful earthquake struck south-east Afghanistan, killing more than 1,000 people. At the time of writing, our partner is assessing the situation and preparing to respond.

* Name changed for safety reasons.



Displaced families seek refuge in a park in Kabul after fleeing fighting between the Taliban and Afghan security in the northern provinces.

Hatoon Sabawoon/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images

ONE STONE CAN MOVE A MOUNTAIN

Hundreds of school students are among over a thousand compassionate people across Australia taking the Ration Challenge this year – to stand with refugees and bring emergency food, healthcare, and life-saving support to the people who need it most.

Global displacement has risen beyond 100 million people this year and we have witnessed conflicts unfold around the world – in Gaza, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and most recently in Ukraine.

Studies show that many young people are feeling disenfranchised about the state of the world. However, we have also seen how a crisis can bring out the best in us and unite us around the globe.

For students as Sydney's Oakhill College, like so many others, the Ration Challenge is one way of turning feelings of disempowerment into action.

By getting sponsored to eat the same rations as a refugee for a week, Ration Challenge participants both raise money to help save lives now and share their experience to create more empathy and compassion in society.



Zebedee Parkes / Act for Peace

Oakhill College students are taking part in the Ration Challenge for the fifth year. In the words of one student: "I wanted to challenge myself and to spread awareness of just how hard it is and what refugees have to go through every day. That's why I was inspired."

"I was inspired to take the Ration Challenge as a physical and emotional challenge. It really allows for us to develop an understanding for what it is like to live as a refugee and also raise money and awareness.

"One stone can move a mountain, so I think that's the best way to move forward for us. As Australians it's in our best interest to get involved and help each other out, so this is our one way of doing it." – Oakhill College student

More than 70 students and staff from Oakhill College have so far raised almost \$32,000.

In total, this year's Ration Challenge has raised nearly \$1,000,000 – enough to feed 3,194 refugees for a year.

FINDING HOPE FOR THE FUTURE AGAIN

Act for Peace storyteller, Emma, recently travelled to Kenya to see the innovative 'Self-Reliance' program run by our local partner, RefugePoint. Here's what she learned along the way.

As she shared her story, tears welled in Joyce's* eyes. Sitting in her tiny one-room flat in Nairobi, Kenya, I was no longer talking to a refugee. I was listening to a 22-year-old woman – four years younger than me – trying to make sense of a life she was never prepared for.

A life on the outskirts of a bustling African city, separated from the village she knows and the family she loves in the Congo.

In 2018, Joyce made the terrifying decision to leave her home to escape the horrors of civil war after her village was attacked several times by militia. To find safety, she journeyed to Kenya, where she lives today with her husband and their 2-year-old daughter.

Joyce is one of thousands of refugees living in Nairobi made vulnerable by the pressures of the urban environment, combined with the emotional and legal barriers of being a refugee.

"It's very stressful for me because back home, I was not aware of things like rent. These things became very hard when I arrived here. Life back home, I enjoyed everything, but life here, things have totally changed", Joyce says.

Processing the trauma of her past while managing a medical condition that prevents her from working, at just 22, Joyce could barely support herself, let alone provide for her household.

Thankfully, in October last year, she made contact with our local partner, RefugePoint. Since then, her life has taken a new direction.

In May, I journeyed to Africa – my first time ever – to meet refugees like Joyce and to see our partner's 'Self-Reliance' program in action.

A relatively new partner of Act for Peace, RefugePoint identify and support some of the most vulnerable refugees living in Nairobi.

Their 'Self-Reliance' program takes around 2 years to complete and aims to meet a person's basic needs through food, rent, medical and counselling support, while supporting them to earn their own income through business training and grants.

What makes their approach so innovative is an unwavering dedication to finding personalised, long-term and sustainable solutions.



Carol, Joyces case manager from RefugePoint, talks to Emma about her work. Carol is always on call to provide emotional and practical support to Joyce on her journey to self-reliance.

Tobin Jones / Act for Peace



Joyce stands with her husband outside her flat in Nairobi, Kenya, where she has lived since fleeing the Congo in 2018.

Tobin Jones / Act for Peace

Solutions for people like Joyce, who began her journey with RefugePoint after approaching one of their community workers in her neighbourhood. Closely guided by her case manager, Carol, she's since received food packages, medical assistance, counselling and rent support to get back on her feet.

"Carol is the best case manager, and one of the best people I've met during my life. Carol is a listener, when I talk to her, she always listens to my questions", she says.

With her family's situation now stabilising, her husband has started business training so he can expand his phone accessories stall, and hopefully, support his family on his own.

"When I see RefugePoint on my side, it makes me feel like my life is in safer hands, and my life could change because of that care that I'm getting", she says.

It's stories like Joyce's which give me hope and make me proud to be a part of the Act for Peace community; a community who backs displaced people and supports local leaders like RefugePoint.

Now I've returned to Australia, I'm excited to share that Act for Peace is developing a game-changing way that you can support more refugees like Joyce living in Kenya, to rebuild their lives and create the futures they want for themselves.

The Shift is launching soon, so keep your eyes peeled for more information on how you can get involved.

**Name changed for safety reasons.*



"When she spoke about the support of RefugePoint, Joyces face lit up. It was a beautiful thing to witness".
– Emma, Act for Peace

Emma Brophy / Act for Peace



Joel Pratley/Act for Peace

Our local partner in Zimbabwe, Christian Care, is helping farmers diversify the way they earn an income so they're better placed to meet the challenges of climate change.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

As climate change worsens, impacting most greatly the communities who are doing the least to cause it, we are working to understand what drives displacement and tackling the issues forcing people to leave their homes.

Extreme wildfires and floods in Australia during the past few years have brought the climate crisis to our doorstep. People lost homes and livelihoods, were left stranded for days without drinking water waiting to be evacuated and are now facing difficult decisions on how to rebuild their lives.

What we're experiencing in Australia is a small reflection of what is happening globally. More than 30 million people have already been displaced by climate fuelled extreme weather events.

It is the communities that are doing the least to cause climate change that are experiencing the greatest impacts.

At Act for Peace, we are committed to transforming the system to address the

root causes of the climate crisis, as well as providing support for communities already impacted.

To prevent whole communities having to move to survive in the future, governments must invest more to help them mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. In each context, uniquely adapted solutions are required – solutions like those being innovated by our partner Christian Care in Zimbabwe (see opposite).

With your support, Act for Peace is working with communities around the globe, backing them to both prevent climate-driven displacement and to find solutions for people already uprooted from their homes.



Act for Peace

Act for Peace staff took part in the global climate strike on March 25 to uplift the voices of people facing displacement due to climate change.

BACKING COMMUNITIES ON THE FRONTLINE OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Meet Ariko*, a beekeeper from Zimbabwe.

In recent years Zimbabwe has experienced a rapidly changing climate, including an increase in severe droughts. The ways communities such as Ariko's made a living off conventional farming are no longer sustainable.

One bad drought can leave entire communities facing displacement.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Act for Peace is working with our local partner in Zimbabwe, Christian Care, to help farmers diversify the way they earn an income and be better placed to meet the challenges of a changing climate.

Engaging with the latest climate science, Christian Care is equipping farmers like Ariko with new livelihood skills, equipment, and expert training in areas such as Conservation Farming, small livestock farming, and beekeeping.

Picking up beekeeping has been a steep learning curve for Ariko, but the benefits of the practice are twofold. He can make good money from selling the honey and there is the added environmental benefit of cross-pollination when the beekeeping units are set up next to other crops.

"There's a real science around it which the farmers are all learning along the way, and we've had reports back from farmers involved in the project that they're just ecstatic."

– Tracey Robinson, Act for Peace International Project Coordinator.

Thank you for backing communities in Zimbabwe on the frontline of the climate crisis. With your help and the support of the Australian Government through the



Act for Peace

Farmers like Ariko are adapting to a rapidly changing climate by learning new skills like beekeeping.

Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), this work is possible.

We hope Ariko's willingness to innovate, learn and adapt can serve as inspiration as we continue to tackle this crisis together.

* Name changed for safety reasons.

TOGETHER WE ARE:

- Working with partners and communities to help them better prepare for disasters, and to adapt to and/or mitigate the effects of climate change, diversifying livelihoods and climate resilient farming.
- Advocating for increased government action to better prepare for, and respond to, disasters and climate change.
- Pushing for governments and those with power to address the root causes of climate-driven displacement.

IT'S TIME FOR LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT

Together we must push for action to help address the world's greatest challenges, like climate change and conflict, that continue to drive people from their homes and prevent them from returning.

In June's election, Australians voted for action on the issues they care about and voted in a new Government. In his victory speech, Anthony Albanese, promised to bring the nation together and "promote unity and optimism, not fear and division".

In the same week, for the first time in history, the number of people displaced by conflict around the world exceeded 100 million. Millions more have been forced from their homes by disasters, with the recent floods in Australia highlighting that displacement is no longer an issue we only see in the news.

It's time for a long-term global strategy on how to prevent displacement, how to respond when it does occur, and how to find sustainable solutions for those uprooted from their homes.

With over 70 years' experience working in partnership with local organisations globally to support refugees and other displaced people, our team at Act for Peace have witnessed first-hand the cost-benefit value of this approach.

In the Pacific, for example, we're supporting our partners and their communities on the frontline of the climate crisis to be prepared for and able to respond to disasters, as well as to adapt to their long-term impacts, helping prevent the likelihood of climate-driven displacement.

We must continue to back those with lived experience of displacement, and support local leaders to prevent, respond to and find solutions for displaced people.

More Australians are in favour of increasing the aid budget than not and our new Government seems to agree. Prime Minister Albanese has said: "The truth is that international aid is not only the right thing to do to developing countries, it is in our national interest to engage and to provide support to developing nations."

Together with your support, we will be calling on this Government to act on its promises and take long-term action to help create a world where everyone belongs.

Words by James Thomson, Senior Policy and Protection Advisor at Act for Peace



Julia Loersch/Act for Peace

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 help their communities prepare for and be able to respond to these disasters.

ONE MUM DOING HER PART TO CREATE A BETTER WORLD

This August, Tara is taking on a brave new challenge: 7 days walking the Larapinta trail on our Trek for Refugees.

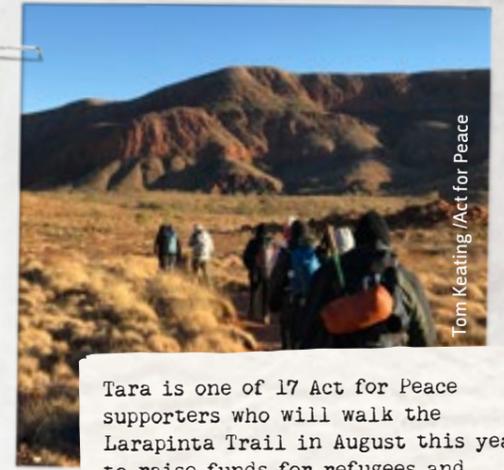
Tara lives with her daughter in a little town called Jabiru in the Northern Territory. She knows she's got the power to help change the world, and she's prepared to work hard to make sure it happens.

In August, Tara is taking on the experience of a lifetime by joining 16 like-minded strangers on a 7-day hike of the iconic Larapinta Trail in the Act for Peace Trek for Refugees. Raising funds along the way, the group will walk in solidarity with refugees and displaced people around the world.

It's the first fundraising event of its kind for Act for Peace – and for Tara – who has done the Ration Challenge for the last few years. She says it's a step up from anything she's done before: "I'm completely out of my comfort zone! It's all new to me."

While scenically spectacular, the journey through the Larapinta will no doubt be a physically and emotionally demanding one. Despite all this, Tara jumped at the opportunity.

"My whole life I've been struggling with anxiety and panic attacks, and a lot of that stems from feeling helpless about the problems in the world; like I can't really do anything about it. So that's why I first started fundraising for refugees."



Tom Keating/Act for Peace

Tara is one of 17 Act for Peace supporters who will walk the Larapinta Trail in August this year to raise funds for refugees and displaced people around the world.

Tara is already close to hitting her fundraising goal of \$5,000. Aside from raising money, she says the trek gives her an entry point to talk more about refugees with people in Australia and help change people's perspectives.

"I guess there's just a stigma attached to the word refugee. So, I like talking to people about it and trying to give them a different perspective. I think it does open eyes, and it does help."

On top of this, Tara says her daughter is a big motivator for why she wants to do the trek: "I just want her to grow up in a peaceful world, and in a world that has hope. We see a lot of negativity, I just want her to grow up with hope, with love, and just feeling good about the world we live in."



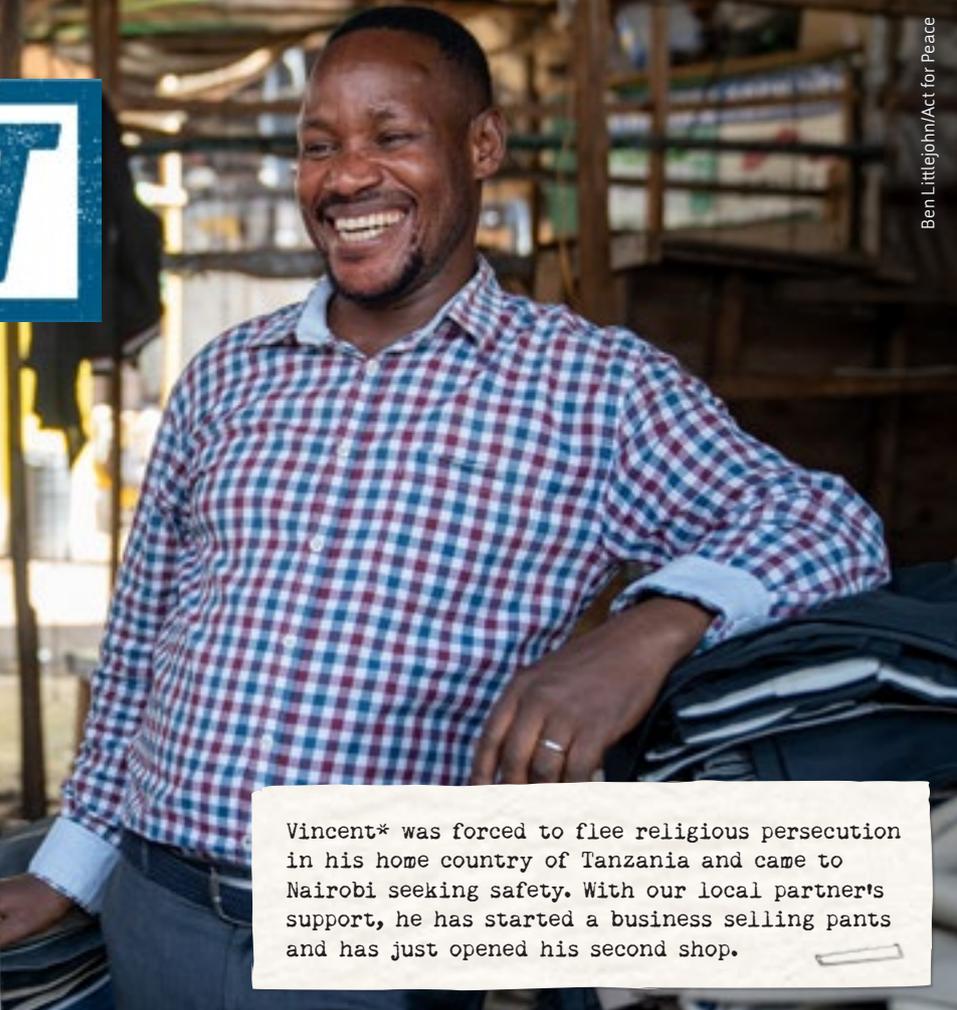
Act for Peace

Creating a more peaceful world for her daughter is one of Tara's biggest motivations for fundraising for refugees.

THE SHIFT



Emma from Act for Peace, also on page 6-7, meeting Vincent.



Vincent* was forced to flee religious persecution in his home country of Tanzania and came to Nairobi seeking safety. With our local partner's support, he has started a business selling pants and has just opened his second shop.

The Shift is a game-changing new way to back refugees to rebuild their lives and find hope for the future again.

Over the next two years, members of The Shift will back a small group of refugees in Kenya to create the life they want for themselves. We will be joining them on each step of this intensive program, connecting with them and each other, and learning directly from our inspiring local partner, RefugePoint.

Together, we will help build public support to scale up this unique approach, create more compassion for refugees here in Australia, and, little by little, help end the refugee crisis.

We're inviting you to be involved in the early stages of developing this game-changing new initiative.

The Shift is launching soon.

To register your interest and keep up to date, please visit: www.actforpeace.org.au/theshift

*Name changed for safety reasons.



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