

# ACT FOR PEACE

MAGAZINE | SUMMER 2026

YOUNG REFUGEES  
BUILDING FUTURES

CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN  
NEEDS IN GAZA

UNITING AROUND THE  
CHRISTMAS BOWL

REFLECTIONS FROM  
BANGKOK

# Unity: for a world that needs peace

LINK  
magazine





# Working in solidarity with local communities

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Because of you, we're able to invest in local organisations and work together to create lasting change.

Our partners develop lasting solutions for people who are displaced by conflict and disaster. You make that change possible. Here are some highlights from our most recent Annual Impact Report.

Scan the QR code or visit [actforpeace.org.au/impactreport](http://actforpeace.org.au/impactreport) to see more.



## CONTENTS

<b>WORKING IN SOLIDARITY WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>2</b>
Highlights from our Annual Impact Report	.....
<b>CRITICAL HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN GAZA</b>	<b>4</b>
Life-saving support for Palestinians needed	.....
<b>YOUNG REFUGEES BUILDING FUTURES</b>	<b>6</b>
Turning their passions into professions	.....
<b>REFLECTIONS FROM BANGKOK</b>	<b>10</b>
Local humanitarian leadership in action	.....
<b>MEET OUR NEW CEO</b>	<b>13</b>
Act for Peace welcomes Andrew Hassett	.....
<b>UNITING AROUND THE CHRISTMAS BOWL</b>	<b>14</b>
There's history in this bowl	

## GOAL 1: SAFETY IN EXILE

Ensuring people live in safety and with dignity while displaced

### 11 PROGRAMS

- 247 refugees employed in leadership roles in two refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border
- 7 passionate and capable trainees recruited and trained for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel
- Almost \$400,000 raised for the Middle East Emergency Appeal



Aliza Khan/Act for Peace

In Pakistan's Umerkot district, programs run by local partner, Community World Service Asia (CWSA), are helping improve access to education.



## GOAL 2: A PLACE TO BELONG

Helping people uprooted from their homes find a permanent place to belong

### 6 PROGRAMS

- 96% of families increased their savings since joining saving and loan groups in Jordan
- 1,012 vulnerable returned refugees and internally displaced people received essential documents in Sri Lanka
- 40 project participants completed a variety of vocational short-term skills training in Ethiopia

## GOAL 3: REDUCED DISPLACEMENT

Working to reduce the number of people forced to flee their homes

### 11 PROGRAMS

- More than 12,000 people accessed health services and received free essential medicines in Pakistan
- 3,335 farmers trained in conservation agriculture in Zimbabwe
- 1,321 people participated in protection, human rights and climate change orientations in the Philippines
- 758 community members attended climate change information sessions in Indonesia

## FY24-25 SNAPSHOT

Act for Peace worked with and for 113,959 people around the world who were uprooted by conflict and disaster.

We backed 18 local organisations across 16 countries to create lasting change, helping empower people to regain the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong.

## WHO WE HELPED:

**25,019**  
MEN

**18,841**  
BOYS

**42,608**  
WOMEN

**20,581**  
GIRLS

**4,110**  
PEOPLE WITH  
A DISABILITY



**18 LOCAL PARTNERS**



**16 COUNTRIES**



**25 PROGRAMS**



**113,959 PEOPLE\***  
(PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS)

\*Total program participants includes 2,804 individuals whose data was not disaggregated and does not include the Gaza emergency response where data is not yet available.



A family looks at an apartment block destroyed by a missile strike in Gaza.

# Urgent needs in Gaza

Despite the ongoing ceasefire in Gaza, humanitarian conditions remain critical with continued reports of Israeli ceasefire violations, a deepening health crisis and harsh winter conditions.

Israel also announced at the end of December that it would suspend permits for more than three dozen aid organisations operating in Gaza. This news means it's more important than ever for local organisations on the ground to receive the resources to provide life-saving support to Palestinians.

Gaza's population has faced multiple displacements, food shortages and widespread destruction of shelters, and the cruel winter has only added to the misery as temperatures plummeted.

Act for Peace continues to equip local organisations to provide life-saving emergency assistance through our Middle East Appeal.

According to Geoff Robinson, Head of Global Solidarity, the situation remains extremely fragile.

“Communities are experiencing extraordinary levels of suffering, displacement and insecurity, and humanitarian organisations are facing significant challenges in getting assistance to those who need it most,” says Geoff.

“The conflict has had a devastating impact on civilians, with large-scale displacement, loss of life, and the collapse of essential services such as healthcare, water and shelter. The operating environment for humanitarian agencies is highly constrained, with limited access, damaged infrastructure and ongoing insecurity making it difficult to deliver assistance safely and consistently.”

These ongoing challenges mean it's more important than ever to provide vital humanitarian assistance to people who are desperately hoping for lasting peace.



While the situation on the ground in Gaza is incredibly complex, it's local organisations who are best placed to respond to the vast needs.

Funds to our Middle East Appeal are deployed through the ACT Alliance network of local organisations. According to George Hajaj, Interim Regional Representative (Middle East and North Africa), ACT Alliance, the needs remain critical.

"Entire neighbourhoods have been flattened, families are displaced and access to essential services ...are extremely limited," he says. "Life is far from returning to normal."

"ACT Alliance members have been responding since the very first day and continue to work tirelessly every day," says George.

"With our members in Palestine, we are delivering food, clean water, medical assistance, shelter materials, psychosocial support and protection services... we are helping people rebuild and restore hope with dignity."

**"ACT members have a strong local presence and long-established partnerships in Gaza. We have dedicated staff and volunteers who remain on the ground, working courageously every day under incredibly challenging circumstances."**

**International support, including advocacy and humanitarian assistance, is critical to enabling this work to continue and expand."**

- George.

Act for peace today by giving to our Emergency Appeal to help local organisations in the Middle East respond to this humanitarian crisis.



[actforpeace.org.au/middle-east-appeal](http://actforpeace.org.au/middle-east-appeal)



With your support and through the ACT Alliance, local partners can continue to provide much-needed medical care in Gaza.

Majdi Fathi/Christian Aid



# Opportunity for young refugees in Jordan

Young people in Jordan are building brighter futures thanks to a sustainable livelihood program transforming families for generations.

Jordan has one of the largest refugee populations globally, hosting the majority of the world's Syrian refugees and the largest number of Palestinian refugees.<sup>1</sup>

While some refugees live in large camps, the vast majority live in urban areas, which creates significant challenges for both refugees and the host community members, including competition for basic needs like food, shelter and jobs.

Young people in Jordan face even more complex challenges, including high unemployment, limited access to quality education, gaps in vocation and financial instability at home.

These pressures can undermine confidence, impact food security and limit their ability to plan for the future.

Complex, multi-layered challenges like this require carefully considered, holistic, targeted, locally led solutions.

The Graduation Approach supports families to build sustainable pathways out of poverty.



Hassan is building a career in hotel management.



DSPR Jordan

Hassan working in the hotel kitchen.

The Forsa (meaning opportunity in Arabic) program was successfully implemented as a two-year pilot for Palestinian and Syrian families in Jordan, supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

Act for Peace local partner, Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) supported 50 families (282 people) through the program, which saw:

- 50 people receive grants to start a business
- 40 families complete the program with two sources of income (one family member starting a business and one family member working)
- 98% of families increase their savings and the quality and quantity of their daily meals

Building on the success of the Forsa program, which ended in June 2024, DSPR is now implementing Forsa for Youth in Jordan's capital, Amman. This iteration is focused on helping young Syrian and Palestinian refugees build hope-filled futures.

Forsa for Youth goes beyond short-term aid, equipping young people with practical, market-

relevant skills, life and soft skills training and opportunities for income generation, while also strengthening social protection, financial inclusion and empowerment.

According to DSPR Programs Manager, Alaa AlSalaiti, the long-term gains are significant.

**“By adapting Forsa for youth, the program not only promotes economic livelihood stability but also nurtures self-confidence, social engagement and long-term resilience,”** says Alaa.

“This comprehensive support enables youth to actively participate in their communities, contribute to their households and build sustainable pathways toward independent, productive futures.”

For individual participants, Forsa for Youth has already been transformative.

When Hassan\* joined the program, he struggled to identify his passion and a future career path.

But with a program team that provided career training and support to build his confidence,



Tracey Robinson/Act for Peace

Omar proudly displays his perfumes.



he started to believe in himself.

Through dedicated career pathway sessions, Hassan discovered a strong passion that aligned with a market need in hotel management.

He received intensive vocational training on topics like hotel operations, room service and catering that not only provided valuable skills for the job market but also boosted his self-confidence and mental well-being.

After completing his training, the project team connected him with a job in a restaurant where he is now becoming a skilled catering and customer service professional.

Hassan's journey has been transformational.

**“Forsa Youth Project has helped me achieve everything I have today. I can truly say that I’m happy now.”** - Hassan

When young Palestinian Omar\*, joined the Forsa program, he dreamed of starting a solar energy business. After researching the market, he realised competition in the sector was too strong and the costs were too high to generate a reliable income.

But the DSPR team encouraged Omar to explore alternatives aligned with his interests and market demand. He chose to pursue perfume making — a popular and culturally significant trade in the region.

One unexpected barrier stood in his way: Omar struggled with poor eyesight, making it hard to measure ingredients and work with precision.

Forsa stepped in, arranging medical advice and providing glasses so he could safely continue.

**“Being able to see properly changed everything.”** Omar shared.

With business skills, marketing training, and mentoring, Omar launched a small perfume booth and has begun entering the marketplace.

His biggest challenge so far is competition, but he is tackling it head-on through quality

improvement, customer loyalty strategies, and SWOT analysis — all tools he learned through the program.

**“Before Forsa, youth here could only find occasional jobs that paid almost nothing. Now I have hope and a future. I am reinvesting everything I earn back into my business to make it better.”** - Omar.

Building on the program's success, DSPR aims to scale the project, supporting a new cohort of refugees and host community members to build sustainable livelihoods.

1. More than 2.39 million Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA and approximately 600,000 Syrians are currently registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

\*Names changed to protect privacy.



Omar bottling his perfumes for sale.



# Walking our talk on localisation: Reflections from Bangkok

Act for Peace has long been an advocate for local leadership.

Our approach to development is centred on long-term partnership and investment in shaping displacement solutions that are driven by the community, for the community.

The Regional Humanitarian Partnership Week (RHPW) Asia Pacific is held in Bangkok each year and is organised by the Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN), Community World Service Asia (CWSA), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

In December 2025, over 500 representatives gathered in Bangkok, representing 237 humanitarian organisations from 38 different countries, to strengthen partnerships and drive humanitarian action.

For Act for Peace, this event provides a tangible platform for our local partners to be at the centre of discussions on the issues impacting them – both across the sector and in their communities.

This year, we supported eight partners to attend the RHPW through the Walking the Talk program, which is delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Act for Peace staff and partners learning alongside each other at the full day partner workshop.



Aimée Keay/Act for Peace

During Act for Peace's interactive session, participants had the opportunity to workshop challenges in small groups and present their solutions.

Partners took part in three days of learning, collaboration and networking, working together to advance humanitarian solutions and strengthen their collective resilience.

Act for Peace presented a conference session, exploring how organisations can move beyond traditional aid models to become enablers of solidarity and locally led change.

Head of Global Solidarity, Geoff Robinson, facilitated the session, drawing on Act for Peace's transformation journey and examining what it means to "walk our talk" on localisation – shifting from transactional funding relationships to genuine partnerships that elevate local leadership and community voice.

Local partners, Oxwell Madara from Christian Care Zimbabwe, Dino Satria from Yayasan Cita Wadah Swadaya (YCWS) and Sooriyakumary Sinnathamby from Organisation for Elangai Refugees Rehabilitation – (OffER Ceylon) shared their reflections on the Walking the Talk program during the session.

Dino explained how flexible funding through Walking the Talk enables YCWS to respond to crises.

"Last year, when we had the Rohingya boat crisis in Sumatra, we were able to respond to that crisis, not only delivering services but also bringing a platform of local leadership...also bringing together communities to discuss the Rohingya crisis and how the local government and communities can provide support," explained Dino.

**"We were also able to continue our core activities during the USAID funding cuts. The Walking the Talk fund enabled us to maintain the services that we provide to refugees."**

Act for Peace Program Coordinator, Florina Xavier, presented a session during the event titled: Learning to Relax, Learning to Breathe – Self Care Time for Practitioners.

Throughout the week, partners expressed why having a platform to share their experiences and learn from others really matters.



Aimée Keay/Act for Peace

Act for Peace partners, Oxwell Madara from Christian Care Zimbabwe, Maria Tendai Dendere from Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Odina Vuisa from Vanuatu Christian Council.

**“We need to strengthen locally led initiatives because it is more sustainable if we empower and strengthen the local people, the local initiatives, the local organisations,” said Maria from Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC).**

“If these are strengthened, then we have frontline workers who can take care of disasters, issues of food security, issues of health, education, the early warning systems, because when they are empowered, they are there, and they are the first responders.”

Siu’ivahamama’o Fangupo, from Tonga National Council of Churches, gained significant value

from the shared learning opportunities.

“I attended a session on inclusiveness and that’s what we’ve been working on the last three to five years in Tonga...so I learned a lot about how other organisations run programs in their countries,” he said.

Alongside RHPW, Act for Peace also held a full-day partner workshop, creating space for partners and staff to learn alongside each other and discuss the future of partnerships and localisation, explore the benefits of impact storytelling, collaborate on possibilities for collective action and reflect on the week’s learning.



# Meet our new CEO: Andrew Hassett

Act for Peace is thrilled to welcome Andrew Hassett as our new Chief Executive Officer.

Andrew joins Act for Peace at an important time in our journey, as we build on a long legacy and look ahead with a renewed focus on peace and belonging.

“Andrew joins us at a pivotal moment when the world and its people need peace more than ever before,” says Act for Peace Board Chair, Leigh Cleave.

“The board is confident in Andrew’s combination of strategic leadership, advocacy and communications expertise and deeply held

values that will guide Act for Peace, helping to deepen our impact as we write this new chapter.”

Andrew brings a wealth of experience and heart to the role, with a background across both global and national contexts.

He has previously served as Director of Communications and Advocacy with the UNICEF hosted Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and as Senior Director of Advocacy and Global Campaigns for World Vision International.

**“I am excited to build on Act for Peace’s 75-year history of working alongside partners to deliver meaningful, lasting change,”**

says Andrew.

“Together, we have a unique opportunity to connect faith communities across borders, unite diverse capabilities and networks and strengthen collaboration to support and empower people uprooted by conflict and disaster,” he says.

As Act for Peace continues to grow from a traditional aid agency into a movement for peace, Andrew brings a deep commitment to justice and a passion for supporting people displaced by conflict, climate and disaster.

**“Acting for peace means moving beyond words to deliberate, collective action that upholds dignity and calls for peace with justice.”** - Andrew.

“It is about standing with people affected by conflict and disaster, addressing the root causes of violence and displacement, and working across differences to create lasting solutions.

“Peace is not passive: it is built through courage, partnership and sustained commitment.”

Welcome Andrew.



Act for Peace welcomes Andrew Hassett as the new CEO.



Wes Selwood/Act For Peace

Church members from Glenbrook Uniting Church celebrating the 2025 Christmas Bowl.

# There's history in this bowl



At a time when unity is so desperately needed, churches across Australia gathered around a simple symbol – a bowl – choosing to put their faith into action during the Advent season.

For 76 years, the Christmas Bowl has been one of Australia's most enduring Christmas traditions.

In 1949, Rev. Frank Byatt sat with his family before a Christmas table laden with food. Outside their home, the world was still scarred by war with millions of refugees in Europe who were hungry, cold and displaced. The contrast was impossible to ignore.

Frank invited his congregation to place a simple bowl on their own Christmas tables to give what they could as a practical expression of Christ's love. That small gesture grew into a movement that now unites churches across the country every Advent season, sparking a tradition of generosity that has endured for generations.

Frank had a vision for Christians of every tradition to set aside their differences and stand together in love for their neighbours.

And today when that vision is still so desperately needed in our communities, the Australian church continues to respond with unity and generosity.

This past Advent season saw congregations gather from Seacliff to Sydney, Hobart to Humpty Doo, giving to support local partners around the world meet urgent needs in their communities.

Faith leaders collaborated to create resources that support churches throughout the Advent journey, offering insights to inspire faith in action.

**"Through the Christmas Bowl, let our love become shelter, our sharing become adaptation, our generosity become joy,"**  
says Reverend Dr Graham Joseph Hill.

Congregants gathered, stories of transformation were shared from pulpits around the country and gifts were given in the spirit of love, justice and compassion.

Those gifts support local partners who meet urgent needs helping to create a world where uprooted people can find safety, dignity, and belonging.

**Thank you for celebrating 76 years of the Christmas Bowl and helping create a world where people uprooted by conflict and disaster can have a safe place to belong.**



# Leave a legacy of peace

**Behind every story is a future still unfolding.**

Young people learning new skills, families rebuilding after loss and communities standing strong despite unimaginable hardship.

These moments of hope don't happen overnight, they are made possible through long-term commitment, trust and care.

One of the most powerful ways to support this work is by leaving a gift in your Will.

By including a gift in your Will for Act for Peace,

you can help ensure that your legacy is one of compassion, justice and peace.

It is a way to continue walking alongside people uprooted by conflict and disaster, long into the future.

To find out more about how you can help create lasting change for people displaced by conflict and disaster through a gift in your Will, scan the QR code or visit [actforpeace.org.au/gift-in-will](http://actforpeace.org.au/gift-in-will)



Thank you for choosing to make a lifetime of difference.

**Cover image:** Glenbrook Uniting Church members gather in unity around the Christmas Bowl.

# ACT FOR PEACE

**CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
THROUGH THE *actalliance***

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

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Wes Seiwood/Act for Peace

