

ACT FOR PEACE

MAGAZINE | WINTER 2026

HOW PEACE BEGINS
THE POWER OF PRESENCE
GROWING A MOVEMENT
FOR PEACE
PREPARING BEFORE
DISASTER STRIKES
RESPONDING TOGETHER
IN VENEZUELA

Your support is changing lives.

A woman is riding a bicycle on a dirt path that winds through a dense, sun-dappled forest. She is wearing a bright orange bucket hat, a black short-sleeved shirt with a large orange and white floral pattern, and a colorful skirt with a geometric pattern in yellow, red, and blue. She is looking directly at the camera with a steady expression. The background is filled with out-of-focus green trees and foliage, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall lighting is bright and natural, suggesting a sunny day.

LINK
m a g a z i n e



The community animator on a mission to build peace

A solitary figure pedals her bicycle down the long, dusty roads that connect the villages in Zaka district in Zimbabwe.

Shupikai is a woman on a mission.

Shupikai is a community animator with Christian Care Zimbabwe. Living in the same community as the farmers she supports, she helps organise training, shares information and connects people with the support they need.

Act for Peace partners with Christian Care to help communities stay strong in the face of a changing climate.

Together, they work with farmers to improve crop yields, diversify their incomes and build the resilience they need to withstand future climate shocks.

This means families' can not only meet their daily needs but also have a more secure future, so they can stay on the lands they call home.

When it comes to making sustainable, long-term change, Shupikai's work is vital.

She inspires community members to become active citizens, helps neighbours work together, encourages people to solve problems collectively and creates the trust needed for communities to thrive. Her work centres on mobilising people, sharing information, coordinating trainings, and supporting farmers as they implement agricultural and livelihood programs designed to strengthen food security and resilience across the community.

As a local community member, Shupikai is deeply trusted by the people she serves. She explains that this local connection is one of the reasons her role is so important.

"Having someone based in the community is different from bringing someone from outside the area, because people may find it difficult to accept the program," she explains.

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Shupikai's work involves communication and coordination.



Community members are more willing to participate in programs and adopt new farming practices when they are encouraged by someone they know and relate to — someone who farms alongside them and understands their daily realities.

Much of Shupikai's work involves communication and coordination. When Christian Care staff plan workshops, field inspections, or training sessions, she is responsible for gathering farmers and informing local stakeholders.

In a region where poor mobile network coverage creates major communication challenges, this often requires her to travel long distances by bicycle between villages to personally deliver messages. She visits lead farmers across the ward, who then help pass information on to others within their groups.

"I make sure that the message reaches the intended people and that there is coordination and mutual support among us as farmers."

Shupikai acts as a bridge between the community and Christian Care staff, carrying messages, concerns, and updates in both directions. If there are challenges such as livestock disease, farming difficulties, or community concerns, she reports them back to program officers so support can be provided quickly.

Through the Christian Care program, Shupikai has seen major changes in her community. Improved farming knowledge, livestock support, and livelihood activities have helped households become more food secure and economically stable.

"Right now, we have our own grinding mill. We are grateful that we are milling and successfully running our program well," says Shupikai.

For Shupikai, one of the most powerful impacts of the program has been the way it has strengthened peace and harmony in the community. She has seen firsthand that when families have food, livestock, income, and productive work, conflict decreases significantly. Rather than spending time gossiping, arguing, or fighting, people are focused on farming, caring for their households, and working together on development projects.



Richard Wainwright/Act for Peace

Shupikai rides her bicycle between villages to mobilise her community and share information.

"My work brings peace and harmony, because when there is no hunger in a household, there is no conflict or disturbance."

- Shupikai

"We encourage them to farm and to keep livestock. So even when they are at home, they are already living with happiness. There is no longer fighting or insulting each other."

Her role as an animator has become about much more than communication, but is also focused on building unity, encouraging cooperation, and helping communities move forward together.

By supporting locally led organisations like Christian Care, you are investing in people like Shupikai — local leaders who understand their communities, have earned the trust of their neighbours and are creating lasting change from within.

One bicycle. One trusted local leader. One community at a time. That's how peace begins.



Urgent humanitarian needs after Venezuela quakes

As Venezuela struggles to come to terms with the loss and damage in the wake of the June twin earthquakes, the humanitarian needs are enormous.

A 7.2-magnitude quake followed just 39 seconds later by another 7.5-magnitude shock — the biggest in Venezuela in over a century — flattening high-rise buildings and entire districts in the coastal state of La Guaira on June 24.

Thousands of people lost their lives and more than 16,000 people are reported injured.

Homes, schools and health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, forcing many families to shelter in temporary accommodation or out in the open. Access to clean water, food, healthcare and other essential services was severely disrupted.

In a nation already facing a prolonged economic crisis, the scale of the recovery effort is unimaginable. The United Nations estimates 1.3 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

With state services already struggling to meet everyday demands before the earthquakes, local organisations desperately need support to meet the overwhelming urgent needs. When disasters strike, local people are always the first to respond.

Through the ACT Alliance, Act for Peace is supporting trusted local organisations already working alongside communities affected by the earthquakes. Because these organisations were part of their communities before disaster struck, they were able to respond immediately and will have a long-term presence.



Entire buildings have been condemned to rubble.



Freisy Gonzalez/LWF

Makeshift tents set up at César Nieves Stadium, which has become a collection centre and shelter for people affected by the earthquakes.

Together, they are scaling up their humanitarian response and providing emergency assistance, including food, clean water, healthcare, shelter and psychosocial support for people affected by the disaster.

“Now that people are receiving support from other countries, it’s such a relief because they know they’re not left behind or facing this emergency alone.

“We’re working with local churches because that’s how we’re able to reach some of the most difficult places.”

Golda Ibarra, Country Representative for Lutheran World Federation.

As rescue efforts continue, local organisations are also preparing to expand their response, including emergency medical care, mental health support and assistance for families beginning the long process of recovery.

Help communities recover

Every gift helps equip trusted local organisations with the resources they need to respond quickly and effectively.

- Your support can help provide:
- Emergency food and clean water
- Emergency shelter and essential household items
- Primary healthcare and first aid
- Mental health and psychosocial support
- Assistance for families as they begin the long road to recovery

Please donate today to help provide life-saving assistance and support communities on the long road to recovery.



afp.org.au/VenezuelaEarthquake



“Sometimes the most important thing you can do is be present”: James’ journey with EAPPI

For James*, watching the horrors unfold in the Middle East on the news from the comfort of his home was no longer enough.

As he followed the ongoing suffering in Palestine and Israel, he found himself feeling increasingly helpless. “I was shouting at the television set,” he reflected, before his wife gently reminded him that it wasn’t helping anyone — including her.

So, James sat down and prayed a simple prayer: what could he do?

Just days later, he received an unexpected message about Act for Peace’s Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). As he learned more, he realised it was exactly the kind of practical action he had been searching for.



Demolition in Jabel Makaber.

Through the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), Act for Peace joins a global movement of churches working for peace with justice. Modelled under the values of nonviolence and principled impartiality, EAPPI utilises the internationally recognised strategy of ‘protective accompaniment’ to uphold the human rights of those affected.

At the invitation of local communities, Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) accompany local communities, for three months, in East Jerusalem and the West bank, offering a protective international presence, monitoring and documenting human rights violations and helping ensure local voices are heard beyond their communities.

For James, the decision to join EAPPI was a natural continuation of a lifelong commitment to justice and compassion. His family background was deeply shaped by faith and service — his father was a minister, his mother was a social worker.

“What’s most important in life is working for the betterment of our communities and for people who are suffering.” - James

During his three-month deployment with EAPPI, James was based in East Jerusalem and spent his days accompanying community members to safely access schools and homes, monitoring access to sites of worship, listening to people’s stories and documenting violations of human rights and international law.

One of the experiences that stayed with him was witnessing the impact of restrictions on children trying to get to school.

James recalled seeing a teenage Palestinian boy



Demolition witnessed by an EA in Silwan.

stopped, searched and detained. The boy was held behind a metal barrier while armed soldiers went through his bag. After finding a phone, they called his mother, and both mother and child were taken away by Israel Police and Border Police. According to James, it's likely they were arrested simply for having Palestinian school materials.

"It was just outrageous," says James, reflecting on the experience of seeing an innocent child treated this way.

James also witnessed the aftermath of a home demolition by the Israeli Civil Administration, where a four-storey building, home to around 90 people, had been destroyed.

The family had been given only seven minutes to leave before their home was demolished.

"There were people there who were supposed to be helping them move their stuff out," James recalled. "And as you can appreciate, there wasn't a lot of support being provided for the Palestinians who were harassed and beaten."

According to Human Rights Watch around 587 Palestinians have been displaced by house demolitions, in East Jerusalem, since October 7, 2023.

For James, EAPPI is about more than witnessing injustice. It's about standing alongside people and ensuring their stories are seen and heard.

"The idea of accompaniment is that you're there with people," he explained. "You're not there to

fix everything — you're there to be present."

Through Act for Peace's involvement in EAPPI, Australians can join this global movement of solidarity, helping to create a presence for peace and supporting communities affected by conflict.

James hopes others will understand the importance of showing up, even when the challenges feel overwhelming.

"Sometimes you think, what difference can one person make?" he said. "But being there matters. Being a witness matters."

At Act for Peace, we believe lasting peace is built by people and communities working together. Through programs like EAPPI, we stand alongside those living with conflict, amplify the leadership of local communities and invite Australians to become part of a growing movement for peace.

Whether through prayer, advocacy, giving or serving as an Ecumenical Accompanier, every act of solidarity helps ensure communities facing conflict know they are not alone.

Scan the QR code to learn more about Act for Peace's Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).



afp.org.au/takeaction

*Name changed to protect privacy.

World Council of Churches (WCC) human rights monitors have been denied entry to Palestine by Israeli authorities who control all access points into the West Bank and Gaza, as part of the ongoing occupation. Recently an Australian EA, supported by Act for Peace, was denied entry at the border and not permitted to experience life in the Holy Land as part of the WCC program. It is increasingly difficult for internationals to enter Palestine, particularly at a time when non-violent and impartial observers are critical to observe and monitor human rights violations in Palestine.



A community prepared: leading from the pulpit in Vanuatu

Elder Able believes that the church needs to work together to support their communities.



For many years, the people of Zone 4, known as Kokoriko, in Port Vila, felt like they were the community people forgot about.

But one workshop helped change the story of this small, close-knit community.

When respected church leader Elder Able attended a Theology of Disaster Resilience in a Changing Climate workshop in December 2024, he returned with more than new knowledge. He returned with a vision for what his community could become.

For Elder Able, the lessons were not just something to take home but they were something to put into action.

“When I returned, I shared what I had learned with the community,” he explains. “People listened, asked questions and started talking about what we could do together.”

Those conversations sparked something new: the formation of Zone 4’s first community committee.

With Elder Able as Chairman, the committee created a new way for residents to organise, plan and make sure their voices were heard. The group included local leaders, women and young people — ensuring the whole community had a role in preparing for the future.

“The training showed me that leadership is about helping people see what they can do when they work together,” says Elder Able.

One of the committee’s first priorities was a community clean-up day. Residents of all ages joined together — mothers, teenagers, children and community members who had never worked together before.

The activity created more than a cleaner environment. It also created connection and pride.

One unexpected change came before the clean-up even began. Some residents had planned to remove large mango and samblong trees, but after learning about their importance for shade, food and protecting the land, the community decided to care for them instead.

The trees became a symbol of what Kokoriko was building: a community that values what it already

has and is united to protect it.

In Vanuatu, where communities face increasing risks from cyclones, rising sea levels and climate-related disasters, preparation can make the difference between devastation and recovery.

Supported by the Australian Government and implemented through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP), the Act for Peace and Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC) Disaster READY program helps local communities identify risks, strengthen leadership and develop practical plans before disasters hit.

A key part of this work is partnering with churches and faith leaders, who are among the most trusted and connected people in communities across Vanuatu. For many families, churches are more than places of worship. They are places where people gather, share information and support one another in times of crisis.

In Kokoriko, church leaders are bringing disaster resilience messages into everyday life — visiting families and including disaster preparedness information in sermons and community conversations.

“The church has a responsibility to care for people. When we work together, we can support our community.” - Elder Able

Already, the impact is visible. Zone 4 now has a committee that can organise activities, advocate for the community and connect with wider disaster preparedness networks.

Residents who once felt invisible, now feel confident to act and lead.

What began with one workshop has become a turning point for Kokoriko.

They are planning future initiatives, exploring opportunities to register as an association, and looking for ways to continue strengthening their community.

For Elder Able, this is what resilience looks like: instead of waiting for help when disaster arrives, focusing on building strong communities that are ready to respond together.



Act for Peace welcomes Jarrod McKenna in mobilisation role

Act for Peace is pleased to welcome Jarrod McKenna as Mobilisation Strategist — a new role that reflects our growing commitment to equipping churches and communities to build peace with justice.

Jarrod has spent more than two decades helping churches and communities engage with issues of justice, peace and nonviolence.

He has worked across Australia and internationally as a pastor, communicator, movement-builder and trainer, including leadership roles with Common Grace and World Vision.

His appointment marks the beginning of a new chapter for Act for Peace, at a time when the organisation embarks on a new strategy to address displacement.

Act for Peace is strengthening how we engage Australians in building peace with justice and Jarrod's appointment as Mobilisation Strategist reflects a growing focus on mobilisation, church engagement and collective action alongside our longstanding humanitarian work.

Act for Peace believes churches and communities of faith have a unique role to play in building peace with justice and as we look to the future, we are inviting the church into deeper participation, solidarity and action.

For more than 75 years, supporters have helped Act for Peace stand alongside people uprooted by conflict and disaster.

This new role builds on that legacy by inviting Australian churches into deeper solidarity and action alongside our local partners.

"Since stepping into this new role, I have focused on strengthening partnerships across the sector and mobilising communities across Australia to respond to this defining moment in our history," he says.



Jarrod (right) pictured with two of his mentors who he describes as "Aussie peace legends", Jo Vallentine, former Australian Senator and joint Nobel Peace Prize nominee, (left) and Rev. Neville Watson (centre).

"I'm excited to announce Act for Peace has an official partnership with Common Grace to galvanise a movement for peace that will act collectively for healing-justice through the nonviolent way of Jesus." - Jarrod

With a deep commitment to peace, justice, refugee solidarity and grassroots action, Jarrod believes faith is expressed in how we stand with those who are vulnerable, displaced or excluded.

"I think any organisation where the byline is confronting injustice together plays a crucial role at this moment in history," he says.

"Making love practical is some of the most radical political work we can do at the moment."

Whether your church is taking its first steps or looking to deepen its engagement, Jarrod would love to start a conversation about how your community can be part of a growing movement for peace. You can contact him at JMcKenna@actforpeace.org.au.



Walking the Talk: Building a global movement for locally led change

Around the world, communities experiencing displacement are often the first to respond to crises, but their voices are often missing from the decisions that shape their futures. Walking the Talk is helping change that.

Act for Peace's global Walking the Talk program invests in 18 local organisations, strengthening the people and partnerships at the heart of humanitarian action.

"People have their own solutions to their own problems," says Maria Tendai Dendere, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC).

Over the past year, Walking the Talk has helped local organisations share their experiences, influence humanitarian practice and strengthen relationships with other humanitarian leaders around the world.

The program has also supported partners to test and strengthen new approaches that respond to local priorities. In Sri Lanka where there is longstanding tension between Tamil and Sinhalese communities, partners piloted

reconciliation workshops that brought women from different ethnic communities together to share their experiences, build connection and begin rebuilding trust.

Across the region, Walking the Talk is also strengthening the foundations that enable local leaders and organisations to continue their work. In Myanmar, Walking the Talk supported local leaders working alongside displaced communities by strengthening leadership, wellbeing and crisis response. In a nation experiencing the impact of a protracted civil war, local civil society organisations, including our partner Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC), are working in extraordinarily difficult conditions. Restricted civic space, interrupted communications and banking services, and severely limited humanitarian access are making their work increasingly challenging. Through professional development, trauma-informed support and peer networks, partners were better equipped to sustain their work and support communities through ongoing challenges.

"Even though our situations and conditions are very difficult, we never give up," says Kyaw Hla, MCC.

In Zimbabwe, partners have strengthened ways of working directly with communities, ensuring people experiencing displacement have a stronger voice in shaping the support they receive. Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is strengthening community ownership by helping local communities and government work together so community assets can be successfully handed over and sustained into the future.

At its heart, Walking the Talk is about more than individual programs. It's about building a growing movement of local leaders, organisations and communities working together for a more just and peaceful world — where communities experiencing displacement are driving solutions, shaping change and building a more peaceful future.



ZCC Project Officers attended a Learning and Exchange Workshop in Masvingo, supported by Walking the Talk.

Cover image: Shupikai rides her bicycle between villages, mobilising her community, sharing information, coordinating trainings and supporting farmers.

ACT FOR PEACE

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE **actalliance**

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