

peacemail

VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 11

POSTAGE PAID
OFF PEAK
AUSTRALIA

act for peace
reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



Over the past year, Act for Peace has shared the concern of the UN, the Australian and other governments over delays by the Sri Lankan Government in granting freedom of movement to people confined to overcrowded camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in northern Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan Government has cited security concerns and the need to first demine home areas before large-scale return to justify its approach. Amidst the policy debate, Act for Peace project partners, the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka (NCCSL), have helped people held in camps to ensure basic necessities are met and are providing psychosocial, educational assistance.

NCCSL also provide other relief action in response to regular flooding and landslides. This relief work strengthens the churches' wider peace and reconciliation ministry by demonstrating the churches' commitment to actively assisting people of all ethnic and religious communities throughout Sri Lanka.

\$32 can provide five blankets and mosquito nets for families arriving in displaced persons camps or made homeless by natural disaster

\$97 can provide an entire month of specialist medical assistance to injured and sick women and children

\$254 can pay for nutritious, cooked meals for ten families for a week

Grants between \$135 and \$300 help people restart cultivation by buying seeds and other inputs

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

"The Christmas Bowl People!"



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THANK YOU Partners for your commitment to Act for Peace through your regular gifts. Thank you for your generosity, especially those who have chosen to increase the amount of their giving. Together, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict and extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101** or email hgraham@ncca.org.au. Also, all feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners.

If you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to join this special group of committed givers, or would just like to help this project, your call or e-mail will be welcomed! All gifts of \$2 or more are tax-deductible.

Helping War and Disaster Victims to Rebuild Their Lives

Dear Act for Peace Partner,

My name is Inoka Udangani and I live in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka's North Central Province. In December 2008, floods destroyed my rice plants. I used credit to buy the plants and could no longer expect a harvest to pay my debts. The floods were the worst in my area in 15 years. The water reached the tops of some houses and overhead electrical wiring. It was two weeks before the flood waters went down.

Fortunately, the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka (NCCSL) gave me 10,000 rupees (about 135 AUD) through the local Methodist Church. This allowed me to pay the initial credit and borrow again so I was able to replant quickly after the flood waters subsided.

The church also had volunteers assisting with relief work. They cooked food in the school and distributed food parcels containing milk, rice, dahl, tea leaves, a tin of fish and Panadol. On the second day, most people took these food parcels and went to live with their relatives.

I have worked my one hectare farm in cooperation with a neighbouring family since I was married. My financial situation is difficult. Usually, I plant one acre costing 58,000 rupees (795 AUD) but may only get 56,000 rupees back from the harvest. I will keep some rice until the price rises.

My husband works at the harbour in the capital, Colombo, so our family has some other income. I'm 26 years old and we hope to provide our daughter, Tisaka, with a good education giving her a good position in society.

It was such a relief to have this help from Rev. Wesley Alexander of the Methodist Church. He told me that in this emergency, all churches and Buddhist and Muslim clergy worked together visiting house to house to find out what people needed. I know that without such grants some would get no further credit to farm and risk being forced into the city to become slum dwellers.

The churches and other religious groups also combined to provide financial management training. This training is arranged especially for women like me and I found it to be very helpful. I am so grateful for the grant, food and training which has helped me and my family put our lives back together. Thank you so much for these gifts.



Inoka

Partner's Prayer Points:

Care for all internally displaced people and families bereaved or separated as a result of armed conflict or disaster.

Wisdom and courage by all leaders and communities in Sri Lanka to overcome the grief, lack of trust and anger to build a just and reconciled society.