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# PEACEMAIL

VOLUME 11 • ISSUE 11

A NEW START FOR REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

## ACT FOR PEACE

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER  
THROUGH THE **actalliance**

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Peel gently to open

Peel gently to open



Thanks to your generous support, Act for Peace's partner – The Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC) – delivers a range of services for refugees who have come to Ethiopia for shelter from their war-torn homelands.

EOC-DICAC's work includes providing supplementary food for critically ill people and coordinating refugee's medical treatment including transport to appointments. It also involves providing counselling for psychosocial support and advice on how to stay safe from threats like human trafficking, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS. More recently, EOC-DICAC has expanded its work for refugees by providing a program particularly for refugees at risk of, or already survivors of, gender based violence with extra support including a choice of four vocational training courses which can help build the confidence of the trainees, empower them and ultimately improve the livelihoods of themselves and their families.

While refugees aren't able to work in the formal employment sector in Ethiopia, the courses give refugees new skills so that when they return home or are resettled in a safe third country, they can use their skills to earn an income. One of the best benefits of the vocational training program is that refugees are learning and given a purpose each day – which builds self-esteem and goals for the future.

### Your support is making a difference:



**\$47** provides transportation to medical care and counselling for survivors of gender based violence so these women can begin to heal and step forward with their lives.



**\$54** three days of emergency accommodation in a safe house for refugees in need of urgent health care in Addis Ababa.



**\$1044** per attendee for a full 6 months vocational training course in Food Preparation. This includes gaining an understanding of the importance of hygiene, nutrition and proficiencies in food preparation. Once equipped with these qualifications, refugees can plan a future in their homeland with a means to earn income.

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

### Would you prefer to receive your Peace Mails by email?

We can arrange this for you. Simply call or email us on **1800 025 101** or **info@actforpeace.org.au**

Take the Act for Peace **Ration Challenge** this June and eat the same rations as a Syrian refugee for one week. Raise money and awareness to support people who have lost everything. The money you raise will help provide food rations, healthcare and education to help give the people of Syria the strength they need to cope. It will also help many other refugees around the world to build safe, just and dignified lives. Last year's ration packs sold out. Register today to guarantee your place. Visit **actforpeace.org.au/rationchallenge** or call **1800 025 101**

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## A NEW START FOR REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

Dear Friend,

My name is Mianda\* and I live with my sister and her son in Addis Ababa. I wish to thank you for giving my life purpose. In 2014 my sister, her son and I fled our homeland of South Sudan because of the war. We became separated from our parents and the rest of our family in the exodus. We still haven't located them but I am thankful to be with my sister and her son.

The Ethiopian government is very generous to refugees from neighbouring countries, allowing us to seek safety in Ethiopia. Here we receive help from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC).

When we first reached Ethiopia, we were housed in a refugee camp with tens of thousands of other refugees. After a year there, my sister became sick and the medical care in and around the camp wasn't enough for her illness. We were moved to Addis Ababa so my sister could receive the treatment she needed.

When we arrived in Addis Ababa, we thanked God for EOC-DICAC, as they took care of us. First, they provided us accommodation in a safe house until we found a place to live. They provided us with a stipend to buy food and to look after ourselves, and they organised transport for my sister to get to hospital appointments. And we were both offered counselling to discuss the trauma we experienced fleeing our home country. We had been through terrible experiences, leaving us with mental and physical scars. The counselling helped us to heal.

As we are a female-headed household with a young child, our family was selected by EOC-DICAC and Act for Peace to be part of a program supporting people who survived or are at-risk of gender based violence (GBV). A major part of the program is providing a member of each selected family with vocational training. Through vocational training we develop skills we can use in the future to earn a living if we are resettled or return to our home country.

I am doing vocational training in Food Preparation. It is a 6-month professional course and we are trained by chefs. I already like to cook but I plan to earn an income in the future by catering for weddings of South Sudanese refugees. For now I'm making more nutritious food to help my sister's health improve.

I have made friends with other refugees on the course and we have all been through a lot. Some have experienced torture or sexual assault when they were fleeing for safety. EOC-DICAC helps these survivors to undergo HIV/AIDS testing and to get treatment if needed. The vocational training is the first time they've started to re-build their self-confidence and open up to others. EOC-DICAC is providing us with much support and I can't thank you enough.

Before I started vocational training, I used to sit at home and wonder "Who am I?" The loneliness became hard to bare. Now I feel motivated each morning, I am learning and I am excited about my future. Thank you for helping me with a new start.

Mianda\*

\*Mianda's name has been changed to protect the identity of her sister and herself.

