

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2009

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The UNHCR estimates that there are 42 million displaced people around the world, some in their own countries and some in countries of asylum. What can an individual Australian at home do to assist this appalling situation?

1. Look around you. Are there people in your street or nearby who are obviously from another country? Sit next to them on the bus, help them if they need it in the street or the shops, keep up to date with basic information so that you are able to refute the prejudiced and ignorant comments which are always around.

2. Ask around you. Are there people in your church who are already involved in programmes assisting refugees? Would your local school be grateful for a few hours per week spent helping children who are trying to learn in a new language and a new culture? Are there groups in your nearest community centre where you could offer skills and social support?

3. Become an Act for Peace Partner. Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). It works with people in Churches in Australia and with ecumenical partners to protect refugees and displaced people in Australia and in conflict-affected regions around the world.

An example of our work is with the Thailand-Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), which provides essential services to more than 140,000 Burmese refugees. Because of the strict rule of the military in Burma, forced labour, human trafficking and the frequent human rights abuses; refugees are flooding across the border joining many others that have spent the last twenty years living in refugee camps.



To find out more about TBBC and other refugee programs or to become an Act for Peace Partner, go to http://www.ncca.org.au/actforpeace/about_us/protect_refugees

4. Check with your Church Office. Many denominations have refugee programs and services where help of all sorts is welcome. You could try:

- Anglicare. 18 King William Rd North Adelaide 5008. 8305 9200
www.anglicare-sa.org.au
- Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide. 39 Wakefield St Adelaide 5000. Multicultural Services Project Officer Basia Gebski. 8210 8101 www.adelaide.catholic.org.au
- Lutheran Community Services. 309 Prospect Rd Blair Athol 5084 Volunteer Co-ordinator Rachel Friebel (Mondays & Tuesdays) 8269 9300. www.lccsa.org.au

- Salvation Army 39 Florence St Fullarton 5063 8408 6900
www.salvationarmy.org.au
 - Uniting Church 212 Pirie St Adelaide 8227 0822 www.sa.uca.org.au
 - Churches of Christ in SA/NT Inc www.cofcaustralia.org
 - The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) SA Regional Meeting
www.quakers.org.au
 - The Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan District of SA & NT
www.greekorthodox.org.au
5. Contact the specific refugee organisations. The best-known of these are:
- Australian Refugee Association (ARA) 304 Henley Beach Rd Underdale 5032 8354 2951 www.ausref.net
 - Survivors of Torture & Trauma Assistance & Rehabilitation Service (STTARS) 12 Hawker St Bowden 5007 8346 5433 www.sttars.org.au
 - Migrant Resource Centre of SA 59 King William St Adelaide 5000 8223 3604
6. What more can Schools do on Refugee and Migrant Sunday?
- Discuss some of the resources or stories in this kit
 - Write a letter for your school newspaper
 - Hold a class debate on a refugee issue
 - Speak at your school assembly
 - Organise a fundraising event

“[L]et us remember that refugees too are real people with real needs. Helping them to rebuild their lives and their communities benefits us all.” Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Heb. 13:2 (NRSV)