



ACWW Out and About

What ACWW Member Societies are up to around the world

ACWW Members Work with Refugees

ACWW Member Linda Roberts in Australia remembers her time in England

"After the war in Vietnam, England settled groups of refugees and Manchester offered support for 20 families in our district, Blackley. The council provided a number of council houses and approached several organizations to take responsibility for a family each. I was a teacher with family liaison responsibilities at our school and when singled out by our principal as the person to spearhead the family allocated to the school, got our Parent and Teacher group (PTA) involved. We scrubbed and painted the house and collected furniture to make it habitable using our own resources, op shop buys, and a little of our association funds. Three classrooms were given over to become a Centre for the families to learn English and the children learnt here as well, until they were ready to enter main stream classrooms. 'My' family consisted of mum, dad, and 3 boys. They settled well and became hard working members of our community. They remained my friends and would visit me and I them, right until I left England in 1992 (usually with yummy food gifts!) Every year the group would provide a celebration in school to share information and food from their homeland. To me, it worked because a structure was put in place to address many multifaceted aspects including welcome, home provision, income source, education and integration into our community."

ACWW Member Society Passage Christelijk mandates action for Refugees

Passage, together with other national organisations, have created this manifesto for working with refugees and call on their members and government to:

- Design and implement training and education, focused on gender and cultural sensitivity, for all professionals and volunteers working with refugees, both in- and outside the shelters.
- Improve the chain of cooperation and communication
- Realise an independent residence permit for all female refugees
- Provide fast and free of charge, easily accessible information and care in order to deal with traumas.
- Create (financial) space for thorough investigation reports about women and girls in the refugee shelters
- Translate Resolution 1325 and national Action Plan 1325 to local level in cooperation with female refugees
- Involve women's organizations at local level with policy and product development regarding the care of female refugees

Passage have also worked with an organisation in Greece which supports primarily women refugees.

Mambi Women's Group supports IDPs in Cameroon

"I come from an area in Africa where there is war. It started over 3 years ago with a crisis which was not properly handled. People are fleeing from some affected areas to those not yet affected. I visited some homes where these people were living. Men, women, children, and pregnant women all together, living 14- 15 people all in one room. I gathered food items like corn, beans, rice and other items like old dresses and soap. I assembled these Refugees and gave them these things. I told some members of parliament about these Refugees and also told some Mayors in my area. They then assigned me some women to help settle the refugees. They came from 6 villages. The first time we had more than 300 refugees to work with. The second time, there were more than 200. The MPs supported with money and food items. We used the money to buy more food, ingredients, and clothes to share with them. This time the Christians in my church gathered money and clothes etc. and we took these to the Refugees as well. The number of women we're helping keeps on increasing every day. Some are school children so we are still trying figure out how they can go to school after being out for close to three years now. They have started fleeing to other areas for safety but more are still coming in from other areas."

Florida Member Society supports Disaster Refugees

My home is in Florida which is near Puerto Rico. After Hurricane Maria devastated much of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, refugees leaving Puerto Rico came to Florida. Florida has helped these people to find places to live, get jobs, medical services, clothing, food and other life sustaining items to help them settle into their new environment. Our Florida Association of Home and Community Education members helped mostly with the personal needs.

Is your Society or Organisation working to welcome and support refugees into your community? Let us know what you are doing!