



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





Alaa' Imteir graduated with training in sweets and pastries from the Episcopal Technical and Vocational Training Center as part of the GRIT program that provides technical and vocational training for Palestinian women. (Photo: Nadin Bayadi)



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

OUR VISION

A healthy and sustainable world where people live in peace with hope, justice, dignity and equality.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by God's love for the world, CLWR challenges and responds to the injustice which causes human suffering and poverty.

On the cover: In Chad and Cameroon, CLWR's Nature Based Solutions program supports farmers like Ache Adeckoy (front) in Logone Birni. She is president of her group of female market gardeners who receive support like training, seeds and tools. In the back (left to right) are fellow members, Soulouka Elise, Vanyang Celine and Pari Adèle. (Photo: CLWR/Quazi Alam)



GREETINGS

Dear friends,

Grace and peace to you. Serving as your interim executive director, I've been heartened by the courageous generosity I see across our church — generosity that meets urgent needs and also builds hope that will last.

In **Gaza**, where families have endured unimaginable loss, your gifts have moved quickly through our Lutheran and local partners to provide water, hygiene supplies, medical care and emergency shelter.

At the same time, you are helping communities face a changing climate with hope and practicality. Our **nature-based solutions** work — restoring soils, protecting watersheds, and planting trees and crops all across the Lake Chad region — puts local farmers at the centre of a plan to restore an entire ecosystem, and save dozens of communities.

Across Canada, congregations are partnering with those farmers through **Friends of Creation** — a four Sunday journey that weaves worship, learning and action. I am grateful for the witness of churches who are joining us on this journey with our global neighbours.

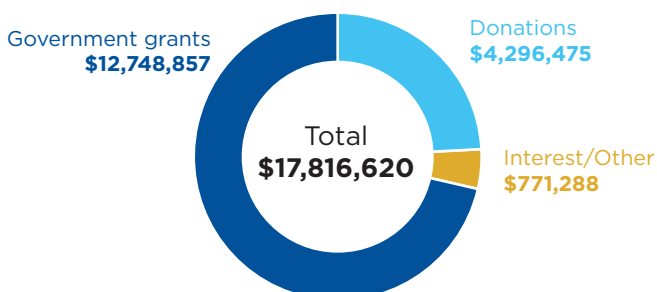
What holds this all together is partnership. Local leaders know what their communities need. You make it possible for them to act. Our role is to listen to those needs, to connect your support and to steward your trust with honesty and hope.

In my brief time serving CLWR in this role, I have been so struck by the quality of our staff, by your faithful commitment to this work, and most of all, the dedication and efficiency of our partners around the world. My first-hand look at this organization will make me an even closer supporter of CLWR for the rest of my life — I hope this report will do a bit of the same for you.

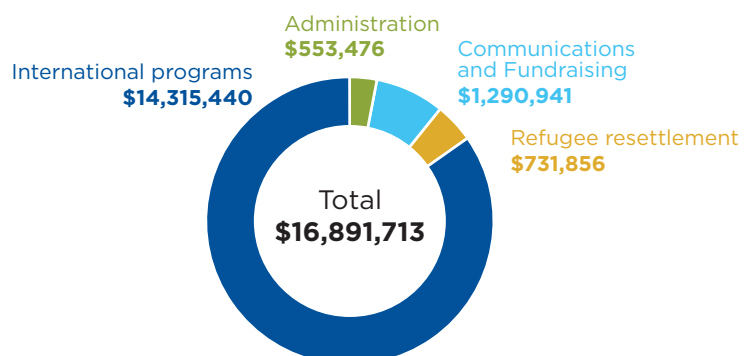
Thank you for the life-saving role you play in this work.

Rev. Michael Pryse
Interim Executive Director, CLWR

REVENUE

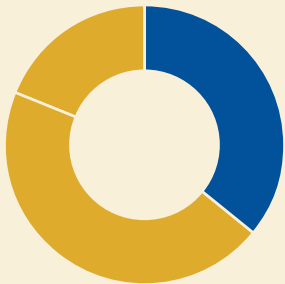


EXPENSES



Complete 2024 audited financial statements are available on CLWR's website at clwr.org.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



Budget

\$6,664,758

Last year: \$9,219,368



Beneficiaries

421,878

Last year: 328,020



Locations

Colombia,
Ethiopia, Gaza,
Haiti, Lebanon,
Myanmar,
Somalia, South
Sudan, Syria,
Venezuela

Not a day went by this year when we didn't see headlines of conflict, disaster or displacement. From Gaza, to Sudan, to Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, people are fleeing their homes in search of safety every day. While it can be easy to turn away from the news, you chose to take action and make a gift to help those in need. In Gaza, despite the intense violence and restrictions on aid, your support is on the ground helping people make it through the day. Our local partners are providing financial support to help people purchase what they can, and improving sanitation and hygiene facilities in crowded shelters.

Then there are also conflict and disasters around the world that don't get much coverage like in Colombia, Somalia and Tigray in Ethiopia. Because of your generosity, our partners are responding in crisis situations big and small. Your gifts are providing much needed support like shelter, food, clean water and medical care for families facing conflict and disaster. And your support continues to provide mental health and trauma support to help people recover long term.

Through ACT Alliance we supported the emergency response of GOPA-DERD to provide relief to people affected by the earthquake in Syria. This included distributing food items, winterization kits and medicine. (Photo: GOPA-DERD)



YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

5,329

people in South Sudan
received emergency food

44

community water
sources in Colombia
rehabilitated

468

awareness sessions on explosive
ordnances and safety in conflict
at shelters in Gaza

Gaza | Vital support in a time of crisis

HANAN IS A MOTHER FROM northern Gaza. She lives with the daily stress and worry that comes from trying to protect and feed her children through almost two years of the Israeli military destruction. As restrictions on getting supplies into Gaza remain high, food has become very scarce, and attempts to collect the aid that is available put people in harms way. Hanan lost one of her sons when he went out to get flour for the family. After fleeing repeated bombings, she and her four remaining children ended up in the Al-Nakheel camp, living in a torn tent no bigger than a small room. “We lost everything — our home, our safety,” she says. “We survive only because we must.”

As the crisis in Gaza continues, your support means that CLWR and its partners can reach families like Hanan’s with life-saving help. Cash assistance has allowed people to make decisions about what supplies to purchase from what is available — like food, clean water or hygiene supplies. And in crowded shelters, your support has helped clean and repair broken bathrooms and sewage systems to stop the spread of disease. This is especially important while medicine and health care are increasingly difficult to access.

While daily life in Gaza continues to be extremely difficult, your support is making it a little safer and more dignified, especially for women like Hanan and their children. In the face of unimaginable hardship, your generosity is helping families like Hanan’s survive another day — and continue hoping for peace.



Hanan stands next to the small tent where her family now lives without water, electricity or privacy. (Photo: DanChurchAid)

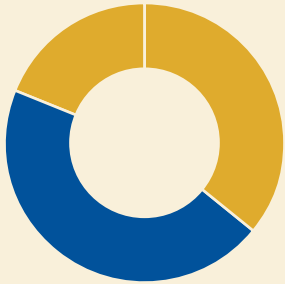
CHANGED LIVES

2,042 vulnerable women and girls who now regularly use safe spaces in Ethiopia

18,024 people who have safer, cleaner water in Myanmar

450 Palestinian students who have been able to stay in school because of on-campus mental-health and psychosocial support

FOOD SECURITY & LIVELIHOODS



Budget

\$5,038,118

Last year: \$2,412,868



Beneficiaries

168,705

Last year: 18,540



Locations

Burundi,
Cameroon, Chad,
El Salvador,
Ethiopia

The number of people in need of food continued to grow this year with increases in conflict, climate change and economic upheaval. While it can feel like an insurmountable problem, your support of CLWR is providing food for families today and for the long term.

In the Lake Chad basin, thousands of small-scale farmers are struggling because of climate change and a depleted ecosystem. Our nature-based solutions project is helping those communities restore the land. Farmers are learning new techniques, planting trees and reviving wetlands. The project also supports women to learn new skills, take on leadership roles and start new businesses to support their families.

Around the world, our local partners know their communities best, and they develop the programs that will make the biggest difference. From agriculture and water management training, to loans and marketing education, your generosity, in partnership with our local partners and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, is helping provide for families today and for years to come.

Farmers in the village of Gambia in Chad's Lake Province are receiving support and training in new agriculture techniques to help them adapt to the effects of climate change. (Photo: LWF/Marie Renaux)



YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

14,341

hectares of land around Lake Chad being converted using nature-based solutions

25

plant and tree nurseries established to support farmers and reforestation efforts

4,741

farmers near Lake Chad trained on new agricultural techniques

Palmata's story

PALMATA ADAM STANDS IN A sunlit field in Gally Anoui, Chad, holding fresh okra she helped grow. Years of harsh weather — long dry seasons followed by sudden, heavy rains — had made it harder for families like hers to grow food. But today her okra crop is thriving, thanks in part to a project that's helping farmers work with nature to restore their land and rebuild their lives.

In addition to support from CLWR's generous donors, the project is funded through the Government of Canada's Nature Based Solutions initiative, which supports locally led projects that use the power of nature to reduce the impacts of climate change. The needs in the Lake Chad Basin are immense and only getting worse with climate change. Weather patterns are less predictable. Droughts dry up crops. Floods wash away topsoil. Many families who once relied on farming and fishing are finding it harder to provide for their children.

But communities are responding with strength and creativity. Farmers are already finding new ways to live in balance with the land and water. With your support, they are restoring soil, planting trees, reviving wetlands and protecting ecosystems. Women are stepping into leadership roles, learning new skills, and starting small businesses. And by the end of the project, more than 14,000 hectares of land will be under improved, sustainable management.

In October 2024, Bishop Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, visited the project in Chad and Cameroon. She met with women leaders and farmers restoring their land, and she saw firsthand the resilience and determination taking root. "This is life-changing work," she said. "Women are being empowered to shape the future of their communities, and the land itself is being healed."



Palmata Adam stands in a field with the okra she grew. She is part of a CLWR program that helps farmers learn skills to restore their land and reduce the impacts of climate change. (Photo: LWF/Marie Renaux)

CHANGED LIVES

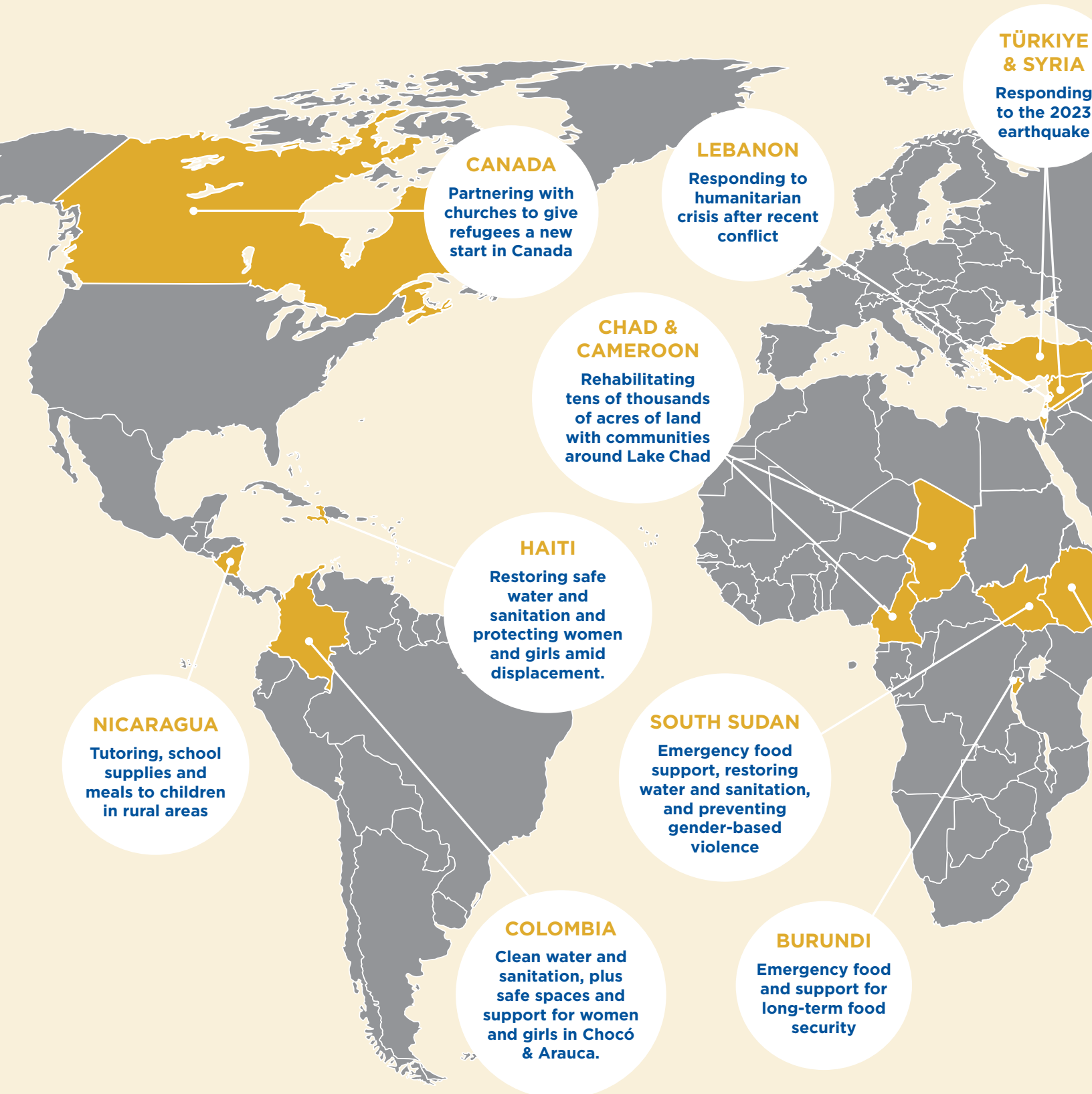
200 women in Ethiopia with stronger economic resilience because of business training and access to credit

2,844 families in Ethiopia who now have a climate-resilient livelihood in place (e.g., irrigation, beekeeping, poultry, drip irrigation)

1,500 women with better prospects because of entrepreneurship/leadership training to grow climate-resilient income

CANADIAN LUTHERAN WORLD

2024-25 Program Highlights



RELIEF

WEST BANK, JERUSALEM & GAZA

Emergency response to Gaza war, including water, emergency medical care and trauma support. Ongoing technical training for women and support for Augusta Victoria Hospital

SOMALIA

Providing improved water and sanitation and safe spaces for women

ETHIOPIA

Improving food security through agricultural training and support for sustainable income opportunities, alongside initiatives to prevent gender-based violence and improve access to water and sanitation

MYANMAR

Water and sanitation for displaced Rohingya communities, plus skills training and support for women at risk of violence

You are changing lives around the world.
Thank you!

Your partnership with communities across the globe is making an incredible impact. Your generosity is:

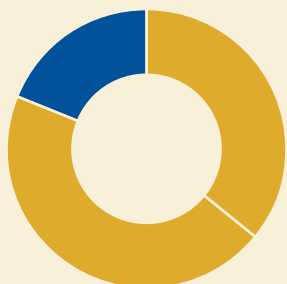
- Delivering urgent food and shelter to people displaced by conflict and disaster.
- Ensuring communities have access to sustainable, clean water sources.
- Strengthening food security and building resilience to climate change.
- Supporting refugees as they resettle and build new lives in Canada.

We take good care of your generosity. **Thank you for your trust!**



See your partnership at work at **clwr.org**

EDUCATION



Budget

\$2,612,564

Last year: \$2,264,499



Beneficiaries

15,228

Last year: 20,250



Locations

Nicaragua,
West Bank

Access to education and training can make all the difference between a bright future and being trapped in a cycle of poverty. But in many places around the world conflict, disasters and high costs for tuition or supplies can make getting that education impossible.

Your generous support is helping break down those barriers. In the West Bank, the GRIT program, with funding from Global Affairs Canada, has provided technical and vocational training to Palestinian women for the last six years. The program came to a close this fall after training more than 3,600 women. The new skills the women gained will give them the chance for a meaningful career as well as financial independence for themselves and their families. Despite the ongoing violence, the program has continued to adapt and keep lessons going, and they even provided extra emotional support to staff, students and their families. In the midst of these challenging circumstances, 84% of graduates working in their fields report that their monthly income has improved after graduation.

And in Nicaragua, your support is helping young children get their education off to a good start. Local

Dua Qatu graduated with graphic design training from LWF Vocational Training Center in Ramallah as part of the GRIT program, which provides technical and vocational training for Palestinian women. (Photo: Nadin Bayadi)



partners there provide educational supplies, extra tutoring and meals at school to ensure students have what they need to focus on education. Your support is providing the foundation for a brighter future.

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

859

women received
technical/vocational
training

32

women with disabilities
received technical/
vocational training

8

TVET institutes that have improved
their facilities to respond to the needs
of women and women with disabilities

Creating brighter futures in the midst of conflict

For the past six years, your support has allowed the GRIT Project in East Jerusalem and the West Bank to help women and girls build careers through vocational training. With the recent escalation in violence that work has been made even more essential, but also even more challenging, says Suhad Kasbari, who is project manager for GRIT.

With the ever-changing security context, it has gotten harder and more expensive for students to be able to attend training in person, so they've had to reschedule or cancel last minute and sometimes shift things online.

The emotional impact has been just as difficult. GRIT staff have been deeply affected by the uncertainty and stress and so they decided to provide psychosocial support sessions for staff, students and their parents. "Talking together—about fear, stress, uncertainty — helped remind us that we weren't alone," Suhad says.

Though the context is challenging, for some staff the work can be a lifeline. Being able to work with women to create brighter futures "helped them cope, even briefly, with the daily heartbreak in the news," Suhad says. Despite the challenges, in the last year the project trained 859 women.

"Through this project, we're seeing real hope. Women are learning skills, earning income, and building better futures for themselves and their families. That's what keeps us going," Suhad says.

The project, supported by generous CLWR donors and with funding from the Government of Canada, concluded this year with an event in August that showcased graduates' skills and celebrated the lives changed. After six years, the project has trained 3,656 women, and 74% of the employed graduates are now able to earn a living wage. We're thankful for the hard work of our local partners over the last six years that has made this possible.



Shahd Zeer, an interior design and decoration trainee at the LWF Vocational Training Center in Ramallah, hones her skills in digital room design by transforming concepts into realistic 3D spaces during her training. (Photo: LWF/Nour Odah)

CHANGED LIVES

97.6% of women say their family supports their decision to pursue technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

4.76 average rating of education quality among women in TVET (out of 5)

94.3% of new women newly graduated from TVET training who are confident in their future employment opportunities

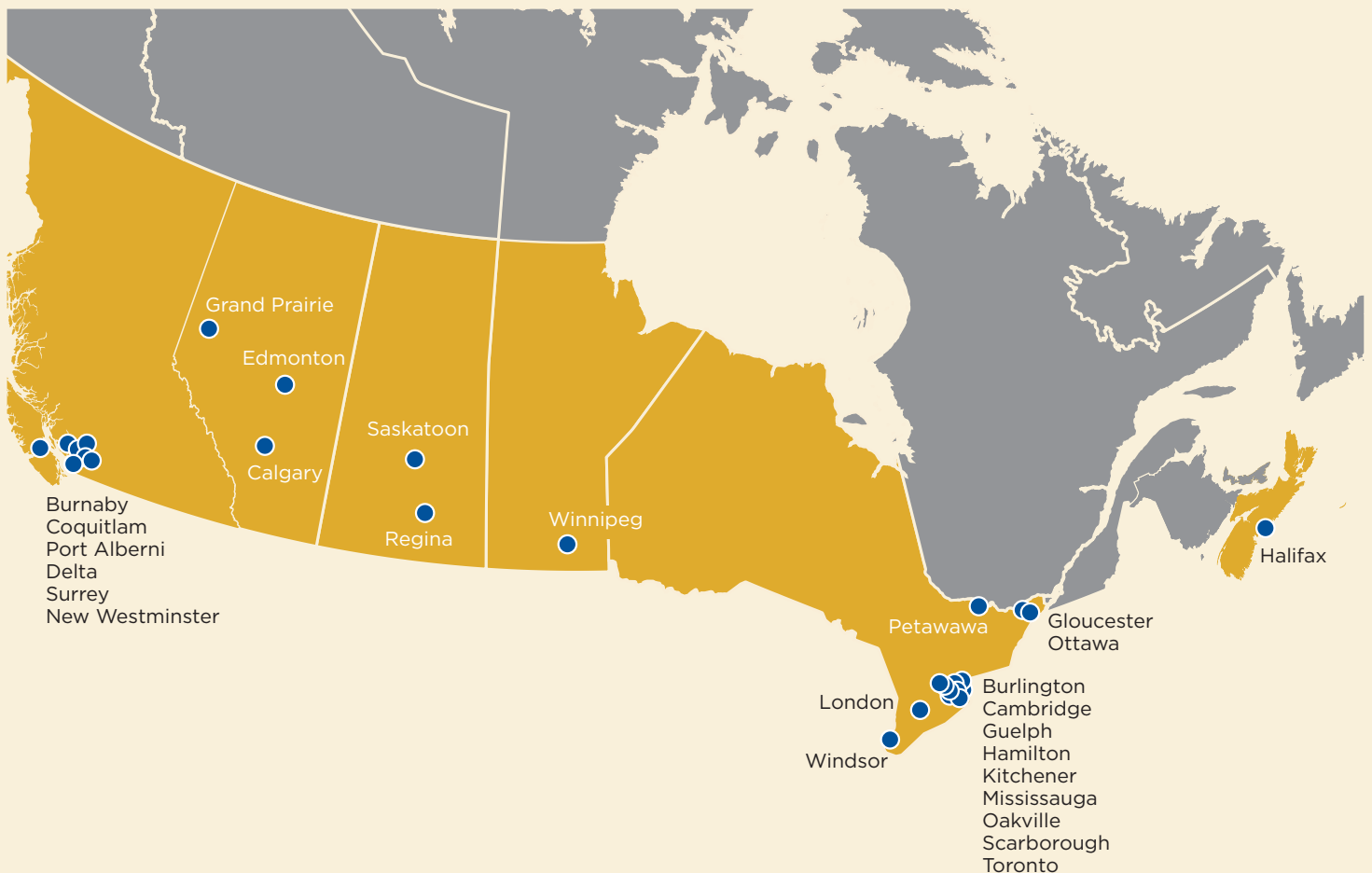
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

With support from Lutheran Churches and community groups across the country, 199 people went from refugee to permanent resident in Canada.

Supporting refugees fleeing conflict and disaster as they start a new life in Canada can be one of the most meaningful ways to make a difference in someone's life. Walking alongside newcomers as they adjust to a new country helps make an overwhelming experience more manageable. Sponsors provide a friendly face in a sea of new people, and they're the person that newcomers can call when they need help, or just someone to talk to.

CLWR is a sponsorship agreement holder with the Government of Canada. This means that through CLWR, congregations and other groups can help sponsor refugees as they come to Canada and find a new home in peace and security. We're thankful so many churches and other compassionate supporters have been part of this important work. To learn more about how you can get involved, visit clwr.org/rr or email us at rrinfo@clwr.org.

DESTINATION CITIES LAST YEAR



Mutwali & Sedig's story

For many refugees, fleeing violence or oppression is just the first step. They often arrive in a new country but spend years in limbo without full legal status. That is what happened to Mutwali and Sedig, two refugees from Sudan currently living in Israel where they have no opportunity to get permanent legal status.

Now they will be able to settle in Canada with support from the Or Shalom Special Resettlement Initiative (OSSRI), a committee of the Or Shalom Jewish Renewal synagogue in Vancouver. With CLWR as the sponsorship agreement holder they are sponsoring Mutwali and Sedig, along with Sedig's wife Khlood who is living in Ethiopia.



A photo of Khlood and Sedig from their wedding.
(Photo: OSSRI)

Sedig is from Darfur, and was displaced by the Janjaweed in 2003. His family fled to the Mourni refugee camp, and then sent him to live with an aunt in Khartoum. As a young African man from Darfur, Sudan was not safe, so he ended up fleeing to Israel. He recently married Khlood, who is also from Darfur, but she is unable to join him in Israel. Coming to Canada will mean Sedig can reunite with his wife, and hopefully find work in his field of political science. "Coming to Canada would be hugely life changing for me," he says. "I will be able to apply my academic credentials, contribute to the Canadian workforce and also engage in family reunification."

Mutwali was forced to flee Sudan when his critiques of Islam led to threats against his life. He looks forward to coming to Canada to be able to fully build a new life. "In Canada I will be able to live in a society where I feel connected to others," he says. "I will be able to build a family and to live as a human being."

OSSRI has a long history sponsoring refugees and supporting their resettlement, and they are already working with CLWR on plans for another sponsorship. The new arrivals will continue to benefit from OSSRI's fundraising and resettlement experience as well as the support of a large and enthusiastic community.

CHANGED LIVES

Arrivals last year:

199

Countries of origin: **Afghanistan, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria.**

Canadian churches join the Friends of Creation challenge

On four quiet Sundays in June, the congregation at Christ Lutheran Church in Waterloo turned their attention to the disappearing waters of Lake Chad. Once one of Africa's largest lakes, Lake Chad is now a symbol of the climate crisis affecting millions.

Christ Lutheran's congregation is part of a growing movement of churches who are committing to learn about and take action against climate change through CLWR's Friends of Creation challenge. The challenge is a simple, four-Sunday commitment where churches learn, pray and act for climate justice while also raising money to support a powerful project that is restoring the land and livelihoods around Lake Chad. Christ Lutheran Church was one of the first to join.

After signing up they received stories, videos and worship resources to help them plan four services where their congregation could learn more about climate change. Pastor David Malina says the challenge has been welcomed and people were eager to learn more.

Friends of Creation also offered the church a way to bridge global realities with local faith by raising funds to restore land around Lake Chad. Christ Lutheran set a goal to raise \$1,400, enough to help restore 28 acres of land.

For Malina, the impact of the project is not only material, it's spiritual. "It helps lift us out of our silos. It reminds us that our lives are part of something wider. God's big, interconnected world," he said. "It's not about doing something huge; it's about doing what we can, and that matters. Every little bit counts. Especially now, with everything going on in the world, it helps to feel connected to something bigger."

Learn more about the challenge and sign up today clwr.org/foc-challenge.



Pastor David Malina with congregation members Connie Ferguson, Carol Filipowitsch and Evyleen Litt in front of their Friends of Creation Challenge display at Christ Lutheran Church. (Photo: Christ Lutheran)

THANK YOU

Our work is only possible because of the support of Lutherans and friends across Canada — thank you for the vital part you play in our work. We're always ready to share more about how your support is making a difference! Contact us today for more info, or if you'd like to talk about opportunities for your congregation to be part of our work, please visit clwr.org/resources or contact churches@clwr.org.

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Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada



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Da'na Djibetsou, a pupil at Logone Birni High School in Cameroon, demonstrates the process of planting and caring for a tree. He is part of the Friends of Nature club at the high school which is supported by LWF as part of the Nature Based Solutions project that is working to restore the ecosystem around Lake Chad. (Photo: CLWR/Romuald Djouokep Mangoua)