

ACROSS

AT 50 AND BEYOND

• FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN - 2022-2026 •



ROMANS 12:2 (NIV)

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world
but be transformed by the renewing
of your mind. Then you will be able to
test and approve what God's will is
—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

INTRODUCTION

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.

This strategy comes into being at a very momentous time, an epoch of fifty years where we have reached a great Golden Jubilee anniversary; thus, we can only say 'Ebenezer', the Lord has faithfully brought ACROSS this far. In reflection, I want to thank God for the service of those who came before us, while anticipating God's plan for what is yet to come – Dr. Ken Tracey and the Team who conceived that Godly vision and founded this Organisation in 1972. I imagine what may have been in their minds when they first established what was then known as the "Africa Committee for the Rehabilitation of Southern Sudan" – their passion, commitment, faithful service, and sacrifices for the Sudanese. Just like today, they too had their own unique set of challenges and opportunities, and they remained faithful to their call, that is why we are continuing with the baton they passed on to us.

In recent years, many communities have taken on a new tone with the influx of humanitarian activity in South Sudan because of the prolonged crisis and subsequent human suffering. As we now look toward what many hope to be a time of renewed peace, ACROSS renews its focus toward projects emphasizing recovery, resilience, development, human dignity, and capacity building – both for communities and the local church who are our key partners.

This strategic plan builds on our strengths and commits to expanding the capacity of ACROSS as an institution and stewarding the resources in our care through impactful programmes and meaningful relationships.

While some of the goals in this plan focus on the infrastructure of the institution, this is strictly to fulfill our mission of community transformation in a manner befitting ambassadors of Christ.

I am one of many who have had the privilege of leading this organisation. While some have led during times of peace and some in times of war, today I see a season of renewal and rebuilding. While we may stand in the shadow of conflict, we commit to fanning the flames of hope and peace.

This plan is a strategy to execute our mandate as ambassadors of Christ and faithful stewards with integrity and relentless resilience required of our calling. We seek to remain firm in our resolve, yet responsive to changing circumstances, as we strive to continue the legacy to serve the Lord through the ministry of ACROSS.

As you read this document, I encourage you to join us in the mission to transform lives and communities through a holistic, Christ-centred approach to the current needs in our world. For it is only through love and service that we will see lasting peace and transformation.

In His service and for His glory,



Elisama Wani-Daniel
ACROSS Executive Director





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1976 ACROSS Staff Retreat

ACROSS HISTORY

ACROSS is an inter-denominational Christian organization founded in 1972 by four mission societies: Africa Inland Mission (AIM), Sudan United Mission (SUM), Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), and Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Originally formed to allow these organisations a platform on which they could serve what was then Sudan, the collaboration was named: African Committee for the Rehabilitation of South Sudan. In later years, when it was no longer necessary to keep our identity neutral, we were called the Association of Christian Resource Organizations Serving Sudan. Today, having outgrown all previous acronyms, we are simply known as ACROSS.

ACROSS has always been a place where people from around the world have come to serve God and grow in their personal and professional development. Today we continue the tradition of receiving seconded missionary and volunteer staff on our team. ACROSS has also been the platform where many South Sudanese have become mature Christian professionals, often going on to hold major responsibilities and strategic positions in the South Sudan government, Church, and society at large.

ACROSS has a special and valuable partnership with the Church in South Sudan. ACROSS aims to see the local church become a resource and a vibrant centre for hope, help, and healing in the communities we serve.

The dynamics in South Sudan affect the nature and style of ACROSS's work. As a local organization, we stay in place when others have had to leave. Beyond security issues, refugee issues, and political movements, the presence of international relief agencies has made some people hopeless and others dependent dampening some people's imagination for change. Over the years, from times of war to the peace agreement in 2005, then to the independence of the Republic of South Sudan and the signing of subsequent peace agreements following civil clashes- ACROSS has had to respond to new realities both helpful and challenging.

Today, ACROSS is focused on the holistic, Christ-centred transformation of South Sudan and beyond. We work to build communities, improve education, strengthen churches, improve livelihoods, and teach about human dignity. Working with South Sudanese communities in a dialogue of equals, ACROSS seeks biblical transformation in all sectors. Through training programs and local resources, ACROSS works to understand and engage the root causes of problems from the perspective of those affected. A holistic approach, one for the whole person and whole community, is necessary for creating meaningful relationships and authentic change.

VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Vision

Christ-centered transformation of communities in South Sudan and beyond.

Mission

To transform communities in South Sudan and beyond through a Christ-centred holistic approach.

Core Values

Integrity In transparency and openness, we commit to standing for people and our values.	Faithful Stewardship We utilise resources intentionally, fairly, and responsibly while avoiding waste and carelessness.	Excellence We strive to exceed expectations, doing this in simplicity, humility, and succeeding in a timely manner.
Commitment We patiently and relentlessly pursue our goals and mission.	Unity We become one as we love each other through God's grace.	

To illustrate the ACROSS Vision, Mission, and Core Values, staff members created a word cloud of attributes to describe the organisation and the benefits our partners experience when working with ACROSS.



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Poverty is endemic in South Sudan with at least 80 per cent of the population defined as income-poor and living on an equivalent of less than US\$1 per day. More than one-third of the population lacks secure access to food. The country's promising economic recovery was derailed in 2020 by many factors including conflict, locust invasions, floods, and the coronavirus pandemic. Depreciation of the South Sudan pound continues, prices continue to skyrocket, and the economic slowdown is expected to aggravate poverty and unemployment, with disproportionate effects on youth and women.

South Sudan has one of the lowest adult literacy rates in the world. Similarly, the country has among the highest mortality, including maternal and infant mortality, rates. Social tensions and disharmony between communities complicate the implementation of activities and may hinder service delivery. Cultural mindsets may influence community responses to development activities, and gender norms contribute to vulnerabilities and marginalisation of girls and women.



Modern technological advances have accelerated the speed of processing and sharing of data and information between stakeholders. ACROSS' operations and beneficiaries are dispersed throughout the country and our Information, Communication, Technology (ICT) Department utilizes available technologies to connect and collaborate, but the lack of infrastructure complicates communication, logistics, and operations.

Like the rest of the world, South Sudan is experiencing environmental change. These may be exacerbated by widespread deforestation and a lack of environmental management. Communities are hard hit by environmental challenges such as floods, drought, and diseases spread by poor sanitation and hygiene practices. ACROSS has extensive experience in implementing WASH programs, appropriate agricultural practices, and awareness creation about the importance of maintaining the ecosystem.

ACROSS

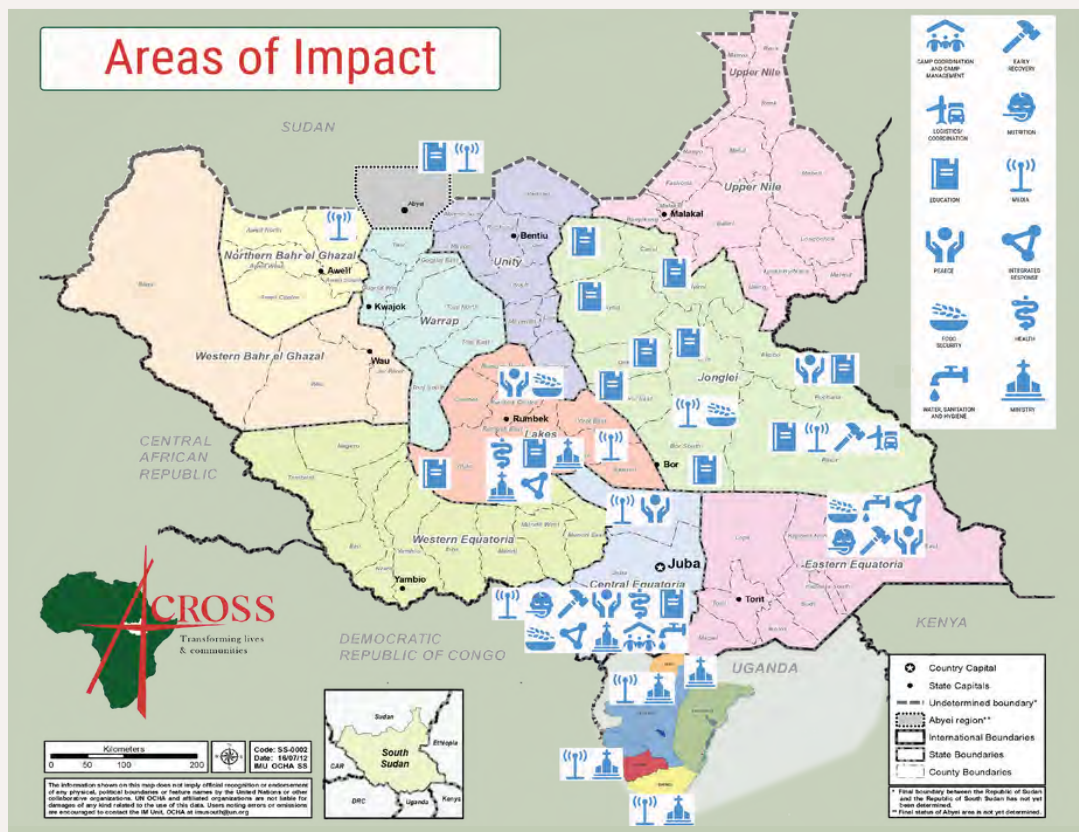
OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

ACROSS has been operating in Southern Sudan since 1972 and has a well-established presence in many parts of the country and even other areas in East Africa. Its long-standing presence, credibility, relationships, and committed staff are some of its most valuable assets.

Over the years, ACROSS' humanitarian and socio-economic development programmes have contributed to the holistic transformation of individuals and communities. It is not uncommon for today's leaders and influencers to recall the work of ACROSS in their home community when they were young. This historical success continues to open doors for current and future collaborations. Our prayer is that the work we do today will serve the next generation as faithfully as our forbearers have served.

At the advent of this plan, ACROSS works in five states in South Sudan and three refugee settlements in northern Uganda. Additional registrations include Kenya, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The UK and USA operations focus on awareness-raising, networking, and resource mobilisation while the Nairobi location serves as the International Liaison Office. ACROSS' Head Office is in Juba, South Sudan.

The geographic focus of ACROSS during the Strategic Plan implementation will be to first strengthen its work in present areas and then seek opportunities to expand its footprint across the nation and beyond.



PROGRAMMATIC SCOPE



Distribution of soap and hygiene items.

ACROSS' programmes are anchored in a holistic approach, and cover a wide range of sectors, addressing specific issues:

- education
- health
- nutrition
- livelihoods
- water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH)
- refugee care
- the 'Triple-Nexus' (The intersection of humanitarian relief, peacebuilding; and holistic development).

As we implement projects and programmes, we are mindful of over-arching issues impacting communities: environmental sustainability, gender equity, conflict resolution, and inclusivity.

In a spirit of partnership, ACROSS strategically collaborates with other actors and partners. Project design and implementation must ensure strong engagement and consultation of all stakeholders – including the local community, government, traditional leaders, and local church. Special attention to vulnerable populations ensures a focus on inclusivity and human dignity. Projects must have a smooth, compassionate, and sustainability-focused exit strategy from the very beginning of the intervention.

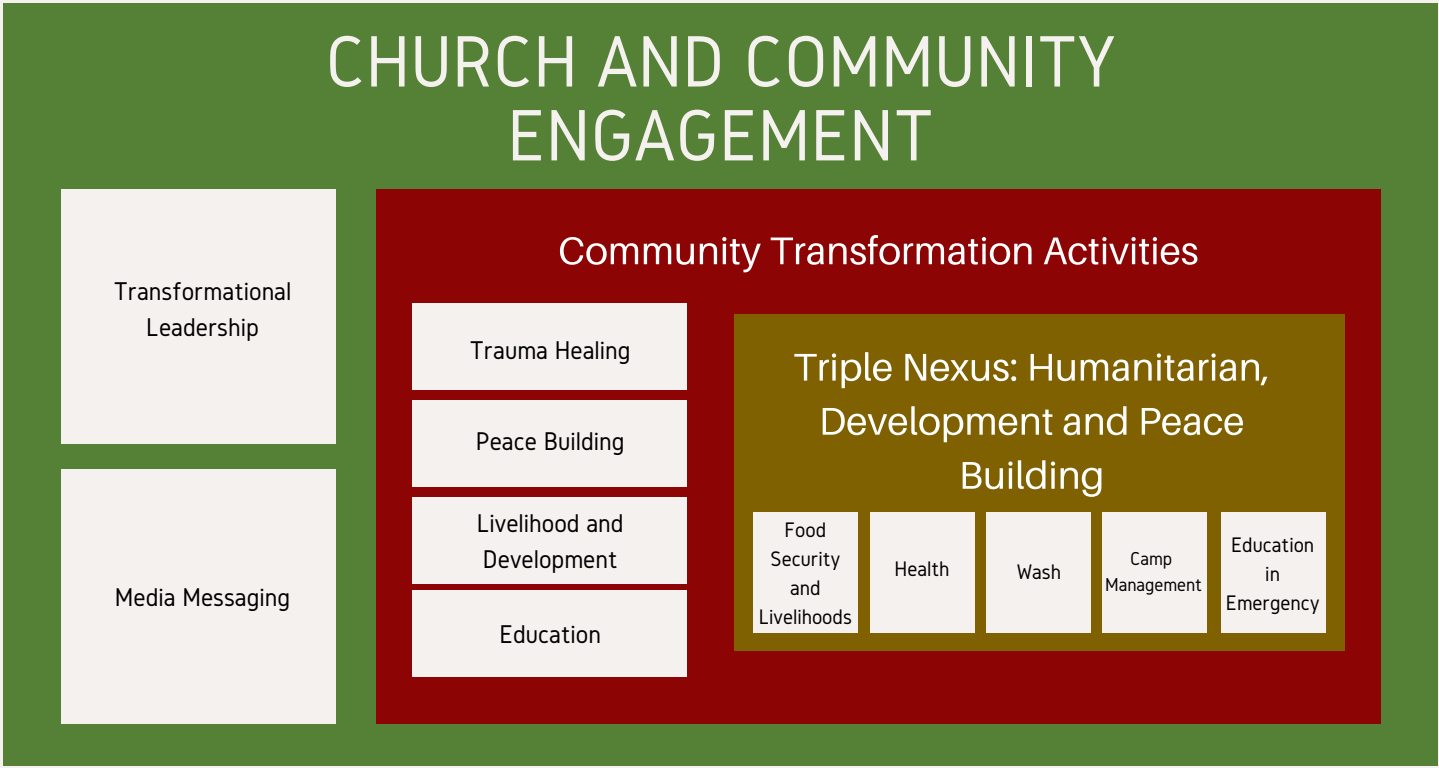
As part of our Christian mandate, ACROSS maintains a commitment to safeguarding vulnerable populations (women, children, disabled, elderly, displaced, and disadvantaged) and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) through gender-sensitive programming, accountability, excellent recruitment practices, and a zero-tolerance policy for SEA.

All ACROSS' programmes and projects must work to achieve our vision and mission of a holistic Christ-centred transformation of communities through partnership with the local Church and like-minded stakeholders. Programmes and projects also align to the cluster objectives for the sector they address, and peace and inclusivity remain cross-cutting themes.

Our experience in media and messaging has proven a valuable strategy in creating dialogue, advocacy, and encouraging positive change in challenging areas. Therefore, the use of literature, radio programming, and solar-powered digital audio players are emphasised in many projects and expansion to video and wider social media messaging is planned.



By engaging the church and the community in capacity-building activities, ACROSS seeks to help communities find holistic, long-term solutions to the issues they face. People learn to identify their resources and envision their preferred future. They then learn to develop and steward resources that move them toward their objectives. We begin with the community through the local church where they are—whether thriving or in a state of crisis.



ASSUMPTIONS



Throughout the implementation period, we recognise that many factors, both internal and external may affect our progress toward these objectives. For the sake of planning purposes, ACROSS assumes that:

- Reasonable security and a safe operating environment prevail in the areas of operation.
- The churches, government, and Civil Society Organizations have credibility and legitimacy within the population to play a key role in peacebuilding and reconciliation in South Sudan.
- Resources for planned activities are secured and sustained.

STRENGTHS – WEAKNESSES – OPPORTUNITIES – THREATS

Taking time for reflection is an important aspect of planning and strategizing. Identifying strengths on which to build, weaknesses as areas to improve upon, opportunities for future growth and threats that can impede progress are all part of the planning process. The following analysis has helped to develop ACROSS' strategic objectives for this season of ministry.

Strengths

- ACROSS' identity as a faith-based organisation
- A long history of working in South Sudan in conjunction with local communities, churches, government, and partners.
- Well established financial system and finance professionals
- Capable leadership/managers and technical expertise
- ACROSS is a registered member of reputable global networks and national sectoral clusters as well as the South Sudan NGO Forum
- ACROSS has assets of land and equipment.

Weaknesses

- Well-developed policies but implementation is inadequate and not institutionalised throughout locations
- Staff orientation and retention practices need improvement
- Long-term projects can lead to donor fatigue
- Inadequate communication means rapid decision making in field locations

Opportunities

- Valuable fixed assets which can be converted into income-generating activities for sustainability
- ACROSS reputation with donors, government and communities are good/high leading to collaborative opportunities
- Diversity of programming widens project opportunities
- ACROSS has wide geographic coverage in under-served locations

Threats

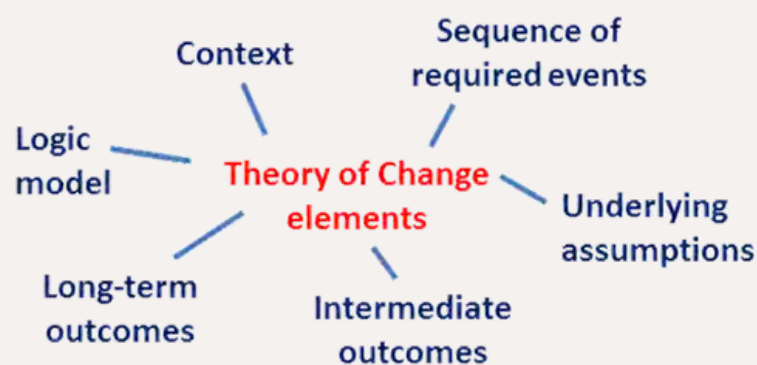
- Insecurity /conflict/instability
- Crime
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Limited funding – project funding model
- Corruption
- Environmental factors (e.g., flooding, drought, locusts, fire etc.,)
- Unstable economy

STRATEGIC-PLAN METHODOLOGY

The development of the five-year strategy involved: a review of previous strategic plan documents, a review of current programs and projects, casting strategy visioning for the 2021-2025 strategy in consultation with field staff and management team, and a SWOT analysis. During the review process the field staff and management team emphasized the importance of focusing on sustainable results, expanding, and deepening impact, improved financial management, and strengthening ACROSS to be agile, effective, efficient, innovative, and excellent in integrity.



Theory of Change (ToC) is a type of methodology for planning, participation, and evaluation that is used in various sectors to promote social change. Long-term goals are defined and then mapped back to identify necessary preconditions for those goals. ToC explains the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative, i.e., its shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes. The identified changes are mapped – as “outcomes pathway” – showing each outcome in logical relationship to all the others, as well as the chronological flow. The links between outcomes are explained by “rationales” or statements of why one outcome is thought to be a prerequisite for another. The process is necessarily inclusive of many perspectives and participants in achieving solutions.



FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following priority areas of focus will concentrate efforts to build on strengths and systemically create opportunities to better achieve our mission. The programmatic focus will build resilience and move even the most vulnerable toward development and prosperity:

- Partnership with the Church to transform communities holistically.
- Community participation in their development.
- Sectoral support contributes to holistic development.
- Organisational Development and sustainability.

In order to create transformational and sustainable development for individuals, families, and communities the theory of change for ACROSS' five-year strategy is to see communities realise holistic transformation and sustainable development that enables families to live in dignity, peace, harmony, and prosperity.



The identified objectives and the strategies planned to achieve them are underpinned in our mission, vision, and core values of ACROSS while being conscious and considerate of the needs and goals of various stakeholders who partner with us. Also considered, is the dynamic environment in which we operate, yet remaining faithful to the orthodoxy of Holy Scriptures which guide our undertakings. We desire to grow in scope, depth, and impact while improving relationships and services.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Families live in dignity, peace, harmony, and prosperity.



Equip the church as a community resource



Partner with the community



Provide life-saving and developmental support



Deliver quality programming and services

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In accordance with the Theory of Change methodology, this plan is highly interactive, dynamic, and responsive. A committee consisting of ACROSS staff from various locations, projects, and departments will monitor the progress of the plan through quarterly meetings. The overall objectives will be assessed annually, and adjustments made if needed. It will be a participatory process that involves internal and external stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 1:

Equip the church to be salt and light in their community by identifying capacity gaps and engaging strategies and resources for community mobilization and positive behaviour change.

STRATEGIES

- Vision-casting
- Training (Community Health Evangelism, Participatory Awakening Process, Discipleship, Transformational Leadership Training)
- Mentoring
- Resource Mobilization and Management

Strategic Objective 2:

Partner with the local church, community, and leaders to identify and participate in their own development and transformation.

STRATEGIES

- Training
- Advocacy
- Peacebuilding
- Messaging
- Resource Mobilization and Management
- Stewardship and Accountability

Strategic Objective 3:

Provide life-saving services and developmental support to individuals and communities in need.

STRATEGIES

- Access to quality early childhood development and basic education
- Access to quality health, nutrition, and WASH
- Access to food security and enhanced livelihoods including skills development
- Create value-added opportunities and market linkages
- Promote environmental stewardship, awareness, education, and advocacy
- Emergency response to communities in crisis
- Protection of children, refugees, and vulnerable persons

Strategic Objective 4:

Deliver accountable and quality programming and service through strengthening organisational and institutional effectiveness and efficiency.

STRATEGIES

- Networking and alliance building
- Mainstreaming Core Humanitarian Standard commitments
- Strong partner relationships
- Mission-focused organizational governance
- Localization and collaboration
- Strengthening of systems and internal controls
- Effective human resource management
- Effective and strategic organisational development and sustainability

THE NINE COMMITMENTS

Communities and people affected by crisis can expect:



1

Assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs



2

Access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time



3

That they are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action



4

To know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them



5

Access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints



6

Coordinated, complementary assistance



7

Delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection



8

Assistance from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers



9

That the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically



CONCLUSION

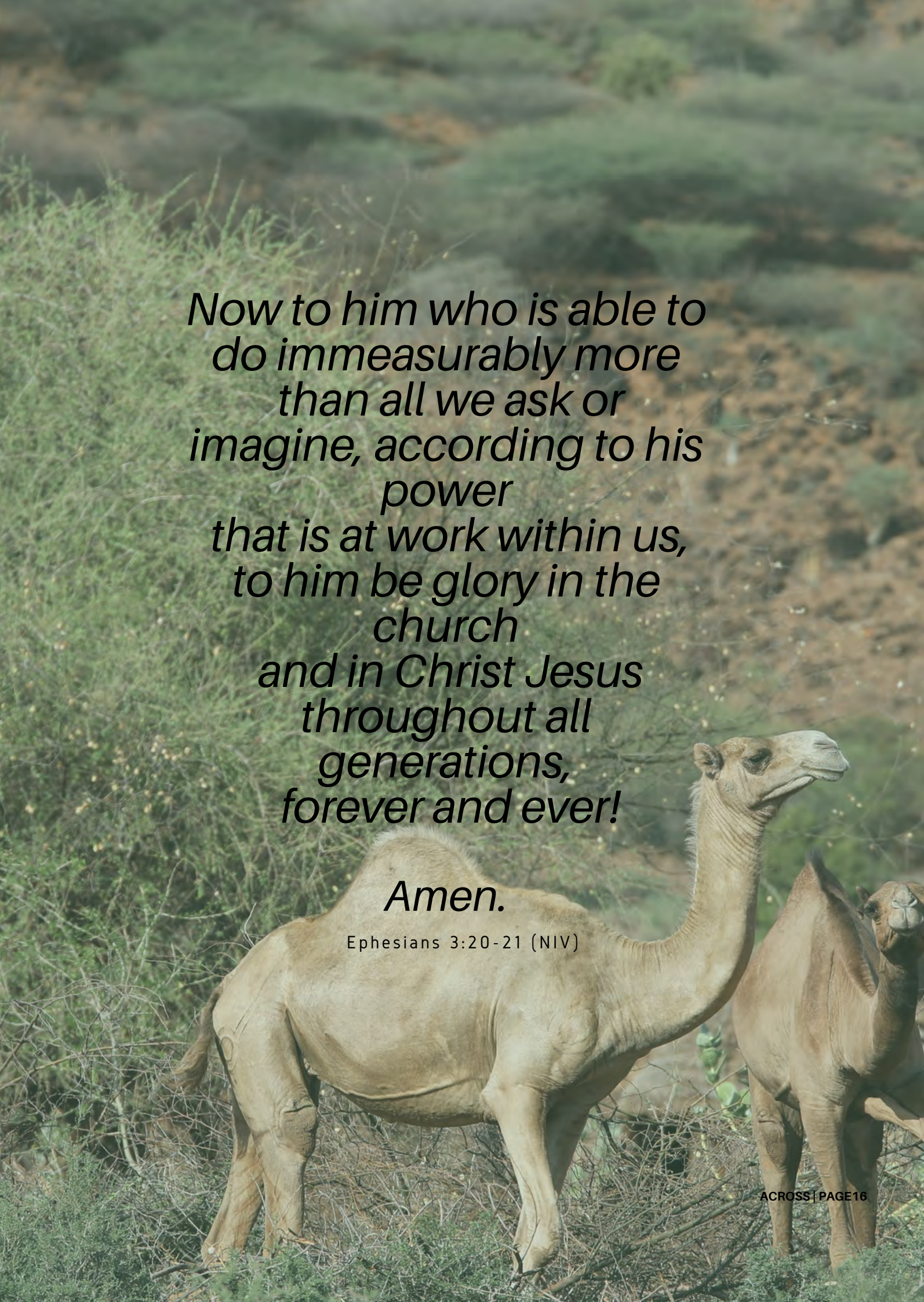
This is a momentous time in the history of the nation and the organisation. We reflect on the past fifty years with gratitude, and we long for the fifty years to come to be a season of peace and transformation.

We pray that those who come after us find us faithful in implementing this plan to the glory of God and the strengthening of communities. While we soberly and diligently undertake this responsibility; our trust, reliance, strength, and inspiration are in God, our faithful Lord who has called us and will do it (1 Thess. 5:24).



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JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN



A photograph of two camels in a dry, brushy landscape. The camels are light brown and are standing among green and brown shrubs. The background is a hilly, arid landscape with similar vegetation. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

*Now to him who is able to
do immeasurably more
than all we ask or
imagine, according to his
power
that is at work within us,
to him be glory in the
church
and in Christ Jesus
throughout all
generations,
forever and ever!*

Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NIV)