



**AGENDA  
FOR HUMANITY**  
5 CORE RESPONSIBILITIES  
24 TRANSFORMATIONS



# **Annual Report on World Humanitarian Summit Commitments - ACT Alliance 2017**



## Stakeholder Information

**Organisation Name**

ACT Alliance

**Organisational Type**

Faith-based Organisation

**City and Country where Headquartered**

Geneva, Switzerland

**Focal Point Name**

Alwynn Javier

**Region**

Global

**Twitter ID**

@ACTAlliance



## 1C Remain engaged and invest in stability

### Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
ACT Alliance will use its influence with its constituencies, civil society and Government leaders to promote stability and long-term community reconciliation, strengthen social cohesion and address grievances.	Advocacy	Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts

### Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The membership of the ACT Alliance is comprised of more than 140 faith-based member organizations with very different profiles, focus areas and origins. Many of them are combining development and humanitarian efforts in their portfolio, or being local in the area of operations. One of the objectives for members of the alliance is to use our influence with our constituencies, civil society and Government leaders to promote stability and long-term community reconciliation, strengthen social cohesion and address grievances.

### Achievements at a glance

We have started to work jointly on a list of different potential action points which could help the ACT Alliance and their members to work on this commitment. The ACT Advocacy mechanism is currently being reviewed to be more responsive to advocacy needs on the ground, especially in humanitarian crises. This mechanism is expected to facilitate the development of key messages for government and duty bearers, and other stakeholders, on actions that would be needed to promote stability and long-term community reconciliation, strengthen social cohesion and address grievances.

### How is your organization assessing progress

Currently under review and discussion within the ACT Alliance Secretariat and Humanitarian Policy and Practice Group.

### Challenges faced in implementation

At this stage of the implementation process, no significant challenges have yet been encountered.

### Next step to advance implementation in 2017

During spring 2017, we are planning to set up a clearer road map of the future of the implementation. There is already a collection of different ideas to pursue in the direction, which include to:

- Further pilot ACT Alliance's humanitarian advocacy tool
- Improve relevant training material, such as developing a capacity building module on humanitarian advocacy

### Tag with other relevant transformations, cross-cutting issues, initiatives

#### Cross Cutting Issues

- Religious Engagement

#### Agenda for Humanity

- 1B - Act early  1D - Develop solutions with and for people



## 2B Ensure full access to and protection of the humanitarian and medical missions

### Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
ACT Alliance will reinforce and highlight through its membership the integral role of faith-based responders in rapid and unimpeded access to communities in need by exhibiting full respect for the humanitarian principles. It will do this by engaging local and national members in information sharing, awareness raising and capacity building on the practical application of the guiding principles and ensuring complete and contextualized integration of the humanitarian principles into all ACT Alliance humanitarian responses.	Capacity	Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity

### Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The membership of the ACT Alliance is comprised of more than 140 member faith based organizations with very different profiles, focus areas and origins. Many of them are combining development and humanitarian efforts in their portfolio, or are local in the area of operations.

### Achievements at a glance

We have started to work jointly on a list of different potential action points which could help the ACT Alliance and their members to work on this commitment. A general review of the ACT Humanitarian Response Mechanism was also completed in 2016, which included a stronger reflection of humanitarian principles and accountability vis-a-vis the recognition of the important role of faith-based actors in delivering effective humanitarian response.

### How is your organization assessing progress

Currently under review and discussion within the ACT Alliance Secretariat and Humanitarian Policy and Practice Group.

### Challenges faced in implementation

At this stage of the implementation process, no significant challenges have been identified.

### Next step to advance implementation in 2017

The ACT Secretariat will implement the global roll-out of the revised Humanitarian Response Mechanism for members beginning June 2017. This process is expected to strengthen the application of humanitarian principles and accountability in our work, as well as the integration of the unique advantages of faith-based organisations in delivering humanitarian response. In Spring 2017, the Alliance is planning to set a road map of the future of implementation. This will include the following directions: improvement of relevant training material, creation of an online exchange for discussion and reflection on specific issues; an opinion paper on faith-based organizations and humanitarian principles

### If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Ensure full access to and protection of the humanitarian and medical missions , what would it be

Recognize the important role of faith-based actors in delivering humanitarian response, as they have the unique advantage of reach and influence not just to their direct constituents but to the broader populations where they are located.

### Tag with other relevant transformations, cross-cutting issues, initiatives

#### Cross Cutting Issues

Humanitarian Principles

Religious Engagement

#### Agenda for Humanity

2D - Take concrete steps to improve



compliance and accountability



## 4A Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems

### Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
ACT Alliance will continue to demonstrate, learn from, identify and share best practice in local-national-international partnerships, in line with the Principles of Partnership, that is inherent in the ACT Alliance's vision and working practices. It will also seek to encourage partnerships directly between local and national members through national and regional ACT Forums, encouraging complementarity and equality.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
ACT Alliance will support the agency of people by substantially increasing the proportion of our humanitarian investment that goes to cash transfer programming. Before providing in-kind inputs, it will ask itself whether cash would work in this context. It will share learning across the ACT Alliance network on best practice in cash approaches, and increase capacity-building on cash for local and national members.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
ACT Alliance commits to establishing a common approach to providing information to affected people and collecting, aggregating and analysing feedback from communities to influence decision-making processes at strategic and operational levels.	Operational	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need
ACT Alliance commits to adopt the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and International Aid Transparency Initiative Standard, with clear benchmarks for achieving these through the CHS Alliance self-assessment tool.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need Invest in Humanity
ACT Alliance commits to make sustained funding conditional on the systematic collection of feedback from affected people on the quality and utility of humanitarian programmes.	Financial	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need

### Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The ACT Alliance wanted to increase substantially cash transfer programming in order to support people agency and strengthen local structures and resources. We wanted to see a change in policy where cash is seen as the preferred option by donors, decision makers and implementing organizations. In practice we want to see in-kind inputs to be replaced by cash if feasible in the given context, and we want to be a learning community where we actively contribute to new knowledge, capacities and best practices on cash transfer programming.

### Achievements at a glance

ACT Alliance members have continued to promote and support cash transfer programming in their humanitarian interventions. ACT members have carried out a number of studies, project and program evaluations to assess outcomes and learning. In the revised ACT humanitarian response mechanism, we have integrated cash transfers as one of the main modes of delivery. This element will be followed-through in subsequent capacity building activities with staff, members and country forums.

### How is your organization assessing progress

Progress and impact is measured using the systems of each ACT Alliance member and at the ACT Alliance Secretariat. Evaluations



are done by ACT Alliance members in their current systems. The ACT Secretariat and Humanitarian Policy and Practice Group will seek to integrate cash programming in monitoring and evaluation systems for ACT Appeals and Rapid Response Funds. ACT will develop a 2016 baseline to enable tracking of progress. Several ACT Alliance members will also report to International Aid Transparency Initiative and directly or indirectly to Grand Bargain on these developments.

### **Challenges faced in implementation**

ACT Alliance membership is composed of 140 independent organisations across the world, with their own governance, so it is not entirely straightforward to introduce cash programming as a preferred mode across the Alliance, and in some parts of the world (e.g. LAC), receptivity to cash modalities is slower to embed. Context will still need to be considered as a primary consideration in implementing this commitment.

### **Next step to advance implementation in 2017**

ACT Alliance will continue to advocate and work for increased use of cash transfers in humanitarian response through promotion and technical support to cash based programming, capacity building and studies.

### **Tag with other relevant transformations, cross-cutting issues, initiatives**

#### **Cross Cutting Issues**

Cash

#### **Specific Initiatives**

The Grand Bargain



## 5B Invest according to risk

### Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
ACT Alliance will increase the proportion of its humanitarian investment that goes to community preparedness, prevention and resilience, with a target that over 10% of ACT Alliance programming should be invested in emergency preparedness and risk reduction. It will deliver over 30 examples of grassroots-level Disaster Risk Reduction awareness-raising activities by ACT Alliance faith-based and church member organizations by May 2018 as examples of good practice.	Financial	Invest in Humanity
By May 2018, ACT Alliance will revise and reform the ACT Alliance humanitarian response mechanisms in line with the direction set out in the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Humanity, including aiming to strengthen local capacities by reforming the ACT Rapid Response Fund so that it is targeted exclusively for national and local members and that it incentivizes greater investment in emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience.	Financial	Invest in Humanity

### Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The membership of the ACT Alliance has a common understanding that efforts need to be made to strengthen the resilience of affected communities as well as strengthening local capacities. This will be achieved by reforming the ACT Rapid Response Fund (RRF) so that it is targeted exclusively for national and local members and incentivizes greater investment in emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and resilience. More specifically, the aim is to enable first responders to conduct immediate emergency response programming focused on saving lives, over a three month timeframe and provide additional funding to members having early preparedness and response plans.

### Achievements at a glance

A revised RRF policy was drafted and approved which states the following:

- Only national ACT members are eligible for rapid response funds
- Forums/members with up-to-date Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRPs) are eligible for additional funding and projects can have longer lifespans
- RRF funds can also be used to cover the cost of replenishment of a member's in-country stocks which were used in the emergency response

The RRF template & process/protocol were revised and streamlined so as to be more accessible to local/national and less time-consuming.

### How is your organization assessing progress

Currently under review and discussion within the ACT Alliance Humanitarian Policy and Practice Group.

### Challenges faced in implementation

No significant challenges to report at this point in time.

### Next step to advance implementation in 2017

In Spring 2017, we are planning to set-up a small working group/think tank around the early preparedness and response plans (EPRP) tool and its associated process that will be tasked to revise this tool and establish an action plan for its improvement. In Spring 2017 and Summer 2017, forums & members will receive trainings on the revised humanitarian response mechanism (including the Rapid Response Funds tools & process) to ensure strengthened capacities of members and a higher quality of programming



**Tag with other relevant transformations, cross-cutting issues, initiatives**

**Cross Cutting Issues**

Disaster Risk Reduction

**Agenda for Humanity**

4A - Reinforce, do not replace, national  5A - Invest in local capacities and local systems

## 5E Diversify the resource base and increase cost-efficiency

### Individual Commitments

Commitment	Commitment Type	Core Responsibility
ACT Alliance commits to streamline and harmonize reporting requirements for members, in line with the expected outcomes of the Grand Bargain. This specifically includes a commitment to not ask more from local and national members than what donors ask of funding members.	Operational	Invest in Humanity
By May 2018, ACT Alliance will significantly increase the proportion of its members' humanitarian funding that goes directly to local and national members and their partners for humanitarian response and emergency preparedness. It will seek to transparently report on this amount as ACT Alliance, and encourage individual members to do the same.	Operational	Invest in Humanity
ACT Alliance commits to adopt the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) and International Aid Transparency Initiative Standard, with clear benchmarks for achieving these through the CHS Alliance self-assessment tool.	Policy	Change People's Lives: From Delivering Aid to Ending Need Invest in Humanity

### Where did your organization stand on these issues prior to making these commitments

The ACT Alliance wanted to achieve an actual change in both policy, behavior AND most importantly practice in terms of more resources and more decision making power available directly to community- and locally-led crisis responses. Most members of the ACT Alliance have for decades sought to empower locally-led crisis responses. This is reflected in policy documents and guidance. In line with the outcomes of the Grand Bargain, the ACT Alliance committed itself to streamlining and harmonizing requirements for partners; which includes a commitment to not ask more from local and national members than what donors ask of funding members.

### Achievements at a glance

- 9 ACT members have signed the Charter 4 Change (C4C) commitments in favor of increased locally-led responses as either signatories or endorsers. ACT C4C members are in the process of seeking to publicize the initiative within ACT.
- Several ACT members have committed resources to test a new response tool to bolster Locally-led crisis Responses (SLR). The SLR initiative is being tested in two major emergencies with plans to cover another 6–8 projects and areas. ACT revised the rules of its Rapid Response Fund so that only national members are eligible, as contribution to the Grand Bargain agenda.
- The tools of ACT's humanitarian response mechanism were revised to reduce workload on reporting for local and national members. The reporting requirements draw from the initiative "less paper, more aid" and mirror GPPI's "10 + 3" reporting in that they are only required to report information commonly required by back donors in a very concise manner.

### How is your organization assessing progress

- ACT Alliance members are among the driving forces in the first individual and collective Charter 4 Change (C4C) reporting in May 2017 and to be followed up in the years to come. Through C4C, ACT members are also participating in the "localization working group", PACT and other Grand Bargain and WHS related monitoring/ tracking of these commitments.
- ACT will establish clearer indicators to associate with its WHS commitments in order to enable more systematic tracking of progress.
- ACT will investigate the best way to ensure that in future ACT appeals are well-positioned to automatically track amount of funding channeled through local actors.

### Challenges faced in implementation

The biggest challenge faced so far is the reluctance harbored by donors and many INGO's/UN agencies to truly relinquish decision making power over programmatic priorities and real control over financial resources to locally-led crisis responses. Despite the rhetorical commitments (including WHS and Grand Bargain) most donors and international humanitarian actors appear reluctant to accept that a more effective, holistic and locally-led crisis response presupposes that international actors reduce their role, size and



share in decision making over the actual programming and project activities if locally-led/frontline-led responses are ever to flourish.

### **Next step to advance implementation in 2017**

ACT Alliance will continue to advocate for more ACT and non-ACT members to engage in C4C and the WHS/GB processes on localization. ACT members involved in the SLR will continue to solicit political support and resources for this approach. This will include a generation of lessons learned and dissemination to the humanitarian community. We will showcase best practice examples at the Global Platform in Cancun in May and the Joint Learning Initiative Localization and Faith Conference in Sri Lanka in October. We will engage proactively with the Switzerland-IFRC Grand Bargain workstream on localization to promote our perspectives.

### **If you had one message for the annual report on what is most needed to advance the transformation Diversify the resource base and increase cost-efficiency , what would it be**

International humanitarian actors including donors need to accept that a more effective, holistic and locally-led crisis response presupposes that they (international actors) gradually reduce their role, size and share in decision making over the actual programming and project activities if locally-led/frontline-led responses are ever to flourish.

### **Tag with other relevant transformations, cross-cutting issues, initiatives**

#### **Cross Cutting Issues**

People-Centred Approach

#### **Specific Initiatives**

Charter for Change

The Grand Bargain

#### **Agenda for Humanity**

4A - Reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems  5A - Invest in local capacities and local systems



## Additional Reports

Attachment	Agenda for Humanity	Cross-cutting issues	Specific Initiatives	Document Description
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