



# ACTING TOGETHER BUILDING STRONGER

LESSONS FROM THE ACT ALLIANCE RESPONSE  
TO TYPHOON HAIYAN

# FOREWORD

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Jesus said to his disciples, “You give them something to eat.” (Luke 9:13)

It is expedient to tell the story of the humanitarian response of ACT Philippines Forum to the disaster wrought by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. ACT Philippines Forum was barely organized when Typhoon Haiyan struck. The humanitarian work was an acid test. But more than that, it showed ACT Philippines Forum where and how it “will lay its treasures” in the coming years. It directed the Forum to appreciate more fully its reason for being.

This learning document tells the story of the collaboration of churches, agencies and organizations worldwide as they prayed for the people of central Philippines, gave material and financial donations and rendered help until the survivors were back on their feet. It tells the story of how such collaboration can be a fuller response to God who assigns tasks that demand our best. It tells the story of how resource sharing is made to work to the greatest extent. It was a response in faith to the command to “give them something to eat” and a demonstration of how two fish and five loaves can be shared not only to feed thousands but to ensure the re-establishment of loving and caring communities. In the process, the church experiences renewal and a more profound sense of service grounded on solidarity and compassion.

But, beyond being a record of what had been and what could have been for ACT Philippines Forum, this learning document is also a testimony of the survivors, who, while unknown to the millions who prayed and helped, were the face of Christ. Going beyond being mere statistics and recipients, the survivors taught us lessons on faith, endurance and thanksgiving.

May this learning document be a celebration – glorifying God and edifying the people of God.

**Rev. Rex RB Reyes, Jr.**  
**General Secretary, NCCP**

# INTRODUCTION

In the various narratives of the Haiyan experience, much has already been said about the destruction and tragedy that befell the typhoon's path. Stories and images of the devastation, in both personal and public domains, have inundated our individual consciousness and remained in our collective memories. So, too, have portrayals of survival, resilience, and recovery, which have sprung from the ground, bringing lessons and inspiration.

For humanitarian workers, Typhoon Haiyan evokes another kind of experience—one that also puts into perspective the challenges and opportunities, as well as the degree of commitment and amount of effort that were borne out of one of the biggest and most complex humanitarian responses in recent history.

This is what this document aims to achieve: to account for the depth and breadth of work that the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, together with the ACT Philippines Forum and in partnership with various stakeholders—grassroots organizations, national agencies, local government units, and entire communities—has done more than three years after Typhoon Haiyan made landfall. Specifically, this document seeks to recall and reassess the endeavors of the ACT implementing members and their partner organizations, using the broad lenses of coordination, localization, convergence, and quality and accountability.

This document serves not only as a record of the achievements of the ACT Alliance, but also as a point of reflection and learning that could be valuable in future humanitarian work. More importantly, we aim to define in concrete terms the power of what faith-based organizations could do in the service of uplifting the lives of the people that empower it.





### FOOD SECURITY

➤ **564,685** Individuals



### NON FOOD ITEMS

➤ **333,036** Individuals



### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

➤ **165,286** Individuals



### CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMS

➤ **6,575** Households



### CASH FOR WORK

➤ **56,656** Individuals



### EDUCATION

➤ **47** Classrooms

➤ **4,918** Students  
(school kits)



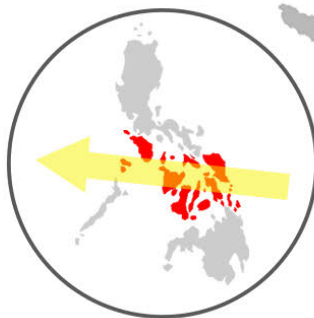
### SHELTER

➤ **180,166** Individuals



### ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

➤ **11,696** Households



PALAWAN



MINDORO



AKLAN



ANTIQUE



IL  
NEGR



————>>>>>>>> WHERE

**act** alliance

# TYPHOON HAIYAN

**10 ACT MEMBERS ←**  
**→ IN 16 PROVINCES**



## LIVELIHOODS (FISHERIES)

► **62,660** Individuals



## LIVELIHOODS (AGRICULTURE)

► **153,375** Individuals



## LEGAL DOCUMENTATION

## AND ADVICE

➤ **28,440** Individuals



## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION TRAININGS

➤ **78,297** Individuals in  
**192** barangays



## QUALITY & ACCOUNTABILITY TRAININGS

➤ **691** Participants  
from **212** CSOs &  
Gov't. Agencies



## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

➤ **19,997** Individuals

➤ **219** Trained in Community-Based Psychosocial Support



# NE WORK: <<<<<<< ————— ➤ 19,9

# liance

# YAN RESPONSE

➤ 219 Trained i  
Based Psycho

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**ACTING TOGETHER, BUILDING STRONGER**  
**LESSONS FROM THE ACT ALLIANCE RESPONSE TO TYPHOON HAIYAN**





Rogelio Francisco builds a new house for his family in Concepcion, Philippines. The town bore the brunt of Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda, in November 2013, and Francisco's house was flattened. Francisco has one prosthetic leg. The ACT Alliance has provided assistance to residents in this town. -- Paul Jeffrey / ACT

# COORDINATION

Coordination was a vital component of the ACT Philippines Forum's response to Typhoon Haiyan. At the time of the response, ACT was composed of six member organizations – Christian Aid (CA), Hilfswerk der Evangelischen/Entraide Protestante Suisse (HEKS), Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO), Lutheran World Relief (LWR), the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), and United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The members have extensive experience in the Philippines and wide networks with deep roots to communities.

By defining where and when coordination was needed, the newly formed body proved crucial to ACT Alliance in three ways: (1) preventing duplication and overlap of activities, (2) harmonizing and integrating responses into a coherent and cohesive strategy, and (3) orchestrating a functional division of tasks among ACT members.

## THE FORUM: ACT ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Forum was formally organized a few months before Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines on 08 November 2013. Signed by CA, LWR, NCCP and UMCOR, a memorandum of understanding paved the way for the formal creation of the Forum on 30 July 2013. As the expression of ACT Alliance's presence in the Philippines, the Forum provided the leadership and direction that were the foundations of a well-coordinated humanitarian response.

The ACT Alliance mandates the creation of a forum in countries with enough ACT members present. This is why, about five years prior to the Forum's formation, there were already informal discussions between members on working more closely together. But coming to a common understanding of the value of collaboration and coordination takes time. It was not until year 2013 when all members had arrived at a shared vision of the future; for them, an integrated response toward both humanitarian and development issues was an inextricable part of the way forward.



Four ACT member organizations, namely, CA, LWR, NCCP, and UMCOR, formally launched the ACT Philippines Forum on 31 July 2013. –Allan Vera/Christian Aid



The Forum was put to task immediately after Typhoon Haiyan made landfall. Among the most urgent to-dos were:

- Supporting implementing members in the affected regions, including joint assessments and Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), gathering data and managing information;
- Participating in relevant cluster meetings; and
- Establishing and managing the ACT Coordination Centre (ACC).



## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR COORDINATION

As members prepared to work together, the Forum emphasized coherence so that the whole was bigger than the sum of its parts. Having in place a clear coordination mechanism was one of the key enablers for a precise, deliberate, informed and organized response to Typhoon Haiyan.

At the very beginning, there was a clear ambition to create an environment conducive to coordination and partnership. In the first six months, most of the ACC's efforts at coordination went to sharing and consolidating information, as well as administrative/logistical support. As time passed, relationships adapted to the multi-organisational approach. Members took better advantage of areas of synergy, and efforts at leveraging partnerships became more prominent.

Part of the leveraging efforts was the ACC's interlinking of various resource and capacity building activities. This

includes CA's Security Training, the Church of Sweden's Basic Orientation and Trainers' Training on Community-based Psychosocial Support, LWR/CWS' Quality and Accountability Trainings, and ACT Alliance's Photography Training. In time for Haiyan's first anniversary, the ACC published a documentation of ACT Alliance's response. The ACC also increased the marketing and visibility of the alliance and its members through visual aid, infographics, tarpaulins and photo booths.

It is often said that in the humanitarian sector, "everyone wants coordination but no one wants to be coordinated", as there are sometimes more incentives to compete rather than collaborate. Despite early obstacles, the Forum was successful in coordinating efforts by laying the necessary groundwork:

- A common vision based on sound analysis of context;
- A shared mentality of cooperation and inclusion;
- Clear incentives for coordination and pooled funding;
- Fostering trust and partnership among members;
- A system for gathering, sharing and managing information;

- Emphasis on coordination as a means to add value to a project and not as an end in itself; and
- Shared commitment towards responding more effectively to the needs of the survivors.

## HAIYAN: THE FIRST TEST

Typhoon Haiyan turned out to be the first test for the then newly-organized Forum. The super typhoon brought unimaginable destruction that deeply altered the landscape and lives of the affected regions and people. Unprecedented in its magnitude and intensity, Haiyan put into sharp focus the ability of the humanitarian sector to respond well despite exceptional constraints.



The establishment of the ACC proved crucial to the ability to act immediately, especially with respect to clarity of roles and strategy, and the alignment of resources to priority areas. The importance of appropriate communication preoccupied the ACC, as

understanding of the wide picture is predicated on a clear articulation of the situation.

In the first year of the response, Bulletins (for the general public) and Situation Reports or SitReps (for the ACT Alliance) were issued by the ACC monthly (in the first month, it was issued weekly) to report on the progress of the response, both in quality and quantity, and the challenges facing it. This accounting was especially valuable in the first months when system-wide information was difficult to gather. ACC continued to collect and define data, such as the number of families in high-risk areas without adequate shelter. The availability of data was predicated on the willingness of each member to share what they have with the rest of the alliance.

The SitReps also probed highly sensitive issues that the Forum was dealing with in an increasingly complex and fluid response, and by so doing, was indispensable in setting both operational and strategic coordination as well as decision-making. Some examples:

- **(February 2014 SitRep)** How does the ACT Forum anticipate the situation developing over the next month considering the level of total destruction?
- **(March 2014 SitRep)** Engagement with the Office of the Presidential Assistance for Recovery and Rehabilitation (OPARR) will have to be planned carefully in the light of concerns over its private sector bias and gatekeeping role. This might be one of the biggest challenges over the next months.

- **(November 2014 SitRep)** Several ACT members, within or outside the appeal, remain active, especially in shelter, livelihood and disaster risk reduction.
- **(February 2015 SitRep)** How to help people prepare for future calamities? As assistance will be needed for years to come, there will be a Follow-up Appeal, a strong aspect of which is disaster risk reduction, or DRR.

## VITAL ELEMENTS FOR COORDINATION

In the days following Typhoon Haiyan, the humanitarian system was reeling not just from the catastrophe, but also from the unprecedented scale of humanitarian giving. The Haiyan response would be one of the biggest and most expensive in recent history. Amidst these challenges, the ACC made gains in pushing for a participatory and collaborative approach. ACT members were set on complementing each other in underserved areas. These initiatives were bolstered by the following factors:

### • MANAGEMENT AND SHARING OF KEY INFORMATION

One of the most effective ways to an integrated response was the sharing of information and assessments by Forum members. What emerged from this process was a sound analysis of the situation and existing capacities, which, in turn, informed the joint approach of the ACT Alliance.

In fact, the PHL131-Typhoon Haiyan Response – the preliminary joint ACT Appeal – did not just combine the appeals of NCCP, ICCO, LWR, CA, and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), but also harmonized and standardized the Forum's humanitarian response.

The appeal took a holistic and multi-sector approach: food and non-food items, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter, community-based psychosocial support (CBPS), education, livelihood restoration and development, cash for work, disaster risk reduction (DRR), capacity building and climate change advocacy.<sup>1</sup> Such an expanse was made possible by pooling the resources, strengths and expertise of each of the five members. Interventions were assigned to and undertaken by each member based on their organization's past experience, existing capacities, and partnerships. Each was expected to contribute to the joint ACT Appeal, and a compliance mechanism monitored their progression against overall targets.

Common standards were also set, in accordance with humanitarian standards such as SPHERE and the Core Humanitarian Standards. For instance, the Forum agreed what should constitute the food packs that were distributed with the ACT Alliance logo.

*A member of the Donor's Joint Monitoring Visit Team, which was composed of several ACT organizations, on a monitoring and evaluation visit to Bantayan Island, Cebu. – Sylwyn Sheen Alba/ACC*







*ACT implementing members, led by the ACT Philippines Forum with their local partners, hold a meeting with the former ACT Alliance General Secretary, John Nduna (center).*

### • **ACT COORDINATION CENTER**

The Forum quickly mobilized itself to direct ACT Alliance's humanitarian response, forming the ACC in Manila within the first week of the disaster. The ACC was hosted by the NCCP. By facilitating regular meetings and discussions, ACC became the focal point of the Forum. It provided a venue for ACT members to set common standards, share crucial information, exchange learning points and explore other ways of working in synergy.

The ACC served as a liaison within the ACT Alliance and United Nations (UN) System. It ensured the timely submission of core humanitarian datasets – Who does What Where (3W), or Who does What Where When (4W) — to various UN clusters; the monitoring of cluster leads; and representation and agenda-setting in cluster meetings. The ACC cascaded agreements to implementing members and participated in the UN Flash Appeal. These actions established awareness of the ACT Alliance presence within the wider humanitarian response.

Monitoring visits conducted by either ACT members or the ACT secretariat were also carefully facilitated by the ACC, lest the visits were done at the expense of project implementation. The ACT Donors' Joint Monitoring Visit (DJMV) on 5-10 May 2014, for instance, required coordination of logistical requirements, preparatory activities, and

communication with visiting members and other ecumenical partners. Monitoring teams, composed of 16 participants from 11 ACT members, were sent to Samar and Leyte, Ormoc and Cebu, Panay and Negros.

### • **COORDINATION WITH THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY**

The humanitarian community is not a monolithic institution, but composed of many independent actors with different, and sometimes even conflicting, interests and priorities. Many of these actors operate at different levels too, from local to the international, and subsequently carry roles and practices that are not always complementary. Without coordination, there is the danger that, instead of being assisted, communities are assailed by disparate aid actions and actors.

Coordination is thus vital. With this in mind, the ACC sought to coordinate and collaborate beyond the ACT members and with the wider humanitarian community. The ACT Alliance showed great flexibility in rapidly developing relationships with field level partners and in drawing from their existing networks to implement their strategies and deliver their interventions. Gaps were identified, weak aspects were addressed, responsibilities were allocated, and roles were clarified to ensure that no effort was duplicated both at the national and cluster level.

- **LOCAL AND STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION**

Coordination with local government units was observed for all interventions, but one area that significantly benefitted from this was shelter. Nearly eight months after the onslaught of Typhoon Haiyan, millions of people were still left without durable settlement options. Property rights and land ownership issues made it difficult for ACT members and their partners to build or reconstruct shelters.

Despite the general challenge of land issues, ACT members were able to expedite housing solutions through close cooperation with the local government units. Land tenure was eventually secured and transitional/permanent houses were finally constructed. It was also through close consultation with local government units and community organizations that deserving beneficiaries of these shelters were identified and validated.

- **THE ACT RAPID SUPPORT TEAM**

Shortly after Haiyan, the ACT Rapid Support Team (RST) was deployed to assist the ACC and the Forum members in coordination, communications, community-based psychosocial support, ensuring quality and accountability, and finance. The RST provided support from headquarters, including invaluable technical expertise and logistics. The deployment of both programme and human resources (HR) personnel at the beginning of the emergency enhanced the ACT Alliance's response.

- **SURGE CAPACITY**

Surge capacity supplied by the LWF lent practical support to the alliance. Several evaluations point to

the effectiveness of the assistance provided by Lutheran World Federation, particularly in reporting and financial issues.

## CHALLENGES TO COORDINATION

In any situation where different organizations work alongside each other in emergency conditions, the potential for confusion, conflict and duplication is high. There were many obstacles to coordination during the response. As the number of actors in the humanitarian sector grew, and the size, ambition and complexity of the response increased, establishing ways of coordination became more difficult too.

- The Forum was quite young, and structures were not yet fully in place. There still were gaps in organizational emergency preparedness and in coordination protocols. This later resulted in a systemic lack of role and mandate clarity, as observed by the PHL 131 external evaluation. This gap is being remedied in part by the creation of a national emergency preparedness response plan (EPRP).



Mr. Nestor Kempis, one of the shelter beneficiaries of NCCP in Sta. Rita, Samar, receives his certificate during the turnover ceremony in 2015. —Joselito Sosmendo / NCCP

- Predictably, the rapid scale up of efforts was not smooth sailing. Bumps along the way affected the clarity of roles and strained efficiency at all levels. For instance, there were some redundancies between

the role of the ACT Secretariat and the ACC. Issues on resource allocation and adequate staffing hampered the ACC.

- There were instances where the demand for frequent updates came to be felt as a burden to the response. Particularly in the initial stages of the response, the demand for information exceeded capacity.
- There were cases where some international ACT Alliance members failed to contact the ACC or the Forum before setting-up operations in the Philippines.
- The roles of national staff and the RST were not clearly delineated, nor was contextual awareness an explicit part of their job description. Ensuring clarity around the roles of the RST and seconded staff will help them orient their work toward areas that need their support without displacing existing capacities. Another area of concern was retaining program continuity beyond the timeframe of the deployment given the short-term nature of the RST.
- The NCCP took the lead in coordinating activities throughout the response despite the Forum's intention to rotate coordination responsibilities yearly. Only NCCP seems to have systematically utilised the ACT brand as well, though all partners did display the logo in external communication. However, NCCP's added function did not translate to practical or financial support from the alliance. Sharpening the Forum's oversight function and strengthening its leadership capacity – through rotating leadership or added support – is one way to remedy the situation.
- Organizational silos were evident in the way the ACT members occupied themselves with their own







programming without proactive efforts to learn from each other. Beyond information sharing and the joint appeal, there were few indications of leveraging synergies between member organisations during the Haiyan response. This development can be traced to the fact that: (1) ACT members covered different geographical areas, (2) ACT members did not have the same local or implementing partners, adding another level of complexity to the response.

- The PHL 131 external evaluation points to a lack of “process preparedness” to explain why templates, reporting and administrative systems were not adapted to development programming. Moreover, methods and tools for assessment were not standardized throughout the alliance despite the joint appeal. For instance, some interventions were entirely based on local government data without validation; in contrast, some were done with minimal contact with local government.
- The potential for strength in numbers of coordination action could have been utilized to advance common advocacies. However, the Forum was not able to maximize the ACC's representation in cluster meetings or improve ACT's visibility/branding, with the exception of the visit of the ACT General Secretary.

# LOCALIZATION

Since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey, there has been an increasing emphasis on the role that local actors play in humanitarian response. While the community of “local actors” is quite diverse, what is clear is that they bring with them an understanding of the humanitarian response firmly rooted in the economic, social, political, and cultural context of communities affected by disasters. More often than not, they are also the first responders in any disaster or crisis.

The evidence is clear on how localization contributes to connectedness, local capacity building, and contextualization. As a gathering of various international NGOs, ACT Alliance understands the importance of giving local and national actors a prominent role in humanitarian response. The alliance recognizes that local organizations have greater knowledge of socio-political and cultural contexts, are more familiar with government structures, and are better grounded in communities.

The strength of the local actors is something that the ACT Alliance sought to complement and harness in the Haiyan response, particularly in (1) the contextualisation of the programme, and (2) forming better relationships with affected people that are less

disruptive, more engaged, more consultative, and on more equal footing.

## STRONG LOCAL PRESENCE

Almost all international members of the Forum have been in the Philippines for more than 20 years. They have established deep linkages with their local partners, including various NGO networks and academic institutions. NCCP, the only local ACT member in the Forum, has a very comprehensive reach through its network of churches and ecumenical partners spanning the entire country. This puts NCCP in a unique position to develop the leadership and visibility of locally-rooted humanitarian organizations that, unfortunately, receive scarce funding compared to international counterparts.

Nonetheless, these local connections proved invaluable during the crisis. On the whole, ACT Alliance’s networks improved the effectiveness and connectedness of humanitarian efforts. The Forum relied heavily on local partners, churches, and ecumenical networks to provide data and assistance in hard-to-reach areas. Local people were able to navigate the difficult terrain; and language differences did not get in the way of gaining trust and acceptance.



*A family smiles after receiving shelter assistance from Swiss Church Aid (HEKS) in Panay Island. HEKS, together with its partner organization "Task Force Mapalad" (TFM) supported 1,800 families in the reconstruction of their homes. -HEKS*



There is plenty of evidence demonstrating the existing abilities of local actors and communities, and the value they bring to preventing, mitigating and responding to disasters. It is worth noting that the Philippines is an archipelago with numerous small islands and isolated indigenous communities. Ensuring programming connectedness, that is, linking interventions with the society at large, in an archipelagic terrain would be difficult without harnessing the locally-rooted humanitarian community. Interventions with local partners present in the area beforehand showed the most strides in programming connectedness.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Within the response, ACT focused heavily on building the capacity of local organizations not just to provide scale and surge capacity in the emergency phase, but also to develop longer-term resilience.

Thus, the Forum also took on a long-term approach to capacity building by integrating the trainings into a

broader strategy. Individual members conducted their own trainings on disaster preparedness, complaint response mechanism, quality and accountability, and psychosocial support. Most beneficiaries/participants were able to recognize the value of undergoing multiple trainings in enhancing their understanding of and ability to respond to disasters.

### • **PRIORITIZING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Key stakeholders from the community —staff of ACT member organizations and their local partners, communities, community associations, and local government units – were trained in disaster preparedness.

Raising Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) awareness occurred in all project areas. LWR, as the Sphere Country Focal Point and convener of the Alliance of Sphere Advocates in the Philippines, conducted 20 trainings for local and international key players, including officials of local government units, to ensure the quality and accountability of relief efforts.

Overall, a significant improvement in behavior was evident, both at the barangay and municipal levels, in terms of preparing for future disasters. Indicators include the ability of beneficiaries to read hazard maps and to identify the location of existing evacuation centers; the application of cost-effective methods to improve the structural integrity of their houses; and their recognition of the need to stockpile emergency supplies such as food, first aid kits, etc. In some instances, these changes in the community's awareness and attitude have been directly attributed by beneficiaries to community-based DRR trainings conducted by ACT member organizations or their local partners.



Besides the development of new skills, it is also worth mentioning how these activities facilitated a transformation in attitudes and behaviors of communities in responding to future disasters. In several cases, local government units (LGUs) noted a more active participation by their communities in consultations and in crafting community response for future disasters. This was a remarkable shift in the attitude of the communities who were difficult to engage with if there was no monetary support or assistance involved.

By the end of the Haiyan response, many communities were able to claim leadership of the decision-making and implementation of disaster response and risk reduction activities in their area.

#### • **COMMUNITY COPING MECHANISMS**

In addition to empowering certain sectors of the community, various localization efforts have also strengthened community coping mechanisms and their sense of unity. One good example is a psychosocial support project done by one of the implementing partners of ICCO in Barangay 89, San Jose, Tacloban City. Officials of the barangay were offered to go on a retreat, which not only helped them process their own emotional trauma caused by the disaster but also collectively strengthened them as a team.

The psychosocial support project also provided social activities for children on a daily basis that offered them a distraction from their daily lives and a place where they could have fun. Children in the community said that the activities also allowed them to share their concerns and fears with one another, developing trust and solidarity in the process.

#### • **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

#### **OFFICIALS**

Capacity gaps were seen also in local government units and agencies. To address this, ACT members organized capacity building events also for local government officials, or jointly, with communities. In the case of the latter, these also served as venues for cooperative and participative planning for disaster preparedness and risk-reduction.

Often overlooked in a multi-sector, multi-actor response is the need for a spirit of trust and collaboration, especially in the field. Thus, bringing LGU staff and civil society together in a space that encourages collaboration and learning proved invaluable.

#### • **CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

Haiyan demanded a humanitarian response; but at the time, most of the Forum's existing partners were development organizations rather than humanitarian players. Thus, the partners' competence was in development, rather than in humanitarian response, particularly a response at the scale and with the sectoral and geographic reach of Haiyan. The alliance and the Forum had to be prepared to give administrative and technical



*NCCP Field Coordinator, Joselito Sosmena, together with the barangay leaders, in a coordination meeting with the local government in Samar. -NCCP*

administrative and technical support to ensure that partners were familiar with humanitarian standards, and that they were able to create ways of working that were more aligned with a humanitarian response.

The alliance and the Forum had to adopt a management style that was sensitive to and incorporated capacity and competence building needs of local partners, including measures such as staff secondments.

#### • **ACT ALLIANCE STAFF**

The ACT Alliance invested time and resources in local staff development. To cite an example, the ACT RST worked on developing the capacity of ACT implementing members in financial and administrative matters. Orientations on international standards and on-site training regarding project implementation were given. Secondments – notably to LWR and NCCP – were undertaken to support LWR on cash transfers and NCCP on communications. The secondtees also made a deliberate effort to transfer skills to national staff.

## **CHALLENGES TO LOCALIZATION**

In some cases, not all local and implementing partners tapped by ACT members had sufficient grasp of the concepts and skills that were required by humanitarian standards. Some gaps that were noted include a lack of understanding of equal access, absence of documentation in complaint mechanisms, and a vague percep-



*Shelter beneficiaries of HEKS, through its implementing partner Task Force Mapalad, after the turnover of the Certificate of Landownership Award. -TFM*

tion of concepts regarding quality of interventions.

Despite substantial efforts by ACT member organizations to expose local organizations to Sphere Standards, Code of Conduct, and HAP/Core Humanitarian Standards, there was insufficient time to learn these in-depth and in a comprehensive manner.

As the capacity of local actors is key to localization, the following action points are worth addressing:

- Sustain capacity building during peace time;
- Localize surge response;
- Work on standardization and consistency of tools and templates;
- Support strong leadership of the national and local staff; and
- Strengthen peer-monitoring approach and simplify requirements.
- There is a lack of clarity on how to balance autonomy (self-governance, mission, values) of local partners with the funding members' responsibility to deal with capacity gaps (identified or unidentified); explicit in the job descriptions of these individuals.

## CASE STUDY

### BUILDING ON LOCAL CAPACITY: EXAMPLES FROM NCCP AND HEKS

Efforts at localization may look small, but, taken as whole, affect the community in profound ways.

- In the island of Jinamoc situated within the municipality of Basey, Samar, NCCP supported the construction of a plant nursery by providing a carpenter and material resources. This nursery was the outcome of an assessment and a plan that the women of the barangay themselves designed and implemented.

The project provided the women of the community with increased incomes and better social standing. It enabled them to contribute to the finances of their households and to break the stereotype that, on account of being female, they do not have the ability to provide for their families or to occupy positions of leadership.

However, the nursery was damaged by Typhoon Hagupit in 2014. This provides a lesson on integrating DRR as any intervention implemented in the Philippines will have to contend with the frequency of typhoons each year.

- By the end of February 2014 – just a little over three months after Haiyan struck – 200 permanent shelters had been constructed in Binaobawan, Pilar, Capiz by the local people using

locally-available materials, and by utilizing local labor. This was a huge success for HEKS, especially considering the context: Municipal and City governments still had to formulate their Local Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (LRRP) to access the PHP 170.9 billion Reconstruction Assistance Yolanda (RAY); the UN Humanitarian Country Team (UNHCT) was grappling with underfunding of the shelter cluster; prices of construction materials were soaring; and complex land issues were stalling shelter interventions.

HEKS and its partner, Task Force Mapalad (TFM), took action. Land issues were resolved through negotiations and multi-stakeholder dialogues with the local government, landowners and beneficiaries. Locally available construction materials were utilized, thereby saving money from the price inflation of materials and hastening the procurement process. Capacity building activities were conducted to enhance existing local capacity, and to introduce concepts such as ‘build back better’, security and humanitarian standards.

Lessons from HEKS’ Typhoon Megi response were also applied. The organization opted to build permanent shelters rather than tent-type emergency shelters.





Members of Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan, who were also trained as solar scholars by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, both CA partners, led the orderly evacuation of almost 100 children, elderly, women and men from their homes near the seashore to the big cave in Barangay Tinabanan, Marabut, Samar, which served as a storm shelter for more than a thousand Marabutnons at the height of Super Typhoons Yolanda and Ruby. Capacity building in disaster preparedness contributes to the communities' resilience. —Allan Vera/Christian Aid

# CONVERGENCE

If coordination was meant to reduce gaps and overlaps in the quantity of assistance delivered by humanitarian organizations, convergence was meant to encourage partnership among humanitarian organizations to leverage resources and deliver greater impact. While coordination and convergence are closely related, the latter is predicated on a greater degree of integration of members.

For convergence to happen, it was necessary to:

- Develop a degree of trust and engagement primarily between and among the Forum members at the national and local level;
- Closely coordinate and collaborate at the strategic and operational level;
- Harness the unique capacities that each member brings to the table;
- Complement each other's strengths; and
- Share risks and costs, and leverage resources.

The convergence of efforts would better ensure an integrated, coherent, and holistic response that has greater impact, as opposed to fragmented programming.

The ACC again was at the nexus of this shared vision

for convergence. The ACC produced, analyzed, and communicated data—through visual aids and infographics—for implementing donors, members, and partners. It mapped out and visualized the ACT response, which, in turn, highlighted the possible areas for convergence and cooperation. The SitReps were particularly useful in showing the progress that the Forum made by sector and by geography.

The ACC also organized and facilitated regular meetings between member organizations and implementing members. These meetings became a venue for exploring possibilities for convergence while shaping constructive working relationships among members within and outside the ACT Alliance. The ACC also provided linkages between ACT members and various humanitarian actors—from the national and local governments, as well as other humanitarian organizations—to various resources and capacity-building activities.

This synergy not only allowed members of the ACT Alliance to converge in some areas, but it also provided them with solutions in delivering interventions in very challenging and complex scenarios. In building shelter and sanitation, for instance, the complementation



*One of the ACT coordination meetings in the first few months of the response. These meetings helped build relationships among ACT implementing members and facilitated the discussions on collaboration. —NCCP*

of the members' resources and efforts was a key factor in addressing difficulties encountered in obtaining construction materials, reaching locations, and accessing skilled labor.



*Ms. Bongiwe Mavuwu was seconded from the Church of Sweden to help facilitate trainings on Community-Based Psychosocial Support and mainstream this into the response of ACT members. –NCCP*

ACT Alliance members also converged and complemented each other's work through trainings for staff, local partner organizations, and communities:

- Church of Sweden: secondments from Church of Sweden to support NCCP on capacity building and community-based psychosocial support
- Lutheran World Federation with NCCP: finance management and shelter construction, including SPHERE standards
- Church World Service Pakistan-Afghanistan with LWR: training on Quality and Accountability (Q&A), and.
- Finn Church Aid: secondment support on NCCP and ACC on communications.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Central to convergence is the concept of partnership. In many cases, the partnerships – between and among members, local partners and networks – adapted and expanded to accommodate greater integration. The PHL 131 Final evaluation identified three types of partnerships evident in the response:

- Horizontal partnerships such as those between the members of the ACT Forum Philippines.
- Vertical partnerships within federations or networks as exemplified by the relationship between Christian Aid UK and Christian Aid Philippines.
- Vertical partnerships between funding and implementing organisations as exemplified by the relationships between LWR and HABITAT Philippines, ICCO and CARET.

The evaluation also pointed that vertical relationships are influenced by “the power distance between funding and implementing organisations.” Such partnerships are beneficial for as long as both parties can agree on shared expectations and responsibilities and have space to re-negotiate agreements when adjustments need to be made. Additionally, funding organisations need to ensure that committed resources are commensurate with their expectations on local partners.

The presence of different types of partnerships adds a layer of complexity to the convergence, and overall, the Haiyan response. Good practices in managing partnerships include CA's efforts to cascade capacity to local partners and stakeholders through trainings, such as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Workshop and Gender Programming Induction in 2015. Other good practices are



NCCP's efforts to help member churches understand that humanitarian support is based on need not church membership; LWR's good monitoring capacity as demonstrated by its timely redress for gaps in the shelter programming of a local partner.

## CHALLENGES TO CONVERGENCE

Notwithstanding these outcomes, ACT Alliance recognizes several areas where convergence could have been improved. One example would be the crafting of the joint ACT Appeal (PHL131-Typhoon Haiyan Response) to better approximate or capture the needs of all the member organizations and the vision of an alliance thinking and acting as one.

In the area of capacity building, more effort could have been extended in creating a common or standard curriculum for the various trainings that were conducted to achieve optimum results.

As for coordination, especially during the early phase of the campaign, international and national coordination mechanisms could have been better observed or strengthened, so as to more fully maximize areas for convergence and complementation of efforts.

Having said all these, it must also be acknowledged that convergence must be informed by the context. For instance, convergence cannot be taken to mean joint purchasing or delivery operations since these could actually be impractical.

Another factor affecting convergence that must be taken into account is the diversity across member

organizations, in terms of organizational nature, focus, and systems, processes, and ways of working:

- Members who implement projects directly differ in dynamics and processes with members who do partner-led implementation. NCCP does direct implementation through churches and staff; meanwhile CA and LWR, through local partners.
- Similarly, systems and ways of working are different for members who are more focused on long-term development than those who are more engaged in humanitarian responses.
- A balance had to be reached between contending concepts: organizational independence versus convergence, organizational interests and priorities versus the alliance's direction and strategies as a whole, expectations regarding outputs and outcomes versus available resources.
- Finally, perhaps the most important element for successful convergence is the degree of partnership between members and their local partners and networks. A multi-organisational approach with integrated programming would have to consider the type of partnership (vertical or horizontal), and whether these partnerships are short or long-term.



## CASE STUDY

### CONVERGENCE IN BARANGAY SALVACION, JINAMOC ISLAND, BASEY, SAMAR

One project that particularly stood out in terms of impact and coherence was in Barangay Salvacion in Jinamoc Island, Samar. During the typhoon, the storm surge submerged the entire island three times, destroying 80 percent of the houses, most of the boats and other means of livelihood, as well as the village school. Despite being only ten kilometers away by sea from Tacloban City, the barangay was off the radar of the media and other humanitarian organizations, and was particularly underserved.

For these reasons, the barangay became the site of various interventions from members of the ACT Alliance: CA implemented a cash-for-work project to clear debris; NCCP built progressive shelters, restored livelihoods, and supported the reconstruction of partially damaged houses; NCA

installed family latrines and rain water harvesting tanks for these houses; and FCA constructed a two-classroom school building in the community. Well-planned and synchronized, the projects not only paved the way for the barangay's faster recovery but also proved the value of a more holistic and integrated response.

In addition, the entire community was also involved throughout the rebuilding process as it played an important role in the planning, decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of the projects. Thus, the recovery of Barangay Salvacion was driven by the spirit of bayanihan/pintakasi—which means forging the bayan or community through cooperation and unity—among members of the ACT Alliance, humanitarian workers, local government units, and the members of the community, making it more empowering, meaningful, and sustainable for everyone involved.



# QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**H**umanitarian funding for Haiyan was one of the biggest in years, but so were the needs of communities affected by the typhoon. This required a robust process for quality and accountability (Q&A) to ensure that humanitarian efforts delivered maximum impact. Thus, the Forum stressed the importance of complying with humanitarian principles and standards.

The Haiyan response illustrated how Q&A is connected to coordination. To deliver on the promises of assistance and protection, the Forum relied on accurate and reliable information shared by members and local partners.

Q&A also relied heavily on M&E. As previously mentioned, M&E tools must be standardized and simplified to ensure reliability and inter-operability. If M&E tools are not standardized, data would be prone to validation and attribution issues. There is also the risk that templates and forms may become empty box-ticking exercises, especially if these are geared towards mere compliance with donor requirements. Simply, poor information results in poor quality response.

## CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS AND SPHERE

The ACT Alliance, and its individual members, had endorsed the Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) prior to the Haiyan response. Prior to the typhoon, the organizational requisites for supporting Q&A were already in place. Minimum standards were set, and compliance mechanisms set-up ahead of the crisis. Staffing needs and resource allocation took into account the need to integrate these into routine monitoring and compliance activities.

In the midst of the Haiyan response, these Q&A standards were relayed to local partners, donors and stakeholders via programming designs, orientations, and workshops. As the Sphere Country Focal Point, LWR conducted trainings to ensure that quality and accountability standards were understood and operational during relief efforts.

Advisors seconded to LWR from Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan through the ACT Alliance held trainings for local and international non-governmental organization (NGO) staff, as well as local government officials, to improve the



*CWS-PA, in partnership with seconded staff from LWR, train local and international NGOs, as well as government staff. —LWR*



Q&A of typhoon relief and recovery efforts. The trainings also covered: Establishing Response Mechanisms, Overview of Sphere Minimum Standards, Safety and Security, and Introduction to the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS).

One concrete result of its trainings was the knowledge built among local government leaders in Sphere Standards. This enabled them to make both local and international organizations more cognizant of meeting Sphere and CHS in their delivery of assistance. This approach suited LWR's strategy, as it prefers developing strong relationships with local leaders before beginning interventions.

## DOWNWARD VS UPWARD ACCOUNTABILITY

The alliance had to manage tensions between the demands of upward accountability (to donors, headquarters, and senior managers) and downward accountability (to affected people) that, if not managed well, can lead to issues of responsiveness



and, ultimately, effectiveness.

At the behest of upward accountability, the pressure to deliver quick results was immense. Quick outcomes were often demanded by headquarters and donors to ensure that the funds are properly spent and accounted for within the prescribed timeline. If checks are weak, however, speedy results can come at the expense of downward accountability.

From the Haiyan experience, the Forum learned that members must learn to strike a balance between upward and downward accountability. This also meant placing the same emphasis on quantitative and qualitative measurements, as the latter is better in assessing resilience and change.

It is important to underscore the twin responsibilities of funding members: on one hand, ascertaining quality control, and committing appropriate organisational resources on the other.

## RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Community empowerment was most remarkable in scenarios where assistance was provided using a rights-based approach to humanitarian programming (RBAHP). The approach focuses on: (1) rights holders as active agents in their own recovery; and (2) duty bearers' accountability to their constituents, and their responsibility to fulfil the rights they are mandated to uphold.

The alliance believes that human rights and social justice must be central concerns in the engagement with duty bearers and in the crafting of humanitarian programmes. The Haiyan experience showed

that empowered communities are also often the most resilient. The method required more time and effort; but the results are perceived to be long lasting and empowering for the people affected by Haiyan.

## COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH

Q&A were also prominent in programs and interventions of ACT members who practiced a very strong community-based or participatory approach. In Samar and Leyte, CA had existing partnerships with local organizations that already had strong ties with the local communities.

On the other hand, NCCP mobilized a high number of volunteers, aside from local church members, who participated actively in humanitarian work in both provinces, as well as in Iloilo. Field extension workers and community mobilizers working for ACT member organizations were also crucial in sharing information necessary to reinforcing Q&A in various interventions.

The alliance sought to engage with the community fully in all aspects of its response. For instance, participatory assessments were done to gather accurate information from discussions with women, girls, boys, and men, including persons with disabilities.

But while the ACT members were explicit in their ambition to focus on gender roles and community

dynamics, and to uphold the dignity of women and girls, the rhetoric did not always translate to reality. The Joint Monitoring Visit Report (JMV) observed that “gender considerations were not visible throughout the entire project cycle.” Similarly, the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as elderly and people with disabilities, is lacking in some projects. In Barangay Salvacion and Ferreras, the JMV noted that ACT members “have not actively promoted and supported empowerment of older people and persons with disabilities within humanitarian, recovery and ultimately long term development activity.”

One benefit of a robust community-based approach is the ability of ACT member organizations to adapt to unanticipated changes and to be sensitive to unforeseen factors. The NCCP,

**“Putting a premium on community-based approaches meant being more attuned to local conditions.”**

for instance, shifted from permanent shelter designs to progressive shelter designs in order to get around the issues of land rights and ownership that were intertwined with constructing permanent housing. Putting a premium

on community-based approaches meant being more attuned to local conditions.

## COMPLAINT RESPONSE MECHANISMS

Complaint response mechanisms (CRM) were implemented by all members. Various instruments were used, such as hotline numbers, complaint boxes, and dialogue with project officers for

handling grievances that were either operational or sensitive in nature. The community already had some level of awareness of the CRM through information shared in trainings and orientations.

Creative ways were also used in implementing CRM. One of ICCO's implementing partners, for instance, used the local radio station to share information on the legal rights of the beneficiaries.

## CHALLENGES TO Q&A

As with the other aspects of the Haiyan response, the effectiveness of Q&A instruments varied among ACT implementing members. In CRM, for instance, some members have comprehensively implemented the CRM process, putting banners and conducting orientations for communities and partner organizations.

On the other hand, other ACT members who failed to conduct orientations for their partner organizations had limited CRM. Other problems that were identified pertain to the practical implementation of standards that had insufficient documentation and follow-up, as well as weak monitoring mechanisms.

By the middle of the Haiyan response, it was clear that capacities were overstretched either for the member itself or their local partners. This led to tensions between the funding agency and the implementing organization. To the extent that capacities were strained, ACT members are advised to exercise caution when the program's ambitious reach exceeds resources.

As the number of donors increased, and the project portfolio grew, so did the need to manage the weight



*An indigenous person doing the hazard mapping in Calamianes Island, facilitated by SAMDHANA Institute, a partner of CA. The community-based approach to disaster preparedness helps build more resilient communities. – Christian Aid*

of accountability. To some extent, undue pressure was placed on partner organizations to finish projects within specific time frames even if these were unrealistic. In this situation, it is worth asking whether accountability and risk are being transferred inappropriately to partners, who are unfairly expected to assume full responsibility for the gaps in the implementation of projects and interventions.

The external evaluation noted that, in some cases, there was insufficient investment in M&E. While individual member organizations did devote staff for the M&E of Haiyan projects, inadequate resource allocation led to overburdened, understaffed M&E systems, and questions around the data's representativeness and attribution.

Uniform tools and templates for M&E were found to be lacking, and later led to issues with validation, compliance and reporting. Some of the tools were



tedious and filled with confusing jargon. This setback became more difficult to resolve as the Haiyan programme stretched on, and was particularly palpable in the middle of the response when assessments and re-calibrations were being conducted.

Following-up on commitments was not a strong aspect of the alliance. A number of evaluations have identified local partners who repeatedly demonstrated gaps in quality assurance. However, the Forum was not able to agree on a common approach on handling errant partners. There is also a lack of clarity on balancing the partner's organizational autonomy with the funding members' responsibility to ensure quality agreements.

The reality of complex and politicized contexts that shaped the terrain of the Haiyan humanitarian response makes the implementation of Q&A strategies challenging. However, positive results—as exemplified by various initiatives of ACT members and their partner organizations—can be achieved with adaptiveness and flexibility.

Probably the most important attribute of ACT and its members in ensuring Q&A is the ability to learn. This allows them to acquire new and better positions and perspectives in future humanitarian efforts, and to better serve crisis-affected communities.



## CASE STUDY

### RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH WITHIN A HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

- CA's partner, Urban Poor Associates (UPA), employed a rights-based approach in a shelter intervention in Tacloban City. Affected communities near the coastline – categorized as No Build Zones (NBZ)– fought hard to be recognized and evade eviction. UPA contested the NBZ directive on the grounds that it would further displace Haiyan victims and exclude them from humanitarian aid. UPA organized 200,000 families across 37 coastal barangays to denounce the NBZ and, despite little support from other humanitarian organizations, the campaign was a success. The government no longer pushed for NBZ, which by then was widely perceived as erroneous.

UPA's leadership and the courage of the people to confront policy and authority resulted in immense change: they were able to secure the right to build safe transitional structures, and the government agreed to prohibit evictions until permanent and decent housing sites were available. The organized families also participated in drafting appropriate land use plans that include housing and settlement and other infrastructures.

- HEKS implemented a rights-based approach for Haiyan victims in Iloilo and Capiz. Specifically, a

land-rights approach was incorporated into the livelihood intervention program for Haiyan victims. This began when HEKS and its partner Task Force Mapalad (TFM) identified 1,850 hectares that typhoon victims could not access even though some of them had already been awarded a Certificate of Land Ownership (CLOA) and Emancipation Patent (EP), or were paying for amortization to the Land Bank.

Both the UPA and HEKS experience highlight issues surrounding land rights claims within a humanitarian response and the need to pursue these claims. This experience also highlights the inescapable links between response and development.

- A joint project by ICCO and its partner Rights Network in Barugo, Leyte showed the merits of a rights-based approach. The project provided livelihood support for the local farmers and also informed them of their rights and how it should be asserted.

**“This experience also highlights the inescapable links between response and development.”**

ICCO's psychosocial support activity specifically targeted PWDs, combining emotional support with rights awareness. As a result of the intervention, the PWDs established a Federation with greater access to assistance from the government authorities.

## SECTION FOCUS

### GENDER AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

In terms of equal access, the humanitarian action was found to be adequately designed and relevant for both women and men. Some good practices include:

- In Jinamoc Island, NCCP gave support for an intervention initiated and operated by the women of the barangay. The project allowed women to become income earners, a position traditionally held by their husbands alone. This intervention also linked project strategies to community-based capacities.
- Gender officers were hired by ACT members to implement gender programming, albeit later into the response. Part of the TOR of CA's gender focal point was to address gender differences to avoid reinforcing the already vulnerable situation that women and girls are in.
- ICCO provided counselling to targeted groups, such as the PWDs, through its local partner (VSO-Bahaginan). There was also evidence of policy changes for PWDs, including the creation of a PWD federation and a PWD representative in the local government disaster management committee. Segregation of data for PWD is now being done in Daan Bantayan, Cebu. (External Evaluation)
- During consultation and information sessions, the facilitators encouraged women to voice their concerns and opinions. The downside was that, in

many instances, the participation of men was an issue as they were noticeably absent.

On the other hand, there were areas that needed improvement to properly address inequalities:

- For livelihood strategies, men's sources of income were prioritized over women's livelihood strategies.
- It was not clear if the interventions had ensured that the operational activities did not put girls and women at risk of gender-based violence (GBV). The JMV found the discussions on preventing GBV in programs lacking.
- In CA-supported Barangay Liwayway, there were concerns that the needs of senior citizens had not been met. Similarly, in NCCP-supported Barangay Salvacion and Ferreras, the Joint Monitoring Report observed that shelter design was not appropriate for the needs of the PWDs, and failed to integrate age specific features.

**“There was also evidence of policy changes for PWDs, including the creation of a PWD federation and a PWD representative in the local government disaster management committee.”**

Assignment of houses on relocation site was completely arbitrary, thereby disregarding the needs of vulnerable groups. Moreover, the design of communal space and usage of such space by different

groups was not considered. These concerns were addressed after the evaluation by ensuring a proximity to the main road, adequate space and a barrier free design for PWDs. Pregnant women were also prioritized in the beneficiary list.





*Persons living with disabilities were supported in claiming their rights. Barangay Daan Bantayan, Cebu. Project implemented by VSO-Bahaginan, a partner of ICCO. – Sylwyn Sheen Alba/ACC*

# CONCLUSION: PARTNERSHIP BEYOND TYPHOON HAIYAN

Evidence gathered during the external evaluation of ACT Alliance's early response point to positive changes in the lives of target communities, which are attributed to ACT Alliance's interventions.

Central to this success is the partnership between and among the members and their partners. Whether vertical or horizontal, short or long-term, partnerships proved to be the essential precursor for many of the aspects of effective programming: coordination, collaboration, localization and Q&A. The ability to leverage synergies, commonalities, and complementation, enabled the alliance to effectively respond to a disaster unlike anything that has been seen before, from the extent of the damage to the overwhelming needs on the ground. Without national and local partners, the surge capacity would have been short and context-deficient. Put simply, making the humanitarian system fit for purpose meant making space for partnerships.

As emphasized in the "Missed Opportunities" and "Missed Again" reports of several international NGOs involved in the Haiyan response (ActionAid,

CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB, and Tearfund), the whole humanitarian web in Haiyan failed to achieve the level of humanitarian partnership that was congruent with the experience and capacity of international as well as sub-/national actors. The Philippines has a vibrant and experienced civil society, and yet, collaboration and coordination were not key facets of the response at a large scale. In this respect, the emphasis that ACT Alliance put on partnership and its vision to take partnership to scale at the very beginning of the response is something that is quite exceptional.

More than three years after initiating its Haiyan response, both the ACT Alliance and the ACT Philippines Forum remain focused in sustaining, improving, and expanding their humanitarian work. Firmly guided by its mission to create positive and impactful change in the lives of those in need, the alliance will continue to pursue a shared vision in the following areas:

## ***1. A platform for humanitarian action for faith-based organizations (FBOs):***



Calls made by the ACT Philippines Forum before the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The Forum actively initiated the coming together of Faith-Based Organizations in the country, and commits to further building this community and expressing its unique role in humanitarian action.  
—Jonathan Sta. Rosa/NCCP



- Strengthen capacity of FBOs and their constituencies, up to the local level
- Enhance quality of humanitarian responses through stronger adherence to standards
- Engage in advocacy for people centered and locally led humanitarian action

## **2. Adequate capacities and robust mechanisms for local resource generation and climate change adaptation:**

- Sustained capacity building programme for local resource generation and fund management
- Along with other relevant local actors, develop options for local humanitarian funding mechanisms
- Capacitate Forum members and their local partners to actively engage in local platforms (e.g., local DRRMC)
- A member can take on a lead role in Climate Change advocacy

## **3. A strong and collaborative Forum:**

- Bring in ACT Alliance members either as full or associate members of the Forum.
- Improve visibility and profile of ACT Forum and its work, both within its main constituency and the broader humanitarian and development community,



*The ACT Philippines Forum continues to bring hope of a full life and uphold human dignity for all. –Paul Jeffrey/ACT Alliance*

guided by a clear communications plan.

- Asia-Pacific Forum – active participation and contribution from the Philippines to pro-actively influence content/direction of Asia-Pacific work, as well as links to global level, how Philippines can help.
- Retain ACC function beyond Haiyan project – explore on members' contributions/resource sharing to sustain the momentum of the Forum's work.



*San Pedro Elementary School students pose in front of their school building which was destroyed during Typhoon Haiyan. Finn Church Aid, one of ACT implementing members, built 47 classrooms as an educational assistance to the affected communities. -- Ulla Karki/ACT/NCCP*



## ABOUT ACT ALLIANCE

The ACT Alliance is a unique global alliance of churches and faith-based organizations consisting of over 140 members from all global regions. It is rooted in local churches and faith communities and works in over 140 countries worldwide to tackle issues of poverty and respond to humanitarian crisis irrespective of the faith, ethnicity or identity of the people in need. Our members are rooted in the very communities we serve.

The ACT Alliance has a membership that is distinctive in its diversity of nationality and culture, its rootedness and experience, simultaneous with a strong commitment to professionalism and high standards of work. The ACT Alliance shares people, resources and knowledge, allowing for a focus on increasing the capacity of local and national responders. As a player with increasing global recognition, the ACT Alliance seeks to maximize opportunities to change the debate on poverty, reduce its impact, and influence governments, the multilateral system, wider civil society and the private sector. This is at the heart of our approach.

The ACT Alliance is:

- Unparalleled in its diversity of global membership
- A faith-based alliance committed to working with people of all faiths
- Dedicated to grassroots to grassroots potential, combined with global coverage
- Committed to humanitarian principles, professionalism and international standards
- An advocate for populations, with a voice that has reach and legitimacy within and across countries and regions

## ABOUT ACT PHILIPPINES FORUM

Officially launched on July 31, 2013, the ACT Philippines Forum is the platform for coordination and collaboration for humanitarian, development, and advocacy work of ACT members in the country. The Forum strongly believes that together, members can do more than one alone: maximize strength, align expertise, and coordinate impact.

The Forum offers a sustainable, comprehensive set of localized and needs-based interventions, meeting communities' needs for food, water, shelter and sanitation, physical and mental health, and building capacity for a stable economic recovery and disaster risk reduction.

Recognizing the community's pre-existing coping mechanisms, all interventions are planned and executed in close cooperation with the local government, civil society organizations, other humanitarian stakeholders and the community as a whole.

The ACT Philippines Forum is composed of Christian Aid, Lutheran World Relief, and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines as full members, and the Church of Sweden, Community World Service Asia, and ICCO Cooperation as associate members.

## LOCAL PARTNERS OF ACT PHILIPPINES FORUM MEMBERS

### Christian Aid:

- Action for Economic Reforms
- A Single Drop of Safe Water
- Alyansa Tigil Mina
- Community Crafts Association of the Philippines
- Coastal Core, Inc./Center for Empowerment and Resource Development
- Center for Disaster Preparedness
- Caucus of Development NGO Networks
- DRR Network
- Fellowship for Organizing Endeavours
- Iloilo Caucus of Development NGOs
- Institute of Climate and Sustainable Cities
- Initiatives for Dialogue Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services
- LCI-Environ
- Manila Observatory
- NGOs for Fisheries Reform
- People's DRR Network
- Philippine Network for Rural Democratization and Development
- Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies Association, Inc.
- Pambansang Kongreso ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan
- Panay Rural Development Center, Inc.
- Rice Watch and Action Network
- SAMDHANA Institute
- Sentro Para sa Ikauunlad ng Katutubong Agham at Tekholohiya
- Socio-Pastoral Institute
- Social Watch Philippines – Alternative

- Budget Initiative
- Tao-Pilipinas
- Urban Poor Associates
- UP Visayas Foundation, Inc.
- Visayas State University
- Women's Legal & Human Rights Bureau
- Zoological Society of London

### ICCO Cooperation:

- Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanaw Incorporated
- Center for Agrarian Reform Empowerment and Transformation Incorporated
- Center for Research on Social Studies
- Initiatives for Dialogue Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services
- Kabuhayan Micro-enterprise Incorporated
- Micro-finance Council of the Philippines Incorporated
- Non-Timber Forest Philippines
- Pag-Inupdanay Incorporated
- Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan
- Philippines Legislators Committee on Population and Development
- Philnet
- Rice Watch and Action Network
- RIGHTS Network
- Task Force Mapalad, Inc.
- Voluntary Service Overseas Bahaginan

### HEKS-EPER:

- Task Force Mapalad

### Lutheran World Relief:

- Habitat for Humanity Philippines
- Kapisanan ng mga Maliliit na Magniniyog sa Pilipinas
- PHILDHRRRA Visayas
- Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, Inc.
- Tambuyog Development Center

### National Council of Churches in the Philippines:

- Antique Church Worker Ecumenical Fellowship
- Aripdip Baptist Church
- Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches
- Iglesia Filipina Independiente Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer, Batad, Iloilo
- Katiguban Baseynon Paraguma
- Save Our Seas-Estancia
- St. Paul's Theological Seminary
- Tabang Ecumenical Network for Disaster Emergency Response
- United Church of Christ in the Philippines-Catbalogan
- UCCP Tacloban
- UCCP Integrated Health Ministry
- Western Visayas Ecumenical Council

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- Church of Sweden
- Church World Service USA
- Council of Churches of Malaysia
- DanChurchAid - Denmark
- Diakonia Sweden
- Diakonie Katastrophehilfe
- Disciples of Christ, USA
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America-USA
- Finn Church Aid
- HEKS-Switzerland
- Hungarian Interchurch Aid
- ICCO & Kerk in Actie
- ICCO Cooperation
- ICCO Netherlands
- Icelandic Church Aid
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- Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Lutheran World Federation
- Lutheran World Relief
- Lutheran World Relief USA
- National Christian Council in Japan
- National Council of Churches in the Philippines
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
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- United Church of Canada
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- Wider Church Ministries
- Y CARE International

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Truly, our journey together reincarnates God's love and justice amidst any disaster. Again, a warm thank you!

# ACT PHILIPPINES FORUM



National  
Council of  
Churches in the  
Philippines



# actalliance

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### Cover photo:

Allan Vera / CA

About the cover: Joyful smiles from a family in Tacloban City, standing in front of their stronger home. The shelter project was implemented by the Urban Poor Associates (UPA), a local partner of Christian Aid, with support from ACT Alliance.