

Report of ACT Alliance Joint Monitoring & Exchange visit
ACT Appeal HTI101
June 2010



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Intro:

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti causing massive destruction, loss of life, and displacement of people. Approximately 3 out of the 9 million people in Haiti were affected, with 230,000 people dead, 300,000 injured, and over a million made homeless. 250,000 residences and 30,000 commercial buildings were damaged or made uninhabitable. More than 500,000 people fled the area of the earthquake and went to rural areas, some of them living with families and others making spontaneous settlements. The total number of people displaced is more than 1,200,000 and there are more than 1,300 spontaneous encampments in Port-au-Prince and throughout Haiti.

Five ACT members responded as requesting members in the preliminary ACT appeal HTI101 issued on 23rd January: CA, CWS/SSID, DKH, NCA and LWF, with relief assistance including food/non-food relief items, shelter, water and sanitation, psycho-social support, health care and awareness, staff care, education and livelihood. A number of other ACT members took part in the initial response, such as IOCC, ICCO, Church of Sweden, DCA and FCA. On 19th February, the full appeal was issued with revised and extended figures, including also CRWRC. The appeal will be revised in June in order to reflect adaptations to the evolving context and needs in the country in general and locations for intervention in particular.

It was decided at the launch of the ACT appeal HTI101 to host joint monitoring visits combining multiple donors in a peer monitoring exercise. The objective was to ensure implementing partners were meeting set objectives, to minimize the multiple bi-lateral visits from donors representatives and to use key learnings and exchange of experience within ACT Haiti forum and across ACT alliance to improve the humanitarian response.

The purpose of the monitoring visit was:

- 1) To undertake joint monitoring of the assistance being implemented for people affected by the Haiti earthquake by ACT members and their partners under the ACT appeal HTI101 to understand and share the extent to which objectives of the proposed programs under the ACT appeal have been achieved to date.
- 2) To find out how the projects are including a quality and participatory based approach, in particular how they are applying the Principles of the Code of Conduct, the Sphere standards and the HAP Benchmarks in the planning and implementation of Appeal activities and what are the challenges faced in the application.
- 3) To exchange experiences and lessons learned to date with a view to strengthening the on-going projects and future interventions and draw possible lessons learned and suggestions for the revision of the appeal mechanism.
- 4) To look at the ACT Haiti forum function and its mandate beyond emergency.

ACT alliance monitoring team was composed of 9 persons (7 men and 2 women) with all kinds of skills representing 7 ACT members. We were given a set of 8 questions to work with, concerning participation and accountability, impartiality in selecting the beneficiaries, especially vulnerable groups, relevance of the type of assistance, psychosocial aspects, LRRD and exit plan, DRR and Disaster Preparedness, and coordination and collaboration. The focus was to provide a view on the implementation process and outcomes in relation to ACT policies, Code of Conduct, HAP benchmarks and Sphere standards.

Monitoring team members:

- DCA – Lisa Henry (lih@dca.dk), Henrik Stubkjaer (hst@dca.dk)
- Kerk in Actie / ICCO – Dick Loendersloot (Dick.Loendersloot@ICCOenKerkinActie.nl), Peter Goudkamp (P.Goudkamp@pkn.nl);
- LWF – Michael Hyden (michael.hyden@lutheranworld.org)
- FCA – Matti Ridanpää (Matti.Ridanpaa@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi)
- PWSD – Alexander Macdonald (AMacdonald@presbyterian.ca)
- CREAS – Horacio Mesones (mesones@creas.org)
- Church of Sweden – Anna Arnborg (Anna.Arborg@svenskakyrkan.se)

Executive Summary: Overall, the ACT implementing members and their partners are working to meet the objectives set out in ACT Appeal HTI101, although progress in some cases has been slower than expected. 167,724 persons have received support (Non Food Items, Cash, Food, Water, Shelter, Psycho social care, Seeds) in the first 5 months of the ACT response. USD 11.860.000 out of the USD 14.626.609 pledged has been expended. (See annex 1)

Quality standards are not always being met due to circumstances beyond our control in the urban setting (logistics, access, available materials and import blockages). For example, the SPHERE indicator of 15 l water per day per person has been unachievable, and the WASH cluster has lowered the indicator to 10 l per day per person. But even so, water supply is on average 1-2 l per day per person. The situation with latrines is similar: the standard is 20 persons per latrine but the current average situation is 1000 people per latrine. The 10 main actors in the WASH cluster are aware of the need to improve and are doing what they can but it is slow going. Within the ACT alliance both NCA and Viva Rio are working hard but are still challenged. All ACT alliance partners are participating in Cluster coordination meetings in different sectors. There are too many meetings which are difficult to get to, given traffic, and there is much talk by all and any who want to talk. More strategic and decisive decision making would be helpful.

Accountability levels vary widely across the ACT alliance response. Although some partners are working in a participatory manner with clear information sharing with beneficiaries, others are less so. This needs to be improved, along with clearer information to beneficiaries and the development of complaints/appeals mechanisms. Best practices observed by the monitoring mission have been shared with ACT members (See annex 2) and should be replicated by others in appeal revision. (See annex 3)

The revision process should be extended (until end July 2010) to allow ACT Haiti forum working session/workshop (led by monitoring team member) on the overall objectives to which implementing members contribute. **Issues to be prioritized in the revised appeal are: disaster risk preparedness, shelter, livelihoods, emergency schooling, and psycho social support. There is an obvious need to continue to apply pressure through advocacy initiatives related to land rights, import of materials, management of reconstruction fund, etc.** Donors within ACT alliance should make their funding pledges for 2011-2012 immediately.

With respect to the ACT Haiti forum, discussions should continue in a more inclusive and accessible ACT forum with a strong coordinator, and should move from sharing information to interaction and decision making on strategic issues which showcase the innovative elements in the ACT alliance response. ACT alliance implementing members should take a united stand on issues (for example, cash distribution methodologies, shelter models, complaints mechanisms, etc), improving quality of our program through bold, well-informed decisions.

The joint monitoring mission provided the space for constructive peer feedback and provides observations which focus on specific themes across ACT alliance Haiti programs. There is room for improvement in the

preparation and management of such a mission, so we have provided our own self critical input. (See annex 4 and 5)

General Conclusions:

1. The members of the monitoring team recognize and appreciate the work ACT members are doing through the ACT Haiti forum and appreciate the openness with which the joint monitoring mission was accepted. We encourage coordination in accessing funding for programs. We are pleased to note sharing of resources (eg stocks, personnel, logistics) and would encourage even more. Psycho social care expertise by Church of Sweden/LWF and support to people with disabilities (PWD) by CWS could be incorporated more consistently in all programs. We request that agencies look beyond their own agendas for preparedness and contribute to a common ACT alliance contingency plan. We request that implementation of accountability initiatives are taken more seriously and followed up. We support the thirst for new knowledge evidenced in the large number of trainings attended by ACT members; we do remind though that sound management is needed to “test” whether new techniques in accountability, psycho social care, cash distribution, use of SPHERE indicators are really understood and implemented by ACT alliance members.

2. We encourage ACT coordinator in country to raise awareness of ACT policies amongst Church leaders and their partners at all levels. We appreciate the co-branding efforts which have been “noticed” within the humanitarian community. But especially with respect to UN system, it is necessary to implement the “ACT/member organization” co-branding system, and to remember at all times to introduce/refer to oneself as ACT alliance member.

3. We encourage ACT Alliance secretariat in Geneva to ensure the dissemination and understanding of the existing guidelines in the ACT manual in French. There is a general lack of knowledge and understanding of ACT principles and procedures, especially outside of the HQs of ACT members. ACT visibility is not only tee shirts and stickers but should involve gaining a more thorough introduction/understanding of what Haiti Forum is all about. (Maybe a brief brochure could be developed.) ACT Haiti MOU should be completed and signed, and an updated, complete members contact list established and used.

4. We encourage a constant and well documented flow of information/articles to the ACT alliance website about the projects. We need to be able to explain that we can make a difference, albeit a small one, but that it's up to the Haitian government, working closely with UN and NGOs, to really make a lasting difference. Such documentation is our key advocacy tool; both to document progress but also to apply credible pressure on decision makers in donor countries.

ACT alliance members have planned programs which they adapt/adjust to needs and demands from communities. Haitians are the backbone of the true humanitarian response in Haiti, and we respect their right to a life with dignity.

Innovative and flexible ACT alliance response! ACT alliance members have well planned programs which they willing adapt/adjust to needs and demands from communities, as Haitians are the backbone of the true humanitarian response in Haiti. ACT alliance partners adjusted response methods, for example, giving the cash value of hygiene promotion kits, instead of the kits themselves, changing to building materials instead of plastic sheeting as the rainy season began, changing from dry ration distributions to cash, adjusting cash distribution cycles to give 1 payment, reducing transaction costs and providing a bigger one time payment, providing water to spontaneous IDP camp next to partner office to appease potential for conflict and address needs, participating in set up of telephone hotline for Gender Based Violence victims, devising a system to make new ID cards (giving people their dignity and chance to

be registered for distributions), allowing use of cash grants for school payments (investment in future) instead of food, incorporating permanent housing where an earthquake resistant model was developed, and harvesting solid waste from latrines into biogas.

Challenges: ACT alliance members have well planned programs, but things can go wrong. In each instance ACT alliance members have learned and adjusted after each mistake. The ability to be transparent about the challenges, address them and adapt new responses is the strength of the ACT alliance partners in Haiti. Examples: Non food item distributions where beneficiary distribution lists were poorly prepared and communication of the timing was poor, resulted in conflict, delayed distributions where ACT alliance member couldn't meet timetable (due to logistical challenges beyond our control) left local population baking in the hot sun for a whole day, non food distribution where all supplies were in open view of population, created panic as the pile of supplies got smaller and smaller, non food distribution without advised local police/security officers where a group of drunken youth acted aggressively and the distribution had to be stopped, cash distributions overwhelmed local bank system as all beneficiaries wanted to withdraw at the same time and beneficiaries received hygiene kits but expected food and became violent.

SNAPSHOTS FROM DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS VISITED:

DKH: dedicated, lively and energetic team, eager to share information and knowledge and also inviting comments/feedback. DKH made a bold decision to go straight for permanent houses, DKH has already initiated a contingency planning, DKH did not take a holistic approach in the camps but rather did just some services. DKH has no church link but rather has a longstanding relationship with CROSE an umbrella organization supporting mobilization of local community groups (could be politically motivated?). DKH maintains a relationship with local government (mayor's office) for getting the required permissions and uses cluster system to coordinate but maybe more importantly to lobby on different issues like land for renters, identification of emergency shelters. Suggestions: Could possibly offer some support to local government (mayor's office in Jacmel). Should more actively use accountability signboards and benchmarks in both information to communities and engage local stakeholders in monitoring systems (even human rights activists). Could also utilize CoS expertise in psychosocial programming in their section of the appeal.

LWF: In general the beneficiaries interviewed were very open, involved and willing to answer questions in a manner which was direct. LWF staff engagement and understanding varied considerably. We observed that LWF is spreading relatively small activities over a large area which is logistically challenging and can cause "gaps" in the services. It has obviously been a challenging situation for LWF to start up quickly in earthquake impacted areas outside its areas of regular interventions. Time is still needed to develop relationships and obtain knowledge of local authorities and decision-making systems. LWF engages the local community and have a focus on community based work. Initially after the earthquake LWF were able to link development programs to new emergency programs after an influx of IDPs in remote areas (Thiotte), far from the earthquake. However, as the majority of the IDPs (Thiotte) have returned to PaP, the emergency program should now be revised. Thiotte emergency program should not be part of the revised appeal.

CRWRC: Good geographical focus, strong link to motivated community committees, CRWRC staff are well acquainted with ACT alliance, the way it works and its objectives. CRWRC is focusing efforts on T-shelters with hurricane resistant improvements and are open to additional improvements as suggested by engineers on the monitoring team. Clear ranking of beneficiaries against vulnerability criteria although insufficient communication of these criteria to local population. Very motivated and skilled staff members who have a well functioning "appeal"/complaint system which beneficiaries are encouraged publicly to use. Good team spirit and focus on the task at hand.

NCA: Very dedicated team, with focused expertise in Water and Sanitation. The visits were programmed in a way that was geared toward the witnessing of project activities as opposed to monitoring of the project through direct interviews with project beneficiaries. This limited the ability of the monitoring team to properly assess many of the questions posed in the ToR. Psychosocial, hygiene and water and sanitation are common sectors of intervention with both partners, but the partners (Viva Rio and MISSEH) vary greatly in their capacities, size, and contexts of the populations they are supporting. The bio-digesters project with Viva Rio has great potential for addressing sanitation issues in the short term, reducing costs for the city involved with solid waste management in the medium to long-term, as well as providing people in Bel-Air, Port-au-Prince with cooking fuel.

CAID: Solid local partners with strong relationships with Christian Aid, as well as a history of working with emergency situations has made for participatory responses that clearly dialogue with the target communities and beneficiaries to prioritize and re-prioritize project components. Have clear community-based organized programs, including psychosocial support as well as disaster preparedness. The affected communities expressed their firm appreciation for the work of the local partners and for the existence of feedback mechanisms to address issues as they arise. CAID works with the UN Cash Cluster and has utilized cash assistance as a major component of their strategy. This has proven to be a highly accepted and appreciated way to allow beneficiaries to decide how best to meet their own needs. Most reported spending their cash on food and schooling. Christian Aid did a very good job at scheduling time to meet with both project implementation staff and beneficiaries. CA have involved their partner GARR in setting up a complaints mechanism for beneficiaries as well as setting up Human Rights Committees for the cash distribution to avoid untoward and bias distributions. The community has been included in all levels of CA and GARR program planning. Due to GARR policy of non impartiality, there was no engagement with local church or local government. This strict interpretation of non impartiality may result in a less sustainable project.

CWS

Together with Service Chrétien d'Haiti (SCd'H) the focus was clear: To work for the improved situation of People with Disabilities (PWD). The work that had been conducted and targets set up had been thoroughly organized with clear directions, ie thorough assessments, clear criteria whom could be included in the program, information sharing with beneficiaries, training on Code of Conduct, discussion on HAP and Sphere standards as well as a complaints procedure. Extremely dedicated and willing to share their knowledge of expertise on PWDs with other implementing ACT member organisations. CWS and SCd'H had a separation between identified possible beneficiaries by monitors and thereafter an independent selection process by another board, in order to avoid bias in the selection process. The program was set up before the earthquake, most beneficiaries at present are PWD's from before the earthquake. The initial group of 2 voluntary monitors has now been expanded to 12 paid monitors, which lets them cover much more camps.

Long-time faith-based Dominican Republic (DR) partner, SSID; of Church World Service that has strong linkages with churches and solidarity in Haiti. A very capable staff team has been providing all ACT members with logistical support from the initial hours after the earthquake. Initially, with the Port-au-Prince airport closed to civilian flights, Santo Domingo, DR was the flight destination for all ACT Alliance member staff. SSID received people at the airport, provided accommodation in apartments, and ground transport to Port-au-Prince. While these services have continued, more ACT member staff has been flying into Port-au-Prince, but in some cases it is clearly more economical to fly into Santo Domingo, depending upon where one's point of origin is. Ground transport between the capital cities has reduced by about 25% after the first three months of the response. The other major component to SSID's services to the ACT Alliance response has been in a supportive role to LWF procurement and warehousing coordination. The ACT Alliance has leased one warehouse facility in Haiti (Delmas), which currently four or five members are using to stock and prepare items for transport to project sites. SSID has donated warehouse space in Jimaní, DR, right at the border. This space is currently filled with mostly LWF items that are waiting for customs clearance to cross the border. NCA also has a series of vehicles here waiting for customs clearance and license plates. These

items are a mix of container shipments to the DR and then transported to the warehouse, as well as items purchased in the DR (such as hygiene kits), and assembled by staff hired by SSID.

SSID's most utilized service continues to be the facilitation of customs paperwork and processes. ACT members that have used and continue to use these services are LWF, CRWRC, NCA and Finn Church Aid. SSID has a staff person dedicated to customs paperwork and the managing of the customs process which currently takes about 30 days to complete (about five different entities in Haiti have to review and approve the paperwork). The Port-au-Prince port is now open to receiving shipments and ACT members are considering this avenue as an alternative for getting goods into Haiti. LWF is looking into the need for more space in Haiti to warehouse items.

CWS is now leading a process to consult with each ACT member to get a sense of their DR – Haiti needs from now until the end of the appeal in order to get a better sense of the changing context and plans of each member in order to best budget the SSID support component. The context has changed, but with certain plans of members, such as the potential purchase of pre-fabricated houses by LWF in the DR, there is a need for SSID to continue to provide warehouse and customs support for the foreseeable future of the appeal.