

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales · Charity number 1172010

Details

Other names ACTION FOR CHILD TRAUMA INTERNATIONAL

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-03-13

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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GU34 4AJ

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Website www.actinternational.org.uk

Activities

Objects: A) THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF GOOD HEALTH OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CONFLICT AND/OR TRAUMA B) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS IN PART, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, UNDER THE UN CONVENTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Activities: A child-centred volunteer-led organisation that trains and supports local people working with children and young people traumatised by conflict, violence and disaster.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People

Geography

- Armenia
- Colombia
- Jordan
- Liberia
- The Gambia
- Turkey
- Uganda
- Yemen
- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£35,341	£33,120	-	-
2024-03-31	£36,321	£39,525	-	-
2023-03-31	£27,726	£36,003	-	-
2022-03-31	£35,593	£35,601	-	-
2021-03-31	£20,824	£13,577	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Stella Charman	Chair	2022-04-01
Barbara Simpson		2023-03-07
Dr Yara Fardous		2022-03-18
Jenny Cuffe		2020-06-09
Saif Ghauri		2023-12-06
Simon James Stewart		2022-03-18
Victoria Burch		2024-03-12

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1172010

Accounts

Action for Child Trauma International



Annual Report & Accounts
for the year ended
March 2025

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	5
2. Governance and management	7
3. Objectives and activities	8
4. Achievements and performance	9
4.1 CATT training & supervision	9
4.1.1 CATT training and supervision in refugee settlements in Uganda	9
4.1.2 CATT training as part of CAMHS Diploma, Uganda	9
4.1.3 CATT training of trainers in Uganda	10
4.1.4 CATT training for Nigeria	11
4.1.5 CATT training Northern Syria	11
4.1.6 Palestine and Gaza	12
4.1.7 CATT Counsellor Support Fund	14
4.2 Bespoke training & materials	15
4.2.1 Inter-generational trauma training for Ugandan counsellors	15
4.2.2 Making of CATT video for use in African countries	15
4.3 Special projects	16
4.3.1 Support for Play Action International	16
4.3.2 Bishop Asili Counselling & Community Development Foundation	16
4.4 Fundraising	17
4.5 Website, social media and profile-raising	18
4.6 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)	19
4.7 Safeguarding	20
5. Financial review	21
6. Annual accounts for the year ended March 2025	23

What we do and why



We have delivered comprehensive training, supervision and support to CATT counsellors living in 18 countries since 2011

This past year the international situation has not improved – it has tragically worsened. UNICEF says that *'by almost every measure, 2024 was one of the worst years on record for children living in conflict zones. More than one in six children globally now live in areas affected by conflict, forced to face unthinkable violations'*. These wars have affected us personally, as well as exploding the need for effective responses to childhood trauma. At the same time, all children's charities are facing severe financial challenges but we are fortunate in one respect: we carry minimal overheads. Working through volunteers, we can flex our work according to the sustainable funding available, and do not have the heart-breaking task of cutting services and jobs in the face of reduced income whilst demand grows.

We are proud to report that this year we have consolidated our work in an eighteenth country – Syria. You can read about our work with the SAMS Foundation in section 4.1.5. It has also been satisfying, after a gap of 10 years, to work once again with Nigerian psychologists and counsellors. This has been achieved in partnership with Nigerian diaspora organisation NIDSG. CATT training is much in demand and has been central to our work this past year. As this report is being prepared, trustees are considering proposals for a further six CATT projects. It fills the gap between highly specialised individual psychological treatments and broader psychosocial support for traumatised children. This year, we have also introduced training about inter-generational trauma, which is a feature in so many countries with long histories of conflict. People need to be aware of new evidence for the biological, as well as social and behavioural, transmission of trauma down the years.

2024-25 has seen us develop closer relationships with partner charities, and most notably SAMS Foundation, for which we delivered the first year of a two-year EU funded training programme. We have also been working closely with UK charity Chance for Childhood, which is interested in integrating the work we do into its portfolio of projects across Africa. They are now key to securing our training legacy for the future (see section 2). We have also invested in developing partnerships with organisations working with Palestinian children in the West Bank and child refugees from Gaza in Cairo. Trustees regard these partnerships as key to ensuring that the skills to treat children are spread widely and to securing our legacy for the future.

This report describes our work in detail and thanks all our committed volunteers (section 1), our generous donors (section 4.5), and staff of our organisational partners who enable and facilitate training taking place in-country and online. We could not do all that we do, with such limited resources, without your collaboration, goodwill and support.

Don't forget: we can't change what has happened, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.

1. Reference and administration details

Charity name and details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/actinternational.insta/?hl=en>

Charity trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney (to September 2024)

Saif Ghauri (Treasurer)

Barbara Simpson (Safeguarding Lead)

Simon Stewart (Digital Transformation Lead)

Officers

Fahed Al-Oqaili – Middle East Operations Manager

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Specialist volunteers and paid consultants this year

Zoe Aristotelous – social media volunteer

Pippa Barlow – private Facebook group administrator and researcher

Brenda Graham – CATT Counsellor Support Fund

Penny Jeffcoat – fundraiser

Lucy Rolington – child and youth rights consultant

Aggie Tait – social media volunteer

Spanish-speaking trainers active this year

Ximena Zambrano

Uganda-based trainers active this year

Martha Akullo

Elias Byaruhanga

James Nsereko

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Ahmad Abdulhamid

Dr Ghalia Al Asha

Haifa Al-Masri
Fahed Al Oqaili

UK based trainers active this year
Shellee Burroughs

2. Governance and management

In March 2024 trustees undertook an online appraisal exercise aimed at rating a total of 15 new projects weighted according to the priority given to our work in different parts of the world. The outcome of this exercise was decisive in the light of the distressing and ongoing destruction and war in Gaza, which threatens the stability of the entire Middle East. Trustees resolved in June to prioritise fundraising and projects to help Palestinian children, in particular those from Gaza, whilst retaining ongoing commitments to work in Northern Syria and Uganda. As a consequence, we put time and energy into developing and fundraising for viable new training projects in Cairo and the West Bank.

Our fundraising efforts (see section 4.4), led by volunteer Penny Jeffcoat, were successful in taking us halfway to our target of £15,000 for Palestinian children. As a result we were able to send trustee Jenny Cuffe on a reconnaissance trip to Cairo in February and bring Wings of Hope Director Ursula Mukarker to the UK for CATT training in March (section 4.1.6). We also successfully delivered on the first year of our contract with SAMS (section 4.1.5) and made another highly productive trip to Uganda (sections 4.1.2, 4.1.3 & 4.2.1). We continue to maintain a careful balance between our projects and fundraising for them, so we do not over-commit or fail to deliver on our promises. Section 5 shows that we do this with minimal overhead costs.

In September 2024 trustees held a strategy session in which it was agreed that the direction of travel was to develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with three charities to which we could transfer our English (Africa), Arabic and Spanish programmes of activity. The aim is for them to be carried forward within larger, more robust and ultimately sustainable organisations in the longer term. **This strategy will result in the closure of ACT International on 31.3.27.** Opportunities for individual trustees to continue with successor organisations will be discussed when specific arrangements are on the table and being progressed via MOUs with each one. Anne Feeney ended her term of office in September and in view of our plans for the future, we have not replaced her. Anne had been a trustee since 2015, prior to our formation as CIO, so it was sad to see her go, primarily due to her work pressures. Our cohort of seven remaining trustees will continue to meet quarterly to oversee and manage activity until 2027, with the help of our band of committed volunteers and officers (section 1).

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma.
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ACT International's charitable objectives are achieved through the delivery of training to help children with anxiety and resilience (our A&R programme), children who suffer from diagnosable PTSD symptoms using the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT), providing trauma awareness programmes and supporting individual counsellors working in remote or under-resourced locations. Our work is led by requests which come directly from local people or community organisations. Below is a summary of our methods:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- **Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT)** created by Dr Carlotta Raby with follow-up case supervision.
- **Anxiety and Resilience Programme (A&R)** compiled by Victoria Burch
- **Teaching for Recovery Technique (TRT)** developed by Children & War Foundation.
- **PTSD, complex trauma and inter-generational trauma awareness:** bespoke training or materials (printed leaflets, social media campaigns and videos) to meet the needs of people of different cultures or experience.
- **Safeguarding** based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context.

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children, in support of community-based organisations.

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need and who may need resources to support their practice. Our CATT Counsellor Support Fund is a key vehicle for this.

Developing educational materials for use in different languages, specific contexts, or to support good practice. The leaflet below was designed for Uganda and made available in Luganda and Swahili versions.



The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charity in the year to March 31st 2024.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and supervision

4.1.1 CATT training and supervision in refugee settlements in Uganda

Uganda continues to host nearly two million refugees and asylum seekers, and has the largest refugee population in Africa and the sixth largest in the whole world. 54% of them are from South Sudan and 32% from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and our work touches both populations. In western Uganda, Elias Byaruhanga visited Oruchinga and Nakivale camps in August and December 2024 to follow up the work of five to six CATT counsellors in each camp, and to discuss any particularly difficult cases with them. This is also an opportunity to hear some 'success stories' like this one:

'My name is UH. I am a boy aged 11 years, a Congolese by nationality. During the war both my parents were killed by soldiers. I used to be scared most of the time, could see the ghost of my mother, experienced nightmares and could get disturbing memories about what happened. Living with my aunt, I never felt part of the family because I didn't feel loved or worthy since they were not my biological parents. Following the treatment sessions by a CATT counsellor, my life has changed for the better. I no longer see the ghost of my mother, my life has changed greatly and I can do so much more. Thank you so much for helping me realize my worth and for gaining the courage to trust again.'

In the north of Uganda are the Rhino and Imvepi settlements of mostly South Sudanese refugees, spread over a wide area. Since 2019 CRESS (Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan) has provided some psychosocial support and a CATT counselling service with our help. Unfortunately, this year we have been unable to make a financial contribution but we have kept in close touch with the two South Sudanese trainers and the lead CATT trainer in Arua, Candia Umar, administers a WhatsApp group to share challenging cases. CATT cases are also referred to the children's mental health team in Arua. One of our key priorities for 2026 is to run a CATT training course for Imvepi settlement.

4.1.2 CATT training as part of the CAMHS Diploma at the PCO School, Butabika Hospital Uganda

This year we repeated our support and funding for the trauma module of the children's mental health (CAMHS) diploma, run by Mbarara University and the Uganda Ministry of Education's School of Psychiatric Clinical Officers (PCOs). This took place in February 2025, but with only three Diploma trainees in attendance. We supplemented this number by inviting a further ten trainees for the week, who were joined by trustee Simon Stewart so there was a final cohort of 14. Trainers were James Nsereko, Elias Byaruhanga and Martha Akullo, with input from trustees Toria Burch and Barbara Simpson. We held a very happy presentation evening at Red Chilli Hideaway when the course ended. All trainees received CATT counsellor certificates and the total cost of the course was £2190, or £156 per certificate awarded.



Presentation evening at Red Chilli Hideaway, February 2025

4.1.3 CATT training of trainers (ToT) in Uganda

As part of the same trip, four new Ugandan trainers were trained at Red Chilli by our training lead trustee, Barbara Simpson. They are Annetie Birabwa, Freddy Odongo, Rebecca Akello and Joanne Nakiryia who can be seen in the photograph below, with Barbara and Stella. Because it was all part of the same trip, the cost of the ToT course was under £600 (£150 per new trainer).



New CATT trainers l to r with Stella and Barbara: Joanne, Rebecca, Freddy and Annet

4.1.4 CATT training for Nigeria

In September 2024 we ran a two-day online CATT course for counsellors in Nigeria who had completed a trauma-informed art therapy course in Abuja run by UK charity NIDSG. Trustee Toria Burch led this with the support of Shellee Burroughs as co-trainer and Stella Charman assisting with IT. This was a pilot as it was the first time we have run a CATT course online, and in such a short time. Nevertheless, there was good feedback from the seven trainees who all passed. However, not all had absorbed the requisite knowledge from their previous training and two days was insufficient time to remedy that, so some intensive follow-up supervision sessions were required before they could be admitted to our register of CATT counsellors. NIDSG funded Shellee's trainer fee, but not her subsequent supervision which was funded by ACT International at a cost of £380 in this financial year. A fully-funded three-day online course is now planned for October 2025.



New Nigerian CATT counsellors

4.1.5 CATT training for Northern Syria

This exciting two-year project was the result of an approach by SAMS Foundation which had received EU funding to develop mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in the area of Northern Syria remaining outside government control. It is here that many of the refugees fleeing from the Assad regime were living in camps and towns, many of which had been severely damaged by the earthquake in February 2023. Children living here are amongst the most traumatised in the world, having experienced this devastation so soon after war, displacement, bereavement and ISIS' brutality.

ACT International was funded via SAMS to deliver CATT training in two locations, Dana and Azaz, using Dr Ghalia Al Asha online and two UOSSM-employed, skilled and experienced CATT counsellors to assist her. We have called this our 'hybrid' model. In this way, a total of 19 trainees successfully completed the assessment and received CATT counsellor certificates. The preparatory work undertaken by SAMS in securing training facilities and recruiting highly motivated trainees ensured a good experience for all. Dr Ghalia's skill and experience as a specialist trauma psychologist and CATT trainer ensured the training was of a high quality, greatly assisted by the practical and technical backup of the two in-person co-trainers. She continued with regular follow-up supervision sessions aimed at supporting the new counsellors and selecting a smaller number for training as trainers in year 2 of the project. Year 1 was delivered successfully within budget with the invaluable input of Fahed Al Oqailai,

our Middle East Operations Manager who doubled as project manager for this purpose. However, we won't know the final outcome until the project, worth nearly \$20,000 in total, comes to an end in December 2025. Now, with the fall of Assad, training can be delivered by Dr Ghalia in person in Aleppo and Damascus and plans have been adapted accordingly.

Here are two success stories provided by our new Syrian CATT counsellors.

OS: Finding strength after eight years of fear

After surviving a missile strike in Aleppo at age ten, OS lived for eight years with severe trauma- nightmares, bedwetting and social withdrawal. Through 13 CATT sessions, he gradually rebuilt his confidence. He created a new story called 'Shadow of the Desert', about a hero who saves his family. Today he sleeps peacefully, engages socially, works at a local shop and proudly says: 'I'm not afraid anymore, because I understand where fear comes from'.

SM: From 'Black Cloud' to 'Freedom' – a young girl's recovery

Following the devastating earthquake in northwest Syria, nine-year old SM suffered intense psychological distress – sleepless nights, nightmares, bedwetting and fear of loud noises. Using the CATT protocol, she re-authored her trauma story, transforming it from 'the Black Cloud' to 'Freedom' empowered by 'magic shoes' that gave her strength to overcome her fears. By the end of treatment she was symptom-free, back in school with confidence, and regained the joy of childhood. 'My story changed...' she said, smiling, 'and so did we'. Her trauma score confirmed a full recovery.



'Hybrid' CATT training for Northern Syria

4.1.6 Palestine and Gaza

It is heartbreaking that the war in Gaza continues with no end to the suffering in sight at the time of writing. The Gaza Child Mental Health Centre's Director, Mohammed El Sharef was detained by the IDF in November 2024 and released after 155 days in detention at the end of

April. Together with IMET2000 and Firefly International, which have continued to fund the team's salaries as best they can, we have received regular updates on their welfare. They are all still alive but living in the most terrible conditions and facing starvation.

Whilst we all wait anxiously and pray for peace, we have prioritised the training of Palestinians who can help with the healing of Gaza's children in the future. Meanwhile on the West Bank, we began building a relationship with a children's trauma counselling centre in Bethlehem called Wings of Hope. In April, we delivered a half-day online introduction to CATT, which generated interest in our full training. However, in order to deliver our 'hybrid' model, we needed a co-trainer in Bethlehem and the only way to achieve this was to bring the Director, Ursula Mukarker, to UK for in-person training. So we launched our £15,000 'Wings of Hope for Palestine' appeal in November and succeeded in hosting Ursula in London and Hampshire in March 2025. She was given one-to-one CATT training by Toria Burch and spoke at a profile and fundraising event in Winchester organised by trustee Jenny Cuffe. Afterwards, we followed up by sending Wings of Hope a contribution towards the publication of a children's book in Arabic about grief and trauma. Called 'Noor's journey', this is for Palestinian children who experience a never-ending cycle of trauma in their lives. It can be used to support children and their families whilst they wait for treatment.



Ursula telling us about the lives of Palestinian children in the West Bank – with trustees Stella (left) and Jenny (right)

The West Bank is an increasingly difficult place to bring people together for CATT training so we also began to explore the possibility of delivering a CATT course in Cairo, to benefit Gazan refugee children living there. We are now developing a partnership with SAMS and other local NGOs to provide training in the Autumn of 2025.

4.1.7 CATT Counsellor Support Fund

This initiative was set up and is administered by ex-trustee Brenda Graham to support individual CATT counsellors working with very few resources and in remote areas. The fund, supported in 2024-25 by personal donations of £1,000, awarded grants worth nearly £2,000 in total to nine counsellors from Colombia, Uganda, Syria and South Sudan. This year there were 16 applications in total, and the selection panel consisted of Brenda, Ximena Zambrano and Jenny Cuffe, with help from Elias Byaruhanga and Fahed Al Oqaili who publicised the scheme.

The feedback we received from all nine recipients was wonderful and shows how small amounts of money can make a big difference to people's lives. Here is the account of just one of them, Wilson Herazo in Northern Colombia. He is a psychologist for Children Change Colombia, working in four rural schools in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a vast national park with the world's highest coastal mountain range. He provides outreach, crisis intervention and personal development workshops for students, and asked for help with transport and overnight costs for outreach visits, and for CATT materials.



Comparto un poco de las experiencias que viví durante el acompañamiento a estas niñas, y de los increíbles paisajes con los que me encontraba en el camino al hogar de ellas.

Wilson shares a little of his experiences in his work with the girls and the incredible landscapes he encountered on the way to their home.

Wilson is supporting two girls of seven and 14 years who live on a farm in the mountains – an eight-hour journey for Wilson by road and tracks. The girls were sexually abused by a coffee grower who lived on their farm during the coffee harvest. More recently the younger girl also suffered a dog attack and is still healing from injuries.

£300 from the Support Fund enabled Wilson to carry out planned fortnightly visits – 16 days in all – to work with the girls using CATT. He also purchased drawing and education materials.

One girl has returned to school after losing a year and is doing well. The younger girl still has difficulty being with other children and is afraid of animals. Wilson continues to work with her, and he takes her to health appointments.

4.2 Bespoke training and materials

4.2.1 Inter-generational trauma training for Ugandan counsellors

Over the course of 2024, in dialogue with our Uganda trainers, we identified the need for training on inter-generational trauma (IGT), a particular concern in Uganda due to its troubled history. This was included in the programme for our February 2025 trip to Kampala, reported on in 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, as a one-day workshop to which we invited trainers and trainees on the PCO School courses running the previous week. It was held at the PCO School and attended by 34 people. Dr James Okello was the keynote speaker on IGT, with particular reference to the Ugandan context, followed by Toria Burch providing an overview of some of the international research now available. In the afternoon workshop groups discussed experiences of working with inter-generational trauma in families, communities, refugee camps and schools. The day provided a valuable but rare opportunity for CATT counsellors to network together, and attendees were asked to take their understanding of IGT back to their workplaces, share their knowledge with others and implement the ideas discussed into their practice, in order to break the cycle of trauma down the generations. Toria's presentation has since been incorporated into our training materials for other courses.



IGT workshop attendees and speakers

4.2.2 Making of CATT training video for use in African countries

In preparation for our first wholly online CATT course (section 4.1.4) we have now produced a short training video, with subtitles in English, which demonstrates the technique being used in a role play situation but featuring a very common traumatic incident. Our grateful thanks go to Franko Olong, who organised a very professional film crew and directed the first cut, and to Rebecca Okello and Dismas Lwagula who played the counsellor and child respectively. This is now a valuable training resource for online training anywhere in Africa.



Dismas (as child) role playing CATT with Rebecca (counsellor) in our CATT training video

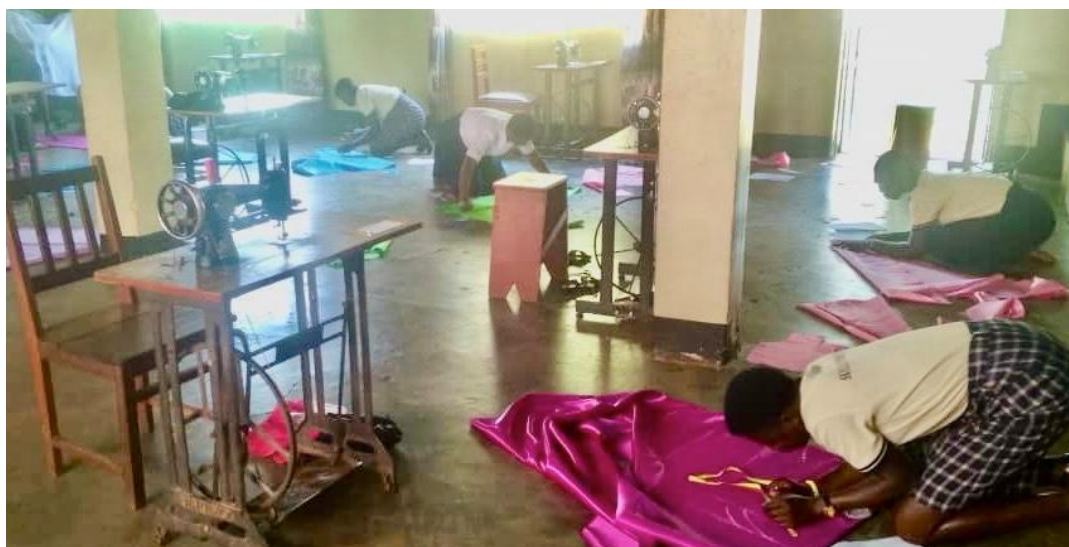
4.3 Special projects

4.3.1 Support for Play Action International

In 2023 we formally transferred responsibility for the volunteer on the children's ward at Butabika Hospital to the management of the Ugandan subsidiary of UK charity, Play Action International (PAI), with funding for a period of two years. The intention was to develop a 'Healing through Play programme' at Butabika Hospital and other health facilities in Uganda. Although this has not proved possible, Dismas Lwagula has continued to work part-time on the ward and contributed to PAI's UNICEF programme: *Learning Through Play*. He helped to deliver training to teachers, educators, community members, and parents across 24 centres in four regions of Uganda, training over 650 individuals. PAI reported very positively on his 'dedication and outstanding performance', which made him a 'key driver of success in this initiative, leaving a lasting positive impact on the communities he served'. We met with Dismas once again in Kampala in February 2025 when he played the child in our CATT video (section 4.2.2) and attended the IGT workshop (section 4.2.1).

4.3.2 Bishop Asili Counselling & Community Development Foundation

One of our most experienced trainers, Sister Florence Achulo, is Director of the Foundation, which in the past has received support as one of our special projects. She contributed to the IGT workshop (see section 4.3.2) and made a specific request via Barbara Simpson for help to rehabilitate a group of trafficked young women and girls whom she has treated for trauma. With trustees' approval Barbara raised over £600 from a highly successful local pub fundraising event to buy them five sewing machines with which to earn income for their families.



The young women learning to use their sewing machines

4.4 Fundraising

The current fundraising climate is very difficult for all UK charities, especially those working overseas where western government support has been slashed dramatically. Nevertheless, we are fortunate to have benefited indirectly from EU funding for Syria (section 4.1.5). Also we have managed to maintain our income to a level close to that of last year (£36,000). This year we launched a special 'Wings of Hope' appeal for Palestinian children, which has now raised 78% of its £15,000 target. Rebecca Murphy and Jane Wonnacott's half marathon South Downs Trail Run kicked this off magnificently in November 2024. Volunteer fundraiser Penny Jeffcoat continues to search all possible avenues for funding, although our small, volunteer-led model puts off many grant-giving foundations, which do not seem to appreciate the cost-effectiveness that we offer. Other obstacles for us have proved to be the difficulty in providing evidence of outcomes/achievements in terms of hard data about children treated, and the uncertain political future within countries across the Middle East and especially for Gaza.

We want to thank all our donors listed below, who recognise the power of their giving to ACT International. Individual donations this year represented a lower proportion (23%) of our income than last year, primarily because many have donated to our Wings of Hope Appeal which has boosted the small amount we usually raise from campaigns and events from 2% last year to 18% this year. This is an area where we still need to improve our performance.

The biggest change is in the income we receive from contracted training activity, which has increased from a negligible amount last year to nearly £14,000 (39%). Whilst the majority of this is accounted for by the SAMS project (section 4.1.5) we have also been helped by both Hampshire's Rural Refugee Network and NIDSG (section 4.1.4) contributing towards the cost of training done on their behalf.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,000 Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation

Online campaigns and fundraising events:

- £620 joint event with Act4Africa February 2025
- £1,000 Burfest raffle August 2024 (run by Glyn & Sandra Tomkins)
- £4,456 Wings of Hope Appeal, including half marathon and Winchester event
- £440 pub event for sewing machines

Individual donors:

- £2,000 Rosemary & Mike Lambert, Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £6,509 in regular or ad hoc giving by Ian & Meriel Tegner, Dr Neil Appleyard, Alex and Una Henderson, Rosie Ghazaros, trustees, volunteers and other supporters who prefer to remain anonymous

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2025		
<u>Funding source</u>	<u>amount</u>	<u>%</u>
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	7,000	20%
Campaigns & events	6,516	18%
Individual donations	8,069	23%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	13,756	39%
TOTAL	35,341	100%

4.5 Website, social media & profile-raising

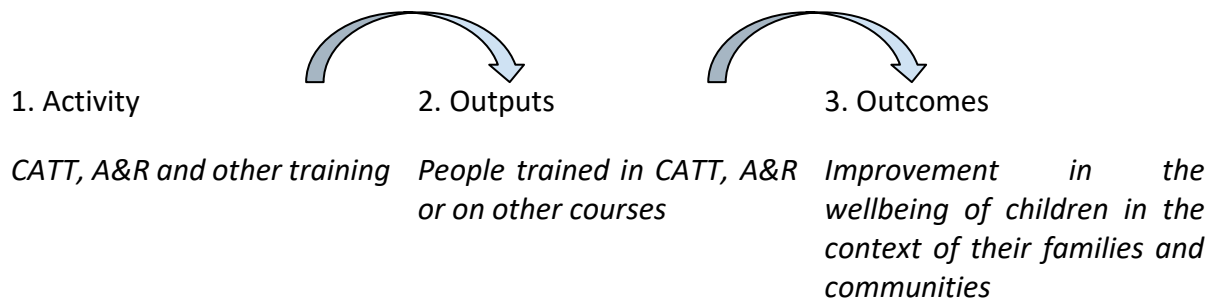
We had 3.7k visitors to our site in the last year, significantly down on previous years. Most of the reduction is in direct traffic to the site, which continues to be our largest source of traffic. This may be explained by reduced promotion of the site to our audiences. In particular, we have introduced and relied on JustGiving for recent fundraising campaigns and chosen to direct people to those pages specifically. We have received increased impressions and clicks in search results year on year, though searches for ACT International and CATT continue to dominate - we do not have a high search position for more general terms like "trauma" and "PTSD", and would need concentrated effort to outcompete on these terms and draw in a more general audience. A content refresh could be considered in the coming year should we wish to raise our profile in this way, but realistically we are competing with organisations that have dedicated investment in content and SEO strategy. A review of individual pages shows extended time on page for our long-form content e.g. "Assessment of CATT practice in Uganda", suggesting that audiences for our unique evaluation and technical content ("What is CATT?") are engaging with it.

Trustees have decided not to invest further time or resources on the website, given our strategy for closing the charity in 2027 (see section 2).

4.6 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

In 2021 we developed a framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). Our primary activity consists of providing training courses, from which the outputs are the people trained. It is important to quantify, record and support them, but they do not themselves reflect the true overall value of our activity and they are only the first-level beneficiaries or outputs of our work. We also think about our *Outcomes*, or the effects of the *Outputs*, being the full impact of what we do on the lives and wellbeing of children and their families.

This principle is displayed below:



In order to ensure the quality of our training, we always collect immediate feedback from trainees on each of our training courses, then follow them up with supervision and support for a minimum of six months. Elias' ongoing programme of visits to the refugee camps in Western Uganda described in section 4.1.1 illustrates this. Some new courses are initiated as pilots so we can learn from them and change/adapt for next time, eg the online CATT training for Nigeria described in section 4.1.4. CRIES-8 scores provide an initial measure of the effectiveness of treatment on relieving children's PTSD symptoms, but as ACT International is only responsible for training counsellors and does not have direct contact with children, so is not the service provider, we only collect these scores for specific cases that are subject to ongoing supervision or for the accreditation of trainers. Nevertheless, CATT counsellors are required to report to us any cases in which it is suspected that treatment may have increased symptoms.

Measuring ultimate impact is much more time-consuming and costly, because it involves commissioning a separate study such as the one undertaken last year in the Gambia. We have not done a full impact assessment in 2024-25, because our primary focus for MEL was to quality-assure the training for the trauma module of the CAMHS Diploma (see section 4.1.2). This was fully staffed by three local trainers, with trustees Toria Burch and Barbara Simpson able to observe sessions at first-hand. In addition, Simon Stewart provided the kind of feedback from the perspective of a trainee that might not be communicated by others in the end of course evaluation forms. As a consequence, we modified our trainer training course and have introduced bi-annual trainers' meetings to discuss challenging issues as well as update trainers on important developments in research and practice.

4.7 Safeguarding

Our approach

ACT International provides a child-centred service where safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Safeguarding means protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of children at risk, enabling them to live safely, free from abuse, maltreatment and neglect. It is a process for keeping children safe.

A significant number of children around the world are suffering from abuse and neglect and require protection. The abuse might take place in homes, the community, schools, hospitals, refugee camps or elsewhere. Child protection is a responsibility shared by everyone; when child abuse is identified, decisive action must be taken to protect the child and prevent further harm.

However, our work with counsellors around the world has also highlighted the need to focus on some wider approaches to protect children and young people, which involve working with communities to sensitise them about child protection and safeguarding issues. Communities need help to understand the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) on children and young people and how this can manifest in significant behavioural change. It is therefore important to raise awareness through deliberate sensitisation sessions and all our trained counsellors are encouraged to include this as part of their practice. Groups with which they engage include refugee communities, families, churches, schools, hospitals, the army, police and prisons and organisations dealing with vulnerable children and/or marginalised groups.

Simply by sharing information about safeguarding and PTSD, providing information about the services available and how to access them for support, counsellors can help a significant number of children and families in the community.

Reports involving incidents of safeguarding concerns

We have not been required to manage any safeguarding referrals, situations or concerns in the 2024-25 period. However, we are on occasion approached for advice and/or consultation where individual workers feel stuck with a situation or are worried about the safety of a child. During the visit to Uganda in February 2025, Toria Burch, clinical lead trustee, offered all Ugandan counsellors face-to-face consultations to help them with such concerns about the children with whom they are working.

We ensure that every individual within our organisation receives clear instructions on their obligation to act to prevent and report abuse. This applies to trustees, paid employees, appointed trainers and volunteers. We also require our organisational partners to report to us about any child who may have come to harm as a consequence of trauma treatment.

5. Financial review

The overall economic climate during the year remained challenging domestically and from a global perspective. The challenging combination of the Ukraine war and unrest in the Middle East continues. President Trump's impact kicked in from the first quarter and trade wars equally make the markets nervous. In his second term, Trump has cut a huge range of federal grants that fund social services. The ripple effect has crossed international borders too. The combination of these events increases the needs and requirements of the charitable services. We remain grateful for public generosity and support to the various causes across the charity sector at home and internationally. Current economic indicators are on the side of caution.

ACT International's trustees retain the same appetite, drive, and initiative to deliver training where it is warranted and needed. We are fortunate to have core sponsors and donors who have supported our challenging work in a difficult time and challenging areas.

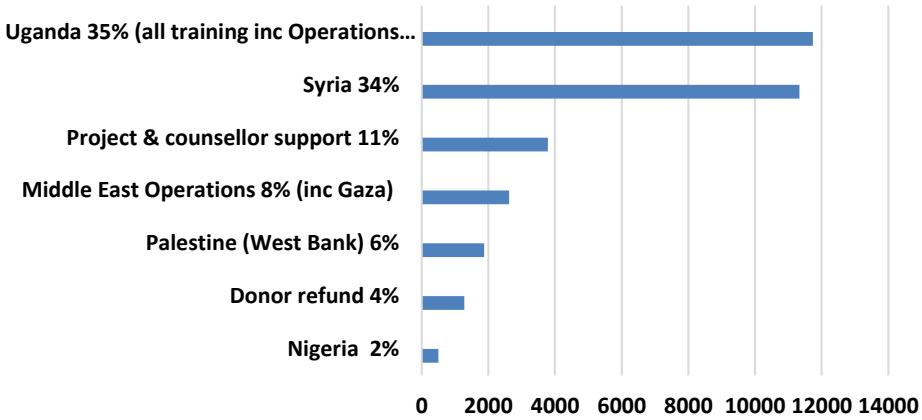
In 2023/24, the trustees setup a project to explore opportunities in complementary operations via partnership or suitable and equitable merger propositions. This strategy is making inroads in 2024/25. These are positive steps particularly when the operational environments domestically and internationally impose limiting factors.

The Board of Trustees across 2024/25 has remained sensitive to matching funding with ability to optimise impact and value. Operational teams continue to show tremendous resilience and cooperation by mobilising and logistically delivering their strategic programmes to a much wider audience in Africa and the Middle East - the latter under exceedingly challenging circumstances. For the first time spending on projects across the Middle East has exceeded those in Africa, reflecting priorities agreed by the trustees.

In 2024/25 our total donations at £35,341 was marginally less than 2023/24 and maintained a 50:50 divide between general and restricted funds received. In the year we applied £33,120 to training programmes internationally. As in previous years we again have achieved a nominal surplus. The aim of the operational team is to apply the maximum available funds, according to the reserve criteria meeting optimum benefit at user end. Our liquidity levels are matched to the scope we can deliver. We remain grateful to our operational team, fundraisers and those who donate and sponsor the mission and scope of ACT International.

Our accounts for 2024-25 have been independently reviewed as required by the Charities Commission and certified in our independent examiner's report.

How ACTI's money was spent 2024-25



6. Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31st March 2025

	£ 2024	£ 2025
Incoming Resources		
Restricted Funds	17,721	17,560
General Funds	18,457	17,643
Total Donations	36,178	35,203
Other income	130	138
Total Incoming Resources	36,308	35,341
Resources Expended		
Programme Activities: Restricted Funds	15,454	16,110
General Funds	21,049	13,915
Project Support & Development	1,621	1,818
Merger Integration Project	1,401	
Refund Restricted Funds		1,276
Total Cost of Charitable Activities	39,525	33,120
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(3,217)	2,221

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024

	£ 2024	£ 2025
Fixed Assets	0	0
Prepayments	863	
Cash at Bank and in hand	16,289	19,768
Current Assets	17,152	19,768
Current Liabilities		(446)
Net Assets	17,152	19,322
Restricted Reserves	3,887	4,949
Unrestricted Reserves	13,265	14,373
Total Funds	17,152	19,322

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Action for Child Trauma International

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Action for Child Trauma International for the year ended 31st March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5Xb) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) The accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Martin James Lewis Carmack

Qualification: ACMA

Address: 28 Raleigh Road, Enfield, EN2 6UB Date:

24 October 2025

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1172010

Accounts



Action for Child
Trauma International



Action for Child Trauma International



Annual Report & Accounts
for the year ended
March 2024

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	4
2. Governance and management	6
3. Objectives and activities	7
4. Achievements and performance	8
4.1 CATT training & supervision	8
4.1.1 CATT training and supervision in refugee settlements in Uganda	8
4.1.2 CATT training in Lira, Uganda	8
4.1.3 CATT training as part of CAMHS Diploma, Uganda	9
4.1.4 CATT training and training of trainers in Colombia	10
4.1.5 Gaza child mental health centre	11
4.1.6 CATT training for Idleb/Sarmada, northern Syria	12
4.1.7 CATT Counsellor Support Fund	13
4.2 Anxiety & Resilience training	14
4.2.1 The Yemen: Hajjah province	14
4.2.2 Armenia: Nagorno Karabakh	15
4.3 Bespoke training & materials	15
4.3.1 Refugee charities in UK: training for volunteers	15
4.4 Special projects	16
4.4.1 The Friends of Butabika Hospital Children’s Ward, Kampala	16
4.5 Fundraising	18
4.6 Website, social media and profile-raising	19
4.7 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)	20
4.8 Safeguarding	21
5. Financial review	24
6. Annual accounts for the year ended March 2023	25

What we do and why



We have trained people in 17 countries

Last year's report was written against the backdrop of war in Ukraine and an earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Distressingly, this year we have to add Israel's military operation in Gaza to destroy Hamas following its attack on southern Israel in October, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages. Since then, the Hamas-run health ministry says over 36,470 people have been killed in Gaza including 16,000 children. This war has had a very direct and personal impact on ACT International, as the team in Gaza were not just our trainees but our friends and colleagues. They are now displaced and live in fear for their lives, moving from place to place with their families to escape repeated Israel Defence Force attacks. The photograph of them in happier times in last year's report is heart-breaking to look at now, one year later.

It is an under-statement to say that our work has never been more needed, and we have done incredibly well, in the face of a cost of living crisis that has undermined so many UK charities, to have delivered a total of 8 full CATT courses this year across 3 continents (see section 4.1). CATT training is now being recognised as effective in filling the gap between the scarce commodity of highly specialised individual psychological treatments and broader psychosocial support for groups of children. Our anxiety and resilience programme is still very appropriate for areas where it is hard to train professionals, and we ran another online anxiety and resilience course for Yemeni teachers just before Houthi attacks on shipping made the practicalities of working there even more difficult (see section 4.2.1).

We have also continued to support groups of counsellors working for a number of international NGOs, whom we have trained in the past, and are looking to form ever closer partnerships that will sustain our work in the future (see section 2).

This report describes our work in detail and thanks all our committed volunteers (section 1) our generous donors (section 4.5), and many valued organisational partners who provide facilities and select trainees on the ground. Collaboration by like-minded humanitarian agencies has got to be the key to healing this troubled and traumatised world.

Don't forget: we can't change what has happened, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.

1. Reference and administration details

Charity name and details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/actinternational.insta/?hl=en>

Charity trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney

Saif Ghauri (Treasurer)

Barbara Simpson (Safeguarding Lead)

Simon Stewart (Digital Transformation Lead)

Officers

Fahed Al-Oqaili – Middle East Operations Manager

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Specialist volunteers and paid consultants this year

Zoe Aristotelous – social media volunteer

Pippa Barlow – private Facebook group administrator and researcher

Madeline Elmitt – research assistant

Brenda Graham – CATT Counsellor Support Fund

Lily Holland - psychology assistant

Penny Jeffcoat – fundraiser

Lucy Rolington – child and youth rights consultant

Aggie Tait – social media volunteer

Interns

Spanish-speaking trainers active this year

Pilu Rivas Lobo

Ximena Zambrano

Uganda-based trainers active this year

Sister Florence Achulo

Timona Asua

Elias Byaruhanga

Umar Candia

Syson Kamwebaze

James Nsereko

Paul Waluya

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Mervat Ahmad

Dr Ghalia Al Asha

Fahed Al Oqaili

Armenian trainers active this year

Narine Abrahamyan

Lilit Karapetian

2. Governance and management

This year has been remarkably busy and productive, as section 4 of this report illustrates. However, ensuring the good governance and sustainability of even a small charity, without paid staff or corporate infrastructure, is becoming increasingly challenging as regulatory frameworks tighten up and operational threats grow. This year we have become aware of many UK children's and young people's charities closing down or cutting back. For ACT International, the issue is not so much finance as volunteer capacity and longevity, so we have been actively exploring a long-term strategy to ensure the sustainability and growth of our work, and perhaps to transfer more responsibility and control overseas. All children's charities must now be trauma-aware with properly trained staff. We have therefore been working on closer collaboration or a merger with one or more charities that share our values and recognise the importance of children's mental health as an integral part of children's health and wellbeing. In this day and age, charities are competing for increasingly scarce resources, and we must join forces to raise more funds and help more traumatised communities in need.

Nevertheless, for now we remain blessed with a stable team of trustees and volunteers, plus a growing group of active trainers who can work all over the world (see section 1) in three widely-spoken languages. We continue our search for a bilingual French/English psychologist to help us expand into francophone Africa.

Our fundraising efforts (see section 4.5), led by volunteer Penny Jeffcoat, have this year been successful in attracting some very welcome new grant funding which has supported projects in the Yemen (section 4.2.1) and Uganda (sections 4.1.1-4.1.3). We maintain a careful balance between our projects and fundraising for them, so that we ensure we deliver on our commitments and do not embark on projects for which we do not have funds available. And of course our overhead costs remain very low, as section 5 illustrates.

In April 2022 our new trustee, Barbara Simpson, took up her role as trustee for training quality and safeguarding officer. She has helped us to review and update all our policies (not just the safeguarding ones) and came on the trip to Uganda to experience CATT training at first hand. As in previous years, ACT International relies heavily on its trustees and specialist volunteers to lead and undertake the key tasks and ensure a highly professional approach to running the charity.

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma.
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ACT International's charitable objectives are achieved through the delivery of training to help children with anxiety and resilience (our A&R programme), who suffer from diagnosable PTSD symptoms using the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT), providing trauma awareness programmes and supporting individual counsellors working in remote or under-resourced locations. Our work is led by requests which come directly from local people or community organisations. Below is a summary of our methods:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- **Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT)** created by Dr Carlotta Raby with follow-up case supervision.
- **Anxiety and Resilience Programme (A&R)** compiled by Victoria Burch
- Teaching for Recovery Technique (**TRT**) developed by Children & War Foundation.
- **PTSD Awareness:** bespoke training or materials (printed leaflets, social media campaigns and videos) to meet the needs of people of different cultures or experience.
- **Safeguarding** based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context.

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children, in support of community-based organisations.

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need and who may need resources to support their practice. Our CATT Counsellor Support Fund is a key vehicle for this.

Developing educational materials for use in different languages, specific contexts, or to support good practice. The leaflet below was designed for Uganda and made available in Luganda and Swahili versions.



The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charity in the year to March 31st 2024.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and supervision

4.1.1 CATT training and supervision in refugee settlements in Uganda

Uganda now hosts nearly 1.7 million refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from South Sudan (57%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (32%), Somalia (3%), and Burundi (3%). In 2018 we began CATT training for workers in refugee camps in the west of the country (specifically Nakivale and Oruchinga). In early 2019 we ran our first CATT course in partnership with UK charity Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan (CRESS), and in 2021 the International Rescue Committee (IRC) commissioned us for the first time to train its staff. Since then we have returned several times to repeat the training, as both staff and refugees tend to move around, and we have now trained over 100 counsellors in total. CATT counsellors take their skills with them so knowledge of trauma and how to treat it spreads to help children elsewhere; for example some of those trained in Arua have recently returned to South Sudan. Every six months we return to the settlements to provide case supervision and support, and each settlement now has a small team of counsellors who can help each other and provide trauma education to families and communities. Elias Byaruhanga and Candia Umar are our senior trainers who provide supervision and support, both online and in person, in groups and one-to-one.

Specifically in 2023, CATT training took place for the IRC in Arua City in July (15 counsellors), and Yumbe in September (9 counsellors). The participants had a variety of professional backgrounds, including doctors, psychiatric clinical officers (PCOs) and nurses. The trainers were Candia Umar and Timona Asua, and the course was funded in full by IRC, at no cost to ACT International.



Group supervision for CRESS in Mijale



IRC staff CATT training in Yumbe

4.1.2 CATT training in Lira, Uganda

Trauma still constitutes a serious and widespread problem across all communities in northern Uganda, torn apart by 24 years of war and now exacerbated by poverty. Young people there are stuck in a cycle of inter-generational trauma stemming from continuous conflict and intermittent violence since independence, in particular the frequent violent raids and abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army between 1987 and 2006. Child soldiers and girls forced into marriage then returned to their communities with often unwanted children, who

suffered from the consequences of their parents' traumatic past. This legacy of trauma - transferred from parents to children and then grandchildren, combined with poverty, sexual violence and child trafficking, mean that today's children in northern Uganda are at heightened risk of PTSD and abuse.

This CATT training project was delivered in partnership with Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation (BADCF) and funded in the main through a grant from the Peace of Mind Foundation (PoM). It comprised a 5-day training course for people working with traumatised children and young people in local communities. It was designed to build on last year's course, as the organisations involved then identified an urgent need for more training, especially for people working further north, in the Kitgum and Pader regions. However, for practical and financial reasons it proved to be more efficient to transport these staff to Lira for training rather than to deliver it there. A further 25 people were invited to attend in February 2024. 13 trainees came from the Lira district and 12 from Kitgum and Pader. A special allowance was provided to their employer, the Centre for Adolescent Reproductive Health (CEFARH), to facilitate their attendance. Sister Florence Achulo Osara, director of BADCF and one of our senior trainers, hosted the training which was led by Elias Byaruhanga. They selected a newly-qualified trainer, Paul Waluya, to assist them.

13 of the 15 trainees received CATT counsellor certificates following the course, which cost in total £4730, or £364 per certificate awarded. This is a little higher than most of our Ugandan courses, explained by the fact that we made an additional allowance to CEFARH to enable its 12 staff to attend.



Classroom at the Bishop Asili Centre, Lira



Presentation of certificates

4.1.3 CATT training as part of the CAMHS Diploma at the PCO School, Butabika Hospital Uganda

We have entered into an agreement with Mbarara University and the Uganda Ministry of Education's School of Psychiatric Clinical Officers (PCOs) to sponsor the trauma module of the children's mental health (CAMHS) diploma, which is run annually. In January 2024 we supported this course, which incorporates the teaching of CATT, and trustee Victoria Burch co-trained together with James Nsereko and Elias Byaruhanga. Trustee Barbara Simpson also attended the course as a trainee learning CATT, and to get first-hand experience of how the training is delivered. The course was attended by 14 other trainees, 7 of whom were on the

2-year diploma course, plus a further 7 others selected by Elias from NGOs working in refugee camps or providing mental health services. 13 of the 15 trainees received CATT counsellor certificates following the course, the total cost of which was £1660, or £128 per certificate awarded.



End of course photo, outside PCO School Butabika Hospital, February 2024

4.1.4 CATT training and training of trainers in Colombia

At the end of November 2023 Pilu Rivas Lobo supported by Ximena Zambrano travelled to Bogota, Colombia, to run a second CATT course in partnership with Children Change Colombia (CCC). As this organisation's website¹ explains, this is a country suffering from extreme poverty and a damaged economy following conflict that has led to *'the displacement of over 8.2 million Colombians, many of whom are children. The peace deal signed in 2016 to end 52 years of armed conflict between the Colombian government and the country's largest guerrilla group, the FARC led to the demobilisation of many child soldiers, now needing support and care to rebuild their lives. However, various illegal armed groups continue to operate in Colombia and many neighbourhoods are controlled by armed groups and gangs, including former paramilitaries. Murder, extortion, sexual violence and other human rights abuses by these groups continue to drive large numbers of people from their homes.... Between 2020 and 2021, there was an astounding 88% increase (from 12,481 to 23,465) in the number children and young people affected by the conflict, including displacement, recruitment, abuse, and sexual violence.'*

Pilu and Ximena trained another 22 people to use CATT. They came from a variety of organisations across the country, supported by CCC, working with children in some of the most challenging situations. They used some experienced CATT counsellors from the 2022 cohort to share how they

¹ <https://childrenchange colombia.org/why-colombia/>

had been using the CATT protocol, which added depth and relevance to the training but only one had done enough cases and had the breadth of understanding to become a trainer at this stage. However, some of the new trainees already had a wider knowledge of trauma so a training of trainers course may be possible in the coming year. The trainees are now receiving regular support and supervision with Pilu via Zoom.

Thanks to the generosity of Children Change Colombia, this course cost ACT International only £2,600, or £118 per certificate awarded.



New CATT counsellors with their certificates



Pilu supervising CATT practice

4.1.5 Gaza Child Mental Health Centre

This is the hardest section to write, because the clinic was doing really well until October 2023 when the Hamas attacks triggered an enormous ongoing military response by Israel which totally destroyed the clinic. Its staff, trapped in Gaza, have been frequently displaced and live in fear for their lives. We keep in touch with them via text messages and the occasional e-mail, and will salvage what we can when the war is over, together with our funding partners.



Mohammed with his family in his apartment in Jabalia, now further destroyed by more recent bombing by the Israeli military

4.1.6 CATT training for Idleb/Sarmada, northwest Syria

The Syria conflict is now out of the news but has been going on for thirteen years. The country is divided between the Assad government-controlled south and northern areas held by other groups including the Turkish-backed opposition in the northwest (cities of Idleb and Sarmada). The area is hard to access, with limited crossing points from Turkey. Here medical and humanitarian services are provided by international NGOs, one of which is our partner, the Union of Medical Care and Relief Organizations (UOSSM). CATT training was requested for their staff here in July 2023. 22 psycho-social workers (PSWs) were trained, together with in-person support trainer Mervat Ahmad and Dr Ghalia Al Asha as lead trainer online. This approach worked well, the trainees had a good experience and learned the skills they needed to treat children with some of the most complex traumatic problems. All the new CATT counsellors received regular online supervision from Dr Ghalia in two groups until March 2023. This was the first CATT training programme ever delivered in this hybrid way in order to overcome the challenges of such a remote and insecure location, so it is especially important in this report to recognise their hard work, courage and commitment to making it happen.

Financially, the course and follow-up supervision cost £2,700 or only £123 per CATT counsellor trained, thanks to excellent collaborative working with UOSSM.



Dr Ghalia teaching CATT online, with Mervat in the training room

Northwest Syria has children suffering from complex PTSD with some of the most severe symptoms to be found anywhere in the world, so Dr Ghalia's follow-up supervision for the counsellors has been especially important. We have permission to show you below and on this report's cover, a picture of one boy during CATT treatment with his counsellor. He fled with his family to this part of Syria from further south, where he had already been living a very difficult life as a refugee when the devastating February 2023 earthquake struck. He was buried for many hours, severely injured, and when finally rescued his arm had to be

amputated. Most of his family died in the earthquake. Before treatment for his trauma he showed highly disturbed behaviour with self-harming. After CATT treatment he is now much calmer and doing well.



4.1.7 CATT counsellor support fund

This fund of £1000 was set up and is administered by ex-trustee Brenda Graham to support CATT counsellors. It offers small grants to those working with very few resources and in remote areas. The fund was publicised in April 2023 on our two private Facebook groups – English-speaking and Arabic-speaking. Ten applications were received, all from Ugandan counsellors, which were screened to make sure they met our criteria. Several of these were for laptops and associated IT equipment, which we regard as important to support good clinical record-keeping, and are frequently not available in local schools and communities. A selection panel was set up, comprising Brenda, Pippa Barlow and Jenny Cuffe. The outcome was that four applications were successful, allocating £970 plus a small amount for bank charges. Alternative funding was found by ACT International for four other applicants, as their bids formed part of wider training programmes or special projects. Two people were unsuccessful, as they did not sufficiently meet the criteria. This initiative creates a significant impact for a relatively small sum of money, and is a real boost to the morale of individual CATT counsellors as well as providing us with an insight into their successes and challenges, and access to quality information about the use of CATT. Trustees intend to continue this initiative in future years, and are tremendously grateful to Brenda for setting it up and overseeing the process.



Didas Mpora, a teacher and school counsellor at Mbarara Hope School, unpacks his laptop and printer

4.2 Anxiety & Resilience (A&R) training

4.2.1 The Yemen: Hajjah province

Tragically, the civil war in the Yemen which began in 2014 continues, despite recent attempts to broker a ceasefire. According to the UN, more than 11,000 children are known to have been killed or wounded as a direct result of the fighting and the entire population is suffering from hunger, poverty and lack of healthcare. In mid-2023, together with Bridges to Peace and Solidarity (BtP&S), we were planning another online A&R training for workers in schools, this time in the Houthi controlled Hajjah province. We were delighted to receive funding for this from the Peace of Mind Foundation (PoM) and Ferguson Trust. However, at the end of 2023 the Houthis began attacking international shipping in support of Hamas and, although we managed to deliver the course itself in November, the security situation subsequently prevented us from completing the follow-up work or undertaking the impact assessment which had been planned and funded, to take stock of our work in the Yemen since 2021.

The course was set up on the ground in the Yemen by Nabd Development and Evolution Organization (NDEO), which secured the necessary permissions from the Houthi government, before selecting trainees who work directly with children and adolescents in schools in the province and have basic counselling and social work skills. The 3-day programme was delivered online by Dr Al-Asha and Mr Fahed Al-Oqaili. A total of 25 participants attended, and expressions of appreciation were immediately received, although further follow-up by the BtP&S in-country supervisor has not been possible. Preparation of an online questionnaire for the impact assessment also took place before it became apparent that we would be unable to administer it. Therefore in March 2024 ACT International trustees took the decision to halt work on behalf of Yemeni children for 6 months, until hopefully the security situation changes and both data collection and training can safely be resumed later in 2024. £1251 in unspent funds were returned to PoM. The total cost of the A&R course was £9,000, or £360 per trainee.



Hajjah school playground

4.2.2 Armenia: Nagorno Karabakh

In July 2023 we renewed our partnership with the Yerevan Children’s Center and the Armenian Association of Social Workers (AASW) to offer online A&R training to professionals working with children (primarily social workers and psychologists) in the four regions of Nagorno Karabakh (known as Artsakh in Armenia), and subsequently towns on the border with Azerbaijan. This isolated Armenian enclave had been under blockade by the Azeris for several months, with living conditions for the population deteriorating and families, many with children, separated. The first task of this training was to teach people techniques to contain and manage anxiety, and promote resilience among children in their local area, which they could then pass on to a wider group in their community. The first phase of the training was delivered by our two Armenian trainers, with some difficulty due to connectivity problems, at a cost of £2,800 from private donations. Then in September 2023 Azerbaijan launched a full-scale attack and almost the whole Armenian population fled to Armenia. On 1 January 2024, the Republic of Artsakh was formally dissolved and has become part of Azerbaijan. As a consequence, the second phase of the project has not happened and we are awaiting the situation in Armenia to settle before attempting to resume activity. £1,900 remains in our restricted funds for this purpose.

4.3 Bespoke training and materials

4.3.1 Refugee charities in UK: training for volunteers working with troubled children

During the year we have maintained contact with several charities in the UK which look after refugees and struggle to find mental health support for the children in their care. In March 2024 a one-day course was run for the Rural Refugee Network in Hampshire, designed and led by Toria Burch, to help its volunteers who are working with families containing troubled children. As the picture below shows, the course included the use of creative techniques.



A follow-up course has been requested for psychologists supporting a residential programme for young refugees in the Summer of 2024.

4.4 Special projects

4.4.1 The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward, Kampala, Uganda

At the very start of the year, we were saddened to say goodbye to Rev Dismas Bwesigye, Chaplain of Butabika Hospital, who has been our friend, supporter and facilitator for the work of the Friends since its inception in 2013. We helped the hospital, and specifically the children's ward, to mark his retirement by providing funds for a farewell event, raised through a special appeal to people in the UK who knew and had worked with this inspirational man over the years. The hospital management gave permission and the event was organised by our ward volunteer Dismas Lwagula in conjunction with ward manager Medina Asibazuyo and her staff. 70 people were invited (including up to 30 children) and a budget of £680 allocated.



Rev Dismas with his wife, guests, staff and children of the ward on the occasion of his retirement, 15th April 2023

Fortunately, this event coincided with an Easter holiday visit by a group of pupils and parents from Gordon's School near Woking, Surrey, who were guests of Red Chilli Hideaway, situated opposite Butabika Hospital. Its owner, Debbie Willis, had approached us about a charitable project which would enrich their experience of Uganda and they fundraised for items needed by the children's ward under the auspices of the 'Friends' project, as well as contributing to the event. In addition, a range of items were provided by one of the East London/Butabika NHS Link's recent volunteers who had visited the ward in January, and ACTI trustee Toria Burch donated textbooks for the PCO School. Further items, notably a much-needed water tank and fridge, were donated directly by Red Chilli Hideaway in Uganda and a cooker through UK donations. Both the visit and the party in April were a great success, and we want to express here our grateful thanks to everyone whose enormous generosity made this project happen and the event so memorable. The UK visitors and Red Chilli team are pictured below with Dismas Lwagala, and at Red Chilli with some of the items donated to the ward.





Over the past 10 years, the 'Friends' project has worked to provide activities and resources on the ward through St Luke's Chapel volunteer Dismas Lwagula. However, since 2016 we have had no formal project manager, and since 2021 his work has been funded from ACT International's mainstream budget rather than from a separate fundraising campaign. This work has always fallen outside the scope of our primary trauma training activity, so in June 2023 the trustees took the decision to transfer the management of Dismas Lwagula to the Ugandan subsidiary of UK charity, Play Action International, together with two year's funding, so that his skills can be more effectively used and integrated into its wider work in Uganda. The Friends' project has therefore been formally closed, although we keep in touch with Dismas Lwagula and the Butabika Link with East London NHS Foundation Trust.

4.5 Fundraising

Despite the cost of living crisis and the generally challenging environment for UK charities, we have increased our income this year to an all-time high of over £36,000. This was largely due to the efforts of our volunteer fundraiser Penny Jeffcoat, whose bid-writing skills generated £15,000 from two significant new donors, the Ferguson Trust and Peace of Mind Foundation (PoM). Unfortunately bids to the Greenhall Foundation, RG Hills and Effective Altruism's Mental Health Funding Circle were unsuccessful. Funds from Ferguson Trust and PoM supported the training for the Yemen (see 4.2.1), which was explicitly prioritised by trustees, plus another CATT course in Lira (see 4.1.2). For the coming year we will focus our fundraising efforts on developing training initiatives for those who can help children traumatised by the ongoing war in Gaza, plus hostilities on the West Bank.

We are very grateful for the loyal and ongoing support of past donors and our ‘family’ of individual supporters who make regular donations by BACS or via our CAF account. The CAF Donate platform has been working well, in particular for the special appeal for the Butabika Hospital Children’s Ward (see section 4.4.1), and the website’s ‘Donate’ page has been much improved thanks to trustee Simon Stewart. We want to thank all our donors listed below, and those who prefer to remain anonymous. Individual donations this year represented a lower proportion (35%) of our income than last year (53%) and we’ve not been very active in arranging or supporting fundraising activities and events.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,000 Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation
- £10,244 Peace of Mind Foundation
- £4,500 Ferguson Trust
- £1,122 Nicky Clinch Ltd

Online campaigns and fundraising events:

- £725 from Gordon’s School for Butabika Children’s Ward

Individual donors:

- £3,000 the Ghazaros family
- £2,000 Rosemary & Mike Lambert, Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £7,610 in regular or ad hoc giving by Ian & Muriel Tegner, Dr Neil Appleyard, Alex and Una Henderson and other supporters who prefer to remain anonymous

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2024		
<u>Funding source</u>	<u>amount</u>	<u>%</u>
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	22,843	63%
Campaigns & events	725	2%
Individual donations	12,610	35%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	130	0%
TOTAL	36,308	100%

4.6 Website, social media & profile-raising

Our site had 20,000 unique² visitors this year, a 38% increase on last year. Around 60% of visitors were from the UK and 10% from the US. Around 90% of traffic is from direct visits, which reflects our lack of investment in paid social, search and referrer partnerships. A review of traffic from search engines³ indicates that most users are specifically looking for the charity, CATT or individual trustees. An examination of how many viewers read more than one page and for how long, indicates an interest in our work in places like the Gaza and Uganda,

² This means that approximately 20,000 different individuals visited our site but perhaps fewer if some of those users are multi-device users, perhaps more if they are users who use the same device

³ This means those not simply clicking on links in emails etc. - most were from people who searched for ACTI, CATT or trustee names (rather than, for example, people who searched for "trauma" or "children's charity")

suggesting there is an audience segment engaged with the detail of what we do. Following discussion, it was agreed that a campaign to raise our profile on social media would lead to more new people finding the site but that, given our limited capacity, this represented encouraging growth and showed that the website was doing a good job for us.

In January we were fortunate to receive social media assistance from two recent graduates, Aggie Tait and Zoe Aristotelous. They developed a strategy for us, launched our Instagram account and have supported regular postings on both Instagram and Facebook. We have ceased to post on X, although we have not closed our account. Our aim is to educate and advocate for children suffering from the symptoms of trauma and PTSD, promote their rights, and raise our profile. We try to align ourselves with other humanitarian agencies working on behalf of children, such as UNICEF, and 'like' their posts. So far we have not embarked on using social media platforms for fundraising, but hope to do so in 2024-25.

In pursuit of our aims (which correlate with our charitable objectives) Aggie and Zoe created an engaging infographic on CATT, and a video illustrating our work in 2023. Subsequent posts in 2024 have publicised the training in Kampala with short interviews with trainees highlighted the crisis in Yemen and its impact on Yemeni children and demonstrated our support for our team in Gaza. Whilst not indicating any political alliance, this post did call for peace. Our social media reach remains small, but we have a foundation upon which to build should more resources become available for this activity later in 2024.

4.7 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

Measuring the quality of our training and its impact on children and their families continues to be a priority, and we collect immediate feedback from trainees on each of our training courses. In addition this year we commissioned wider impact assessments for our work in the Yemen and the Gambia. Both countries presented challenges; the Yemen because of its ongoing conflict between the government and the Houthis, and the Gambia because of extreme poverty and a lack of mental health services and expertise.

Two years after ACT International trained the Gambia's first cohort of CATT counsellors, we asked Pippa Barlow, a child and adolescent mental health practitioner, to find out whether they had put their new skills into practice and with what result. We also wanted to know if the training had helped them identify trauma that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. Six of the 18 counsellors were interviewed in depth. Although a lack of child-centred services in the Gambia meant that few of them had the chance to practise CATT directly with children, they all said that it enabled them to recognise symptoms of trauma and to educate parents and caregivers about the appropriate response. In a country with high levels of child abuse and domestic violence but little public awareness of its serious effects on mental health, they felt this was an important step forward and all of them wanted ACT International to provide further training. Pippa described their responses as 'a massive vote of confidence and gratitude' to ACT International.

In the Yemen where we have been working with Canadian-based charity Bridges to Peace and Solidarity, we have now delivered an on-line Anxiety and Resilience programme to more than 90 teachers and mental health workers across five provinces, including those controlled by

the Houthis. The pilot took place in 2021 and the training was rolled out in three subsequent phases. At the end of each training course, participants completed questionnaires about its content and delivery and the training was adapted and improved each time.

In November 2023, we launched the third phase of this training (see section 4.2.1) for 25 participants funded by the Peace of Mind Foundation which also contributed £1500 for monitoring and evaluation. ACT International commissioned Madeline Elmitt, a graduate in Arabic Studies, to carry out an assessment of the programme's impact. She subsequently produced a questionnaire for participants asking how they applied the lessons learned to their work with children and how these were received by the children themselves. Unfortunately, the deteriorating security situation in the Yemen and concerns about the safety of participants has made it impossible to distribute the questionnaire or progress the assessment. However, we intend to review the situation later in the year. We remain committed to our work in the Yemen and expect to complete the impact assessment in 2024-25, and to report on it in this section next year.

4.7 Safeguarding

Our approach

ACT International is a child-centred service, where safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Our programmes are focused on strengthening resilience and developing coping skills. We strive to empower children and young people in order to ensure that they are better equipped to face the many and significant challenges that they encounter, often on a daily basis, and help them to reach their full potential.

We work with partner organisations in countries where children's rights may not be sufficiently protected by law or culture. People are often working in difficult circumstances to treat and support children and minimise risks of harm. We need to work sensitively with partner organisations who ask for our involvement, as their situation may constrain their approach to safeguarding. We seek to understand their local context and share our expectations for working with them.

Although definitions of 'child' and 'child abuse' may differ according to national and cultural understandings, organisations need to be clear that in international law 'children' are defined as all those under 18 years of age, and that 'child abuse' includes the range of acts, intentional or otherwise, which harm children.

We speak out and advocate for children in a way that will enhance their lives today and leave a legacy of improved childhood experiences for future generations of children and young people.

Reports involving incidents of safeguarding concerns

We have not been required to manage any safeguarding referrals, situations or concerns in the 2023-24 period. However, we have been approached for advice and/or consultation where individual workers feel stuck with a situation or are worried about the safety of a child. For example, during our recent visit to Uganda Toria Burch was approached by Rebecca

Akello, a counsellor for the NGO Hope for Justice working in Kampala with children and young people who are sexually and criminally exploited She needed advice about an especially complex and challenging young women whom she was treating.



Toria, Rebecca and Stella in Kampala February 2024

Butabika Hospital

In our 2023 Annual Report we reported on the ongoing under-staffing in the Butabika children's ward in Uganda and continuing difficulty with resettlement of children back to their families and community due to under-resourcing of social work. Our work with the East London Hospital/Butabika Link and transfer of key staff to the employment of Play Action International later in 2023 have helped with this, although we no longer have any formal responsibility or input to the ward.

Using photographs and video footage of children

The ethics of publishing photographs and video footage of children has been subject to discussion. As a result, we have now published our Communications and Children's Images and Information policy, which details our procedures for when we use information and visual images of children and young people, including photographic stills, and audio and video recordings. Our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. The policy details our procedures and reflects that the safety, dignity and rights of children are central to what we do and how we portray children in our work.

Awareness of where issues of culture and safeguarding children may collide

It is critical that all countries develop a strong safeguarding culture. However, issues of faith and race in safeguarding children reveal examples of misunderstandings leading to over intrusive practice or inactivity in the face of child maltreatment. We always seek to understand the local context and to share our expectations of working with them. This has been strengthened by materials introduced in our Training the Trainers programme which embeds matters connected to safeguarding in all aspects of the training, and also equips trainers to manage difficult situations with sensitive approaches and practical advice.

We ensure that every individual within our organisation receives clear instructions on their obligation to act to prevent and report abuse. This applies to trustees, paid employees, appointed trainers and volunteers. We also require our organisational partners to report to us about any child who may have come to harm as a consequence of trauma treatment.

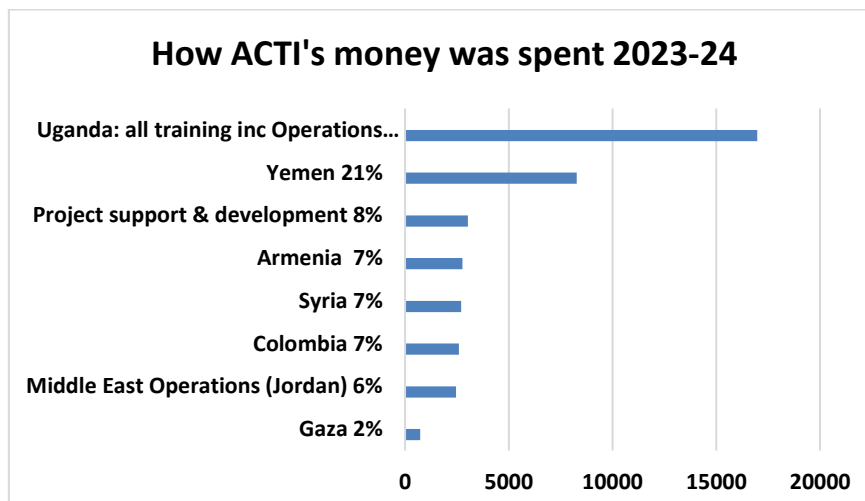
5. Financial review

The overall economic climate during the year remained challenging domestically and from a global perspective. The combination of war in Ukraine and unrest in the Middle East has enhanced the suffering of disadvantaged and impoverished communities in Africa, Middle East, and Asia. Many communities are now displaced and seeking new opportunities in Europe and elsewhere. The combination of an energy crisis, trade wars and high inflation increases the need for charitable services while at the same time affecting those who so generously support charities both domestically and internationally. Unfortunately, many charities are going out of business and the UK sector is shrinking. The rise of geopolitical unrest over the past years remains a dominant feature at present. However, current economic indicators provide some encouragement that future growth will generate confidence across the sectors, and may yet provide a boost to charitable giving.

ACT International's trustees continue to have the appetite, drive, and initiative to deliver training where it is warranted and needed. In 2023/24 they have sought to match funding with ability to optimise impact and value. In addition, they set up a project to explore opportunities in complementary operations via partnership or suitable and equitable merger propositions. Operational teams continue to show tremendous resilience and cooperation by mobilising and logistically delivering their strategic programmes to a much wider audience in Africa, using Uganda as a hub. . These are positive steps particularly when the operational environments impose limiting factors. We are also fortunate to have core sponsors and donors who have supported the challenging work we undertake internationally at a difficult time and our finances remain sound.

In 2023/24 our total donations at £36,178 was 30% up on 2022/23 with almost a 50:50 divide between general and restricted funds received. In the year we applied £36k on training programmes internationally. In doing so we restricted the deficit in the year to £3k compared to £8k last year. Our liquidity levels are matched to the scope we can deliver. We remain grateful to our operational teams of volunteers, fundraisers and those who donate and sponsor the mission and scope of ACT International.

This year our accounts have again been independently reviewed as required by the Charities Commission, and have received a clean bill of health.



6. Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31st March 2024			
		£	£
		2023	2024
Incoming Resources			
Restricted Funds		3,600	17,721
General Funds		24,126	18,457
Total Donations			
		27,726	36,178
Other income			144
Total Incoming Resources			
		27,726	36,321
Resources Expended			
Programme Activities Restricted Funds		5,913	15,454
General Funds		28,575	21,049
Project Support & Development		1,515	1,621
Merger Integration Project			1,401
Total Cost of Charitable Activities			
		36,003	39,525
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year			
		(8,277)	(3,203)
 Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024			
		£	£
		2023	2024
Fixed Assets			
Prepayments			863
Cash at Bank and in hand		20,369	16,302
Current Assets			
		20,369	17,165
Accruals			
Current Liabilities			
Net Assets			
		20,369	17,165
Restricted Reserves		2,187	3,887
Unrestricted Reserves		18,182	13,278
Total Funds			
		20,369	17,165



Action for Child
Trauma International



Action for Child Trauma International

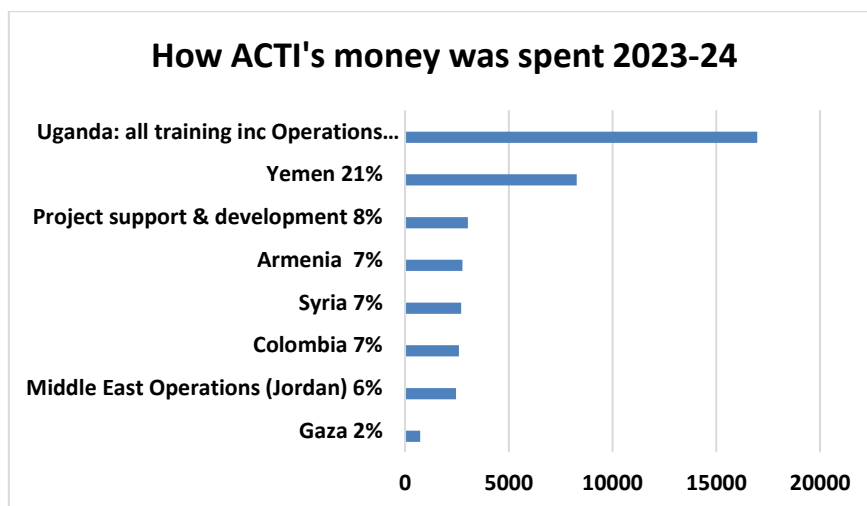
Executive Summary of Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended March 2024

Last year's report was written during challenging times, including the war in Ukraine and an earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Unfortunately, we now have to face the military action in Gaza, which started after Hamas attacked southern Israel in October, resulting in the loss of 1,200 lives and 251 people being taken hostage. Since then, reports from Gaza indicate that over 40,000 people, including 16,000 children, have died. This conflict has deeply affected ACT International, as our team members in Gaza were not only our trainees but also our friends and colleagues. They are now displaced and living in fear, constantly moving to escape ongoing attacks. Looking at their photo from last year when they were smiling is heart-wrenching, especially now, a year later.

So, it's an understatement to say our work has never been more important. Despite the challenges caused by the cost of living crisis affecting many charities in the UK, we've successfully delivered 8 full CATT courses this year across 3 continents. Our CATT training is now recognized for effectively bridging the gap between rare, specialized psychological treatments and broader support for groups of children. Our anxiety and resilience program continues to be very relevant in places where training professionals is difficult. Just before increased Houthi attacks on shipping made things even harder in Yemen, we managed to run another online course for teachers there.



We have trained people in 17 countries



This year has been our busiest and most successful so far, as you can see from section 4 of the full report. However, running a small charity without paid staff or a big organization is getting harder because of stricter rules and more challenges. We've seen many children's charities in the UK shutting down or reducing their activities. For us at ACT International, the main concern isn't just money but having enough volunteers and keeping them for the long term. That's why we're looking at a plan to make sure our work can continue and possibly give more responsibility to training teams overseas.

We have also been supporting both individuals and clusters of counsellors who work for various international NGOs that we've trained in the past. We're aiming to build stronger organisational partnerships that will help sustain our work in the future. Today, every children's charity needs to understand and address trauma, with properly trained staff. We are therefore working to partner or merge with other charities that share our mission and recognize children's mental health as a key part of their overall wellbeing. With more charities vying for limited resources, it's important for us to unite to raise funds and support more communities in need.

Our fundraising efforts have been successful this year, bringing in valuable new grant funding for projects in Yemen and Uganda. We are careful to balance our projects with the funds we have, ensuring we only take on what we can afford. Plus, as we function as a network of volunteers, our administrative costs continue to be very low.

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2024		
Funding source	amount	%
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	22,843	63%
Campaigns & events	725	2%
Individual donations	12,610	35%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	130	0%
TOTAL	36,308	100%

The full report goes into detail about our activities and expresses gratitude to our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and important organizational partners who help provide facilities and select trainees on the ground. Working together with like-minded humanitarian organizations is crucial for healing this troubled and traumatized world.

Remember, while we can't change what has already happened, we can—and do—make a difference in what comes next. By helping young minds heal, we give them a better chance at a normal life.

Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31st March 2024			
		£	£
		2023	2024
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	Restricted Funds	3,600	17,721
	General Funds	24,126	18,457
Total Donations			
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	Programme Activities Restricted Funds	5,913	15,454
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		20,369	17,165
	Accruals		
Current Liabilities			
Net Assets			
		20,369	17,165
	Restricted Reserves	2,187	3,887
	Unrestricted Reserves	18,182	13,278
Total Funds			
		20,369	17,165

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Action for Child Trauma International

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Action for Child Trauma International for the year ended 31st March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

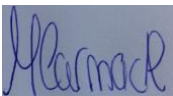
As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act'). I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5Xb) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) The accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Martin James Lewis Carmack

Qualification: ACMA

Address: 28 Raleigh Road, Enfield, EN2 6UB

Date: 20th August 2024

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1172010

Accounts



Action for Child
Trauma International



Action for Child Trauma International



Annual Report & Accounts
for the year ended
March 2023

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	4
2. Governance and management	6
3. Objectives and activities	7
4. Achievements and performance	8
4.1 CATT training & supervision	8
4.1.1 CATT counsellors' conference in Kampala	8
4.1.2 CATT training in Lira, Uganda	10
4.1.3 CRESS CATT team	11
4.1.4 Supervision for CATT counsellors in Ugandan refugee settlements	11
4.1.5 Supervision for Gaza child trauma clinic	12
4.1.6 CATT counsellor support fund	13
4.2 Anxiety & Resilience training	14
4.2.1 Jordan (Tahfeez & Altkaful)	14
4.2.2 The Yemen: Mareb province	14
4.2.3 Armenia: Nagorno Karabakh	15
4.2.4 Uganda: Hope School, Mbarara	15
4.3 Bespoke training & materials	16
4.3.1 Colombian Institute of Family Welfare	16
4.3.2 SALVE Uganda: trauma awareness	16
4.3.3 Refugee charities in UK: trauma awareness March 23	16
4.3.4 Responses Ukraine war & earthquake in Türkiye and Syria	17
4.4 Special projects	17
4.4.1 Friends of Butabika Hospital Children's Ward, Kampala, Uganda	17
4.4.2 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation, Lira	18
4.5 Fundraising	18
4.6 Website, social media and profile-raising	20
4.7 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)	21
4.8 Safeguarding	22
5. Financial review	23
6. Annual accounts for the year ended March 2023	24

What we do and why



We have trained people in 17 countries

The year covered by this report began shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which has forced two-thirds of children in Ukraine to flee their homes.¹ And as it ended in early February 2023, a horrific earthquake shattered the lives of 6.2 million children² living in Türkiye and Syria, many of whom were already displaced and living in poverty. In the meantime, war has continued in, or on the borders of, other countries where we have delivered our training programmes, such as the Yemen, Uganda and Armenia. So this year has been an exceptionally traumatic one for a vast number of innocent children and their families, whose experiences of conflict and natural disaster will resonate for years to come. The task of repairing lives and communities is daunting, especially where peace still feels very far away.

We have done our best this year to respond to this global crisis by further updating our materials and tools and adapting them with local people to meet their needs. We have continued training, both online and face-to-face, in a variety of community locations and refugee settlements, including some in war zones. We have also given support and supervision to networks of counsellors working for a range of organisations, whom we have trained over the years to refresh their skills and commitment. This report provides the detail of what we have done with the aid of all our donors, a growing team of volunteers listed in section 1, and through collaborative relationships with a large number of organisational partners. We believe that by working in an integrated way with others we can ‘punch above our weight’ and promote trauma-informed ways of working to heal children growing up to be the adults in charge of their own future.

Don't forget: we can't change what has happened, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.

¹ Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/refugee-children-crisis/ukrainian-refugees#children>

² Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.net/what-we-do/emergencies/turkiye-and-syria-earthquake>

1. Reference and administration details

Charity name and details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/actinternational.insta/?hl=en>

Charity trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney

Brenda Graham (Safeguarding Lead)

Saif Ghauri (Treasurer)

Philip Sarell (to 7.6.22)

Simon Stewart (Digital Transformation Lead from 7.6.22)

Officers

Fahed Al-Oqaili – Middle East Operations Manager

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Specialist volunteers this year

Fundraisers:

Penny Jeffcoat

Pupils of the Gordon's School, Woking

Lily Holland - Psychology assistant

Nick Charman - accountancy support for Uganda conference

Adam Jeffcoat – creative media

Pippa Gray – private Facebook group administrator

Interns

Zara Bracegirdle –General Operations Assistant to September 2022

Spanish trainers active this year

Almudena Garcia Perea

Pilu Rivas Lobo

Uganda-based trainers active this year (excluding conference attendees)

Elias Byaruhanga
Syson Kamwebaze

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Dr Ghalia Al Asha
Fahed Al Oqaili

Armenian trainers active this year

Narine Abrahamyan
Lilit Karapetian

2. Governance and management

Although it was once again possible to travel this year, the majority of our work can now be done either online or using local trainers and this has significantly brought down both our training costs and our carbon footprint. So this is the first year that we have not needed to send any UK trainers to support overseas courses. However, in May, a group which included four trustees visited Uganda to run the long-awaited conference for CATT counsellors (see section 4.1.1). Apart from that our activities, primarily this year in Uganda and the Middle East (see sections 4.1 and 4.2), have been delivered online and/or with in-country resources and skills. We have made more materials and resources available online (section 4.3) as we are aware of enormous need for help to comfort and treat children in inaccessible places or without accessible psycho-social services. As a result of our profile-raising initiative last year, we have been approached for help by people in many parts of the world, and in particular Türkiye and Syria following the earthquake in February.

Our fundraising efforts (see section 4.5), led by volunteer Penny Jeffcoat, have yielded enough to do the work for which we have operational capacity. However, without paid staff we remain unable to scale up to meet this growing need. Trustees are very mindful of this challenge and are keen to change our volunteer-led model to ensure the long-term sustainability of our work. So in September we initiated a project to find another charity for either very close collaboration (including the sharing of infrastructure and overhead costs) or a full merger. At the time of writing we have a promising candidate and hope to be able to report in full on this next year.

In June 2022 our new trustee, Simon Stewart, took up his role as digital transformation lead and thanks to him we have developed our website and improved our office systems and storage of shared documents. ACT International relies heavily on its trustees and specialist volunteers to lead and undertake the key tasks and ensure a highly professional approach to running the charity. In particular, Victoria Burch has worked tirelessly over the course of the year to develop and adapt our clinical materials and resources, and Saif Ghauri has brought rigour to our financial systems. Jenny Cuffe's research expertise was employed on an assessment of the impact of CATT practice in Uganda and has developed our approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning (see section 4.8).

At the end of the year Brenda Graham retired as trustee and safeguarding officer. She joined as a Luna Trustee in February 2014, but in the three years before that she provided the 'training of trainers' element of our work, and over the years has worked on developing our training quality standards, delivering training in Uganda and providing personal support to a number of counsellors. Brenda remains with us as a volunteer to manage the CATT counsellor support fund (see section 4.1.6). We are enormously grateful to Brenda for all she has done and ACT International would not be the robust, professional and impactful little charity it is today without her. However, we are also delighted to report that we have recruited a highly experienced training and safeguarding professional, Barbara Simpson, to replace Brenda from 1st April 2023. We will be able to say more about her in next year's report.

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In the past ACT International's charitable objectives have been primarily achieved through the delivery of training in the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT). However, we have now extended our activities so that we fulfil our purpose through a wider range of training programmes, both online and in person, through the provision of online materials and resources, and by supporting people working with children affected by conflict and/or trauma. Below is a summary of our activities:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (**CATT**) created by Dr Carlotta Raby
- Anxiety and Resilience Programme (**A&R**) compiled by Victoria Burch
- Teaching for Recovery Technique (**TRT**) developed by Children & War Foundation
- **PTSD Awareness**: bespoke training to meet needs of local culture or experience
- **Safeguarding**, based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children (e.g. inpatients on the children's ward of Butabika Hospital)

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need (e.g. Alhagie Camara for the Gambia) and who may need resources to support their practice.

Developing materials for use with children (eg Tortu the Very Worried Tortoise by Victoria Burch) in specific contexts, or to support good practice



The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charity in the year to March 31st 2021.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and supervision

4.1.1 CATT counsellors' conference in Kampala

Our objectives for this conference were to bring together up to 45 trained Ugandan CATT counsellors in order to:

- Refresh and update their knowledge and practice of CATT, especially when using it with children suffering from complex trauma
- Enable networking and cross-country sharing of CATT practice, its challenges and solutions
- Enable CATT counsellors to develop relationships and form ongoing peer support networks
- Celebrate the achievement of the counsellors and boost their enthusiasm and commitment for their work

In addition, the team took the opportunity of being in Uganda to do the following:

- Provide teaching input (Toria Burch) to the classroom element of the CAMHS Diploma trauma module taking place at the PCO School 25-29 April
- Provide training (Toria Burch) for CATT trainers to deliver ACT International's new Anxiety & Resilience programme
- Observe and assess experienced CATT counsellors who had undertaken online training in September 2021 to become trainers, but had not had an opportunity for teaching practice in order to achieve full accreditation
- Collect data for an impact assessment of ACT International's work over the past ten years in Uganda (Jenny Cuffe)
- Meet and assess the contribution of the Butabika children's ward volunteer, who has been sponsored by ACT International via St Luke's Church since 2016

The conference was organised in Uganda by Operations Manager Elias Byaruhanga. He worked with ACT International trustee Brenda Graham in the UK. Three other trustees also travelled to Uganda for the conference: Chair Stella Charman, Clinical Lead Toria Burch, and Research/Communications Lead Jenny Cuffe. Specialist input to the conference was also provided by the Uganda team of experienced CATT trainers led by clinical psychologist James Nsereko. Nick Charman, an accountant, also assisted with the disbursement of expenses to delegates and payment of invoices. Butabika Hospital's Executive Clinical Director, Dr Harriet Birabwa opened the conference and Mbarara University's Department of Psychiatry Director, Dr Godfrey Zari Rukundo, spoke and presented certificates at the close.



New trainer Timona Asua receiving his certificate from Dr Rukundo

Delegates were selected from our database of trained CATT counsellors to represent all areas and communities across Uganda, including refugee camps, and a number worked for NGOs such as International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan (CRESS). Many travelled long distances hours to attend, including 4 from Arua in the far north of the country.



Happy end of conference photo

Total cost of running the conference with its associated activities, including the research project, was £8,749. It was very much appreciated and judged to be cost-effective and highly successful, despite the challenges and limitations created by travel and rising costs since the pandemic. Our Ugandan counsellors are very keen for a second national conference to take place in 3-5 years' time.

4.1.2 CATT training in Lira, Uganda

The area around Lira in northern Uganda continues to suffer from the legacy of conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army from 1994-2002, with rural communities challenged by poverty, domestic violence, child neglect and trafficking. Here Sister Florence Achulo Osara runs the Bishop Asili Development Foundation which supports, treats and rehabilitates local children in their communities. For ten years she has been one of our most experienced counsellors and trainers. In November 2022 the Foundation hosted a one-week CATT training course at its centre in Ngetta near Lira led by Elias Byaruhanga with Sister Florence. This followed up broader PTSD awareness training which had been held the previous year and resulted in a request for more in-depth training to help participants meet the needs they now recognised in their communities. The 2022 CATT course was attended by 22 people including Bishop Asili staff, some of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church in Ngetta, a headteacher and teachers from local schools, staff of the Centre for Adolescent Reproductive Health (CEFARH) based in Lira, and a staff member of the African Youth Initiative Network (AYIN). The aim was to train this group, all of whom work directly with traumatised children, to use CATT and learn about child-centred practice, children's rights and safeguarding. Sister Florence reported to us:

'The skills that these members obtained will help them to counsel children who have gone through an overwhelming experience and are unable to cope and become functional. Some of these experiences could be physical, social, emotional and sexual abuses, violence, trafficking etc. Other experiences of these children could be child neglect or some natural disasters that were not resolved, causing them to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)'

All 22 were very grateful for the training and the 18 who passed were keen to start treating children. A number of them also felt that the course had helped them go back to their inner child and be aware of or deal with their own unresolved trauma. Many wanted the same training at a later date for their colleagues or sisters. The total cost of running the course was £3,512, so £195 per CATT certificate awarded. Our thanks to Sister Florence and Elias for a job very well done.

CATT trainees outside Bishop Asili in Ngetta



4.1.3 CRESS CATT team

CRESS UK (Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan) continues to support a wonderful team of 9 CATT counsellors working with South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. Team leader Canon Gale Scopas with new CATT trainers Lulu Emmanuel and Beatrice Kiden attended our conference in Kampala in May 2022, and were featured in last year's annual report. Over the course of 2022 the team supported 616 children in need and ran an emotional health awareness programme which reached 2,345 children and adults.³ This is a magnificent achievement. Once again this year we supported the work of the team by providing £2,750 to supplement CRESS funding and extend its work to the Imvepi refugee settlement.

4.1.4 Supervision and further training for CATT counsellors in Ugandan refugee settlements

Elias Byaruhanga has delivered CATT training to staff working with children in two big refugee settlements in south western Uganda (Nakivale and Oruchinga) since 2018. Together these host many thousands of refugees from DRC, Burundi, Somalia, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Elias returns on a six-monthly basis to offer guidance and supervision, which took place this year in July and February. In addition this year he added a PTSD sensitisation (awareness) session in February 2023 for staff of Tutapona, the agency responsible for delivering psycho-social needs of children in Nakivale refugee camp⁴. Its training programme coordinator, Rose Mary Nyirangoroye is a CATT counsellor. Elias' session was held in Mbarara and was attended by 21 participants, and it reinforced the need for a rolling programme of training for people working with children in the settlements. Here there is a large turnover of staff and many trained counsellors move on quickly. So Elias immediately planned more CATT training for 2023-24. However, when they leave their jobs in the settlements, CATT counsellors take their skills with them so in our view CATT training is never wasted if knowledge of trauma and how to treat it spreads to help children elsewhere.



Tutapona delegates learning more about PTSD from Elias in Mbarara

4.1.4 Supervision for the Gaza Child Mental Health Centre

³ <https://cressuk.org/trauma-therapy-training-south-sudan/>

⁴ <https://www.tutapona.com/>

This has been an important year for the child trauma clinic in Gaza which was finally registered as an NGO, now independent of the Adam Centre, by the Ministry of Education and the Interior. Its official name is the Insan Centre for Training and Sustainable Development, but we continue to refer to it as the Gaza Child Mental Health Centre. It is no longer one of our special projects, as our funding responsibilities are now limited to trauma training and supervision, undertaken remotely by Dr Ghalia Al Asha. However, ACT International continues as a partner in the running of the centre with IMET2000 and Firefly International and a new Heads of Agreement for this work was signed in early 2023.

Despite repeated bombardments (one of which tragically killed a client of the centre), plus frequent power outages, the centre continues to do wonderful CATT work with children with a steady flow of 10 new cases per month. Its work is well regarded in both Gaza and the West Bank and it continues to receive many visitors and conduct regular open days. Thanks to funding from IMET2000 and Firefly, the centre's psychology staffing level has increased and Dr Ghalia provides the team with regular monthly supervision sessions, giving special attention to the more difficult cases and increasing her input following periods of more intense conflict and death. The team has received cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) training and is now supporting caregivers more effectively. It has also made time to look after its own emotional and mental health - so crucial when living and working in a society permanently in a state of siege. The team is regularly visited and receives referrals from international agencies. The photo below shows them with a medical representative from Oxford University.



4.1.5 CATT counsellor support fund

In September 2022 trustee Brenda Graham proposed the setting up of a fund for CATT counsellors. It was agreed that the sum of £1,000 would be budgeted in future years for this purpose. Bids for the fund would be obtained primarily by advertising on the private Facebook group for CATT counsellors and approved by a small panel. However, in the current financial year 2022-23 a pro-rata amount was allocated to respond to a specific request for help from Paul Waluya. He is a CATT counsellor and trainer who works as a counselling psychologist for the CBT Center in Nsambya, Uganda⁵. He needed transport to help him reach

⁵ <https://cbtcenterug.com/>

the outlying schools where he counsels children as part of his role with the CBT Center. With our donation he was able to buy a second-hand boda-boda. Next year's annual report will provide details of more counsellors we have been able to support with their practical needs in 2023-24.



Paul with his boda boda

4.2 Anxiety & Resilience programme training

4.2.1 Jordan (Tahfeez & Altkaful)

Two face-to-face A&R training courses were delivered in Jordan this year by Dr Ghalia Al Asha with the support of Fahed Al Oqaili. In July they trained 20 members of staff of the Tahfeez Association for Leadership and Development⁶ in Irbid, which works with Jordanian young people. Then in October a further 15 staff of the Altkaful Charitable Association were trained. These two NGOs were able to fund the costs of the participants and provide training facilities, so the overall cost to ACT International averaged only £98 per certificate awarded.

⁶ <https://tahfeez.org/en/home-nn/>



Dr Ghalia teaching Tahfeez staff 10.7.22

4.2.2 The Yemen; Mareb province

This year our partnership with Bridges to Peace and Solidarity (BPS) has continued and together we have been able to deliver online training to teachers in one of the most unstable areas of the Yemen: the contested Mareb province. The A&R programme delivered here is especially designed to help them support children who are living in a war zone, and to promote their resilience whilst awaiting a more peaceful time to come. Our experienced trainers, Dr Ghalia and Fahed, once again delivered the training organised by BPS Director Dr Kawkab Alwadei with her new in-country partner organisation, Nabd Development and Evolution Organization (NDEO). 25 people were trained in February 2023 at a cost of £6,000 (£240 per certificate). We are enormously grateful to the British Yemeni Society and IMET 2000 for providing 50% of this sum. Building on the achievement of training in a Houthi-controlled province, we have now planned further training for Hajjah which will be reported on next year. We are also planning to undertake a full impact assessment of the A&R work in the Yemen since 2020.



Mareb training room February 2023

4.2.3 Armenia: Nagorno Karabakh

Unfortunately our plans for training in the Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh), in partnership with the Yerevan Children’s Center, had to be postponed this year as hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated once again. There is now a blockade of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) so it is completely isolated, and many children are separated from parents and suffering both there and in Armenia itself. As a consequence, the need for psychological support is higher than ever, and interventions to support parents and children effectively have had to be revised. Thankfully, the two A&R trainers who are local psychologists have continued to be active and at the time of writing a new training plan has been agreed, which will be rolled out in the summer of 2023 and reported on next year.

4.2.4 Uganda: Hope School, Mbarara

In October 2022, Elias Byaruhanga and Syson Kamwebaze ran training in Anxiety and Resilience (A&R) for 23 teachers of Hope Nursery and Primary School in Mbarara. Guest of honour at the training was Dr Godfrey Rukundo (see section 4.1.1) who pointed out that anxiety was common among young people but often unrecognized in Ugandan schools. In March 2023 Elias returned to meet a group of 11 teachers and discuss their work and challenges encountered. All had identified children with anxiety and shared their stories. Some had become skilled at using relaxation techniques especially breathing exercises, talking with children in an understanding and friendly way, and in the use of a worry box. Elias will now run a supervision session every term.



Hope School teachers with Elias (right) October 2022

4.3 Bespoke training and online materials

4.3.1 Colombian Institute of Family Welfare

In June our training partner Children Change Colombia organised further online Children & War Teaching for Recovery Technique (TRT) training delivered by Almudena Garcia Perea and Pilu Rivas Lobo to staff of the Colombian Institute of Family welfare, which is an agency of the Colombian Government. Pilu and Alumdena gave their time as volunteers and as this was online, this training was at no cost to ACT International. Since then we have been seeking a fluent English/Spanish speaker to develop further our training programme in Spanish, but so far we have been unsuccessful, and we have nothing further planned.

4.3.2 SALVE Uganda: trauma awareness/sensitisation

Following Victoria Burch's presentation at the CSC conference in November 2021, ACT International was contacted by SALVE (Support and Love Via Education International), a UK charity which runs a refuge for street children outside Jinja in Uganda. The request was for a one-day trauma awareness training for SALVE staff in Jinja. Elias Byaruhanga designed and, in June 2022, successfully delivered this course in conjunction with SALVE's in-country director. It was attended by 17 people, one of whom is now on our waiting list for CATT training.

4.3.3 Refugee charities in UK: trauma awareness

Over the course of the year we have networked with charities in the South East of England which have been caring for child refugees in UK, in particular from Syria, Afghanistan and the Ukraine. This was in response to the evident unmet need which they have for training in mental health and trauma awareness for their staff and volunteers. Finally, a pilot half-day course was held in Winchester on 17 March 2023 designed and delivered by Victoria Burch with Jenny Cuffe and Barbara Simpson in attendance. The course was organised by Jenny with the Winchester City of Sanctuary Welcome Hub and held in a city-centre church at minimal cost. There were 16 attendees from 6 different organisations. 5 of the 16 were psychologists. All found the training very valuable and gave constructive feedback. Subsequently a working group has been set up to explore the possibility of running similar courses elsewhere in the

UK. Trustees have to decide whether to proactively launch a programme of training on these lines, or simply react to need that comes to us via our networks or online contacts. However, this is clearly an area for possible development in 2023-24.

4.3.4 Responses Ukraine war & earthquake in Türkiye and Syria

As highlighted on page 3, this has been a traumatic year for children in eastern Europe and the Middle East. We have responded to the refugee crisis from Ukraine by supporting psychologists in the affected areas and countries where we are able (3 Ukrainian psychologists attended the Winchester training see section 4.3.3), and by providing advice on supporting children after a traumatic event in English, Ukrainian and Polish, via our website. In addition, we funded counselling in Arabic for the staff of Firefly for Syria based in Antakya, who were deeply affected by the earthquake in February. Currently we are planning two new CATT courses with local NGO partners to help people in northern Syria treat displaced children who have now tragically become earthquake victims. In the coming year we will continue to be as flexible and responsive as possible to those who find us online and/or approach us for help.

4.4 Special projects

4.4.1 The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward, Kampala, Uganda

Throughout the year we have continued to fund Dismas Lwagula to volunteer for three days per week providing activities for the children on the ward at Butabika Hospital. In May we were able to visit the ward and were delighted that Dismas, who learned to use CATT as part of his CAMHS Diploma course, joined the conference (section 4.1.1). As a result of the impending retirement of Rev Dismas Bwesigye, we took direct control of his management and payments, but we need to find a longer-term solution for this work now that Dismas has fully graduated and has skills that can be applied clinically. At the end of the year we were engaged in planning a visit by some pupils and parents from the Gordon's School in Woking, Surrey who successfully fundraised for resources for the ward (including the volleyballs and netssown below) and for a retirement party for Rev Dismas, who left the hospital on 31st March. Both the visit and the party in April were a great success and will be reported on in full in next year's annual report.



Volleyball in the children's ward grounds at Butabika Hospital

4.4.2 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation, Lira

Unfortunately Sister Florence Achulo, Director of the Foundation, was unable to attend the CATT conference in May but we have kept in touch with her and in November the Foundation hosted a CATT training course (see section 4.1.2). We remain acutely aware that this area of Uganda has many challenges and are hoping to provide some additional support to this and other local NGOs in 2023-24.

4.5 Fundraising

Thanks in large part to the persistence and professionalism of fundraising volunteer Penny Jeffcoat, and despite the very difficult fundraising environment for UK charities, we have achieved income of nearly £28,000 this year which has enabled us to do everything you have read about so far in this report.

In April 2022 the trustees approved an application to the Christmas Challenge run by the Big Give fundraising organisation. The Big Give is the UK's largest digital match funding campaign; in addition to raising funds, the trustees were hoping to raise the charity's profile and increase skills and capacity for online fundraising. A considerable amount of work and effort went in to this initiative; the process itself is complex and requires some creative visuals (provided by Adam Jeffcoat). We secured the required pledges and our application was approved by the Big Give. However, in July we were informed that we had not been selected to receive 'champion' funding. IMET2000 and Firefly International were also not supported, despite success in previous years, and we suspect that fewer resources were available for distribution this year.



Adam's 'Big Give' banner which we use regularly now in our publicity

Towards the end of the year Penny Jeffcoat explored other opportunities for funding from grant-giving foundations as well as reviewing past bids. Several organisations, such as the Gisela Graham Foundation, informed her that the trustees had decided to focus their grant applications on UK- based projects this year.

The trustees prioritised the Yemen Project for targeted fundraising activity, and in February 2023 a bid was submitted to the Ferguson Trust, whose objectives are to promote education, peace and development. The bid was for £8,900 with a requirement for 50% of the budget to be secured from other sources which was achieved. The bid was strengthened by our solid partnership with Bridges to Peace and Solidarity (see section 4.2.2). We were subsequently informed that our bid was successful with an award of £500 (not received until May 2023). In February 2023 a further bid to the Greenhall Foundation for work in the Yemen was prepared and submitted online on 1 March. Only the first 150 applications were accepted and our bid was timed-out due to systems problems and slow internet speed. Fortunately around the same time we were introduced to the Peace of Mind Foundation, a grant-giving NGO established in 2022 to provide mental health relief to war-traumatised children. Following successful liaison with Lea Zoric, one of the founders, it was agreed that Penny Jeffcoat would submit an informal proposal for funding to support the Yemen. This was well received by their board of trustees and a full application was submitted in March for £6,000 to support online A&R training for the Hajjah province of the Yemen.

The CAF Donate platform has been working well, although we do feel we could further improve the 'look' of our Donate page and illustrate campaigns more effectively here. Thanks to treasurer Saif Ghauri we have also benefitted from a significant amount of Gift Aid/Giftaid on eligible direct donations and we are enormously grateful to all our loyal donors listed below, and those who prefer to remain anonymous. Individual donations this year represented a much larger proportion (53%) of our income than last year (24%) but we've been rather less active in arranging or supporting fundraising activities and events.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,000 Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £2,000 Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation
- £1,600 IMET 2000
- £1,500 British Yemeni Society and member Ian Tegner

Online campaigns and fundraising events:

- £750 from Burfest raffle August 2022
- £125 Beech Village Christmas Fair
- £500 raised by Penny Jeffcoat through online selling

Individual donors:

- £1,000 from Corrin & Ava Henderson
- £5,000 from Michael and Rachel Weston
- £8,700 in regular or ad hoc giving by Neil Appleyard, Alex and Una Henderson and other supporters who prefer to remain anonymous

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2023		
Funding source	amount	%
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	9,000	32%
Other charities	3,100	11%
Campaigns & events	1,375	5%
Individual donations	14,223	51%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	28	0%
TOTAL	27,726	100%

4.6 Website, social media & profile-raising

This year Digital Transformation Trustee Simon Stewart has helped us keep our website up to date and an effective vehicle for providing information and materials to those working with traumatised children all over the world. Our site had 13K unique visitors this year - a 346% increase on last year and the largest source of traffic remained direct visits, with a notable peak around November. Approximately half our site visitors were from the UK, a quarter from the US, and the remainder from the rest of the world. The number of visitors via search has increased 27% since last year and the number of visitors from social media increased by 74%, though traffic volumes from these sources remain relatively low.

Simon made some updates to the site structure, adding more advice content and turning some of our PDFs into web pages, which may have contributed to this very welcome overall increase in organic traffic. Also at the end of the year, the launch of the CATT counsellor support fund (see section 4.1.6) and the efforts of its administrator Pippa Gray, led to a modest increase in the number of counsellors viewing posts in the private Facebook group. However, our public social media 'reach' has remained static (even though we have had more website visits as a result) and we remain in need of a volunteer who can help us to boost this in the coming year.

During the year we have continued to try to communicate about our work and raise our profile as best we can, in the hope that this will both attract those who need our help and support fundraising. We were disappointed that despite considerable effort, we failed to get a report into the Ugandan press about the conference and the wider work on childhood

trauma by all the CATT counsellors who attended. However, in May Stella was interviewed on London's 'Voice of Islam' radio station as part of a programme to explain the importance of children's mental health. Then in February 2023 she was interviewed by Children Change Colombia as part of its social media campaign for children's mental health week. We continue to look for opportunities to raise awareness about the importance of children's mental health and trauma, which we believe should be embedded in the work of any child-centred health or education charitable organisation. So other charities/NGOs are also the focus of our profile-raising efforts.

4.7 Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL)

As an organisation we are constantly trying to improve the service that we provide and the quality of our training. As well as measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of our training through feedback directly from trainees and the provision of ongoing support and supervision, we must also assess its impact on the wellbeing of children, their families and communities - see our Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework, 2021 <https://actinternational.org.uk/mel>

All counsellors trained by ACT International are required to measure the impact of CATT on a child using the recognised CRIES-8 measurement and to collect feedback from family members and other adults involved in the child's care. In addition, they are able to post questions and receive updates via our private Facebook page (see previous section). Furthermore, this year's conference of CATT counsellors and trainers in Kampala was an opportunity to stress the need for good record-keeping and for sharing examples of good practice. We encourage all counsellors to undertake further training and many choose trauma treatment as the topic for ongoing research or study of key aspects of treatment.

The May Kampala conference (section 4.1.1) was also the starting point for a wider assessment of the impact of our work in Uganda, a country where ACT International (formerly Luna Children's Charity) has had a presence for over a decade. This was conducted by Jenny Cuffe, one of our trustees. Twenty six counsellors responded to a questionnaire about their practice and 14 were interviewed. In addition, Jenny talked to four children, their counsellors and adults involved in their care. The research, which is available on our website <https://actinternational.org.uk/cuffe-uganda-catt-assessment> indicates that CATT has become an important tool for mental health professionals in the country and that the majority of counsellors believe it has had a positive impact on the children they treat. CATT training has also been influential in spreading knowledge about PTSD and its symptoms. In the forthcoming year, we have plans to undertake a similar assessment of our work in the Yemen over the past three years.

Further findings about the problem of retention of counsellors and the challenges they face, often related to funding and workplace structures, have provided us with important learning tools that will help us develop our practice in the future. The vast majority of those we have trained work in exceptionally challenging circumstances and require ongoing support and encouragement. This is what underlies our 'special projects' and is partly what led to the creation of the CATT counsellor support fund (section 4.1.6). We have learned a great deal over the past two years about the provision of training wholly or partly online, and one key

factor is that it must be accompanied by solid on-the-ground ongoing support which is now built in to our training programmes, but has of course added to the costs.

4.8 Safeguarding

Brenda Graham, our safeguarding lead trustee, left the role in April 2023. All trustees, volunteers and members of the wider ACTI community are deeply grateful for the commitment, diligence and hard work that Brenda has contributed to the charity over her nine years as the safeguarding trustee. Her successor is **Barbara Simpson**. She brings with her a significant knowledge base, and many years of experience in the field of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults across the statutory, voluntary and independent sector.

Butabika Hospital: the ongoing under-staffing and continuing difficulty with resettlement of children back to their families and community due to under-resourcing of social work continue to plague the Butabika children's ward in Uganda. This led to the decision to work more closely with the East London Hospital/Butabika Link and to gradually transfer key staff to the employment of Play Action International later in 2023. Trustees are confident that this charity is well equipped to work effectively with Butabika children's card via its Uganda subsidiary.

Using photographs and video footage of children: the ethics of publishing photographs and video footage of children is subject to discussion. When we use information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our overriding principle is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families and communities. Barbara Simpson, Safeguarding Lead Trustee is currently developing a Communications and Children's Images and Information Policy which will detail our procedures and will reflect that the safety, dignity and rights of children are central to what we do and how we portray children in our work.

Awareness of where issues of culture and safeguarding children may collide: It is critical that all countries develop a strong safeguarding culture. However, issues of faith and race in safeguarding children reveal examples of misunderstandings leading to overintrusive practice or inactivity in the face of child maltreatment. We work with partner organisations in countries where children's rights may not be sufficiently protected by law or culture. People are often working in difficult circumstances to treat and support children and minimise risks of harm. We always seek to understand the local context and share our expectations for working with them.

Review of safeguarding policies: We are currently working with Keeping Children Safe (KCS) to become an accredited member. This means that we will have updated all of our policies and are able to evidence that all trustees, volunteers and associates of ACTI, have embedded safeguarding practice in all of the work that they undertake for the organisation.

Apart from our ongoing concerns about the Butabika children's ward, no other incidents have been reported to the safeguarding officer this year.

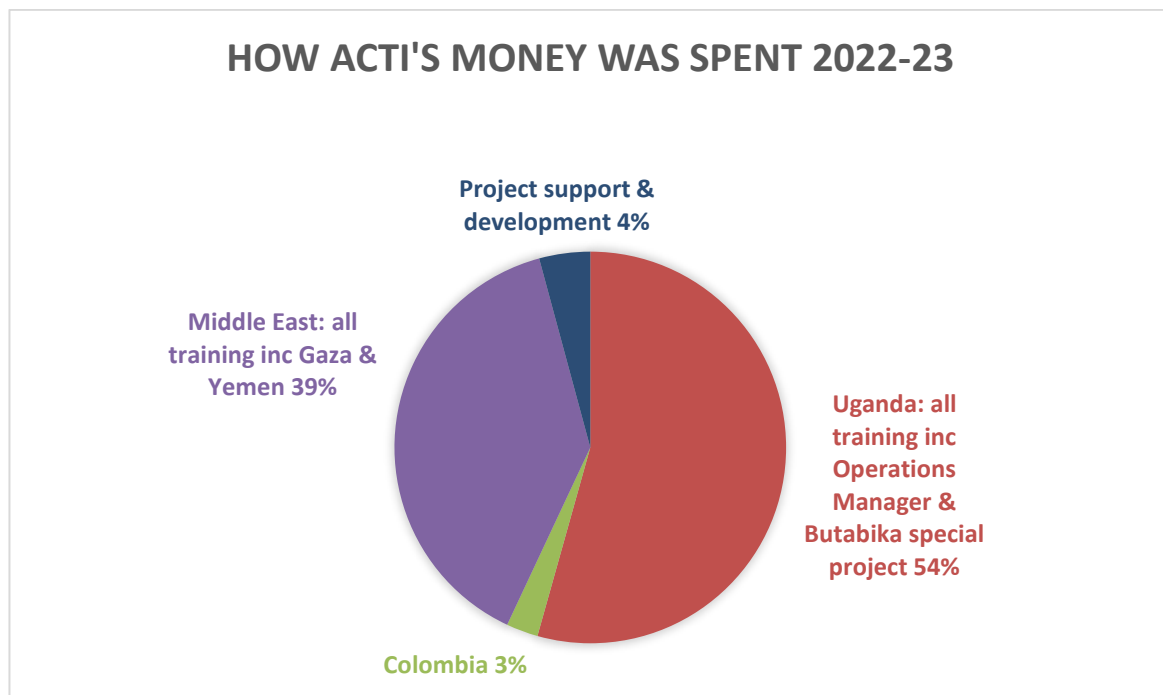
5. Financial review

The general economic climate remains challenging following the advent of Covid-19 and the continuing impact of the Russian war on Ukraine. This has a far-reaching impact on global politics, food and energy impacting emerging and developed nations. Global impacts around 'sticky' inflation and interest rates continue to destabilise, at a country level, with significant impact on cost of living for the majority, and are particularly hard for many facing simultaneous devastating impacts of climate change across continents.

ACT International forecasted a stretched agenda for 2022/23, and it has remained focused and delivered to its operational plan. Despite the overall challenges, ACTI donors have continued to be robust in their efforts and support to enable the operational team to further optimise their drive in 2022/23, whilst actively seeking new opportunities to make a difference to the children traumatised in troubled parts of the world.

Our liquidity year on year remained on level pegging. Operationally, we remain focused on prioritising and optimising impact and value with reference to restricted and general donations to budget. In the year, we applied funds exceeding our intake for 2022/23, by £8,277, but retaining a strong base of £20,369 to chart out the programme covering 2023/24. We again exceeded the income threshold of £25,000, and the trustees requested an independent examiner's report. This review took place over June/July 2023, and was satisfactorily certified.

The operational team remains keen to extend the scope and reach of its mission, and to this end is actively looking at suitable partners or joint venture operations over the 3–5-year plan. The focus and priority will be to optimise the aim and objectives of ACT International in compliance with the Charities Act 2011.



6. Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31st March 2023

	£ 2023	£ 2022
Incoming resources		
Restricted funds	3,600	11,251
General funds	24,126	23,340
Total donations	27,726	34,590
Other income		3
Total incoming resources	27,726	34,593
Resources expended		
Programme Activities:		
Restricted Funds	5,913	14,055
General Funds	28,575	18,975
Project support & development	1,515	2,148
Fundraising support & marketing		423
Total cost of charitable activities	36,003	35,601
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	(8,277)	(1,008)

Balance Sheet as at 31st March

	£	£
	2023	2022
Fixed assets		
Prepayments		2,624
Cash at bank and in hand	20,369	25,757
Current assets	20,369	28,381
Accruals		301
Current liabilities		301
Net assets	20,369	28,080
Restricted reserves	2,187	4,235
Unrestricted reserves	18,182	23,845
Total funds	20,369	28,080

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1172010

Accounts



Action for Child Trauma International (formerly known as Luna Children's Charity)



Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended March 2022

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	4
2. Governance and management	6
3. Objectives and activities	7
4. Achievements and performance	8
4.1 CATT training	8
4.1.1 CATT Counsellors Conference in Kampala	8
4.1.2 CATT training in the Gambia	8
4.1.3 CRESS CATT team	9
4.1.4 CATT training in Colombia	9
4.1.5 International Rescue Committee, Arua, Uganda	10
4.1.6 CATT trainer training	11
4.2 Anxiety & Resilience Training	11
4.2.1 Middle East	11
4.2.2 The Yemen	12
4.2.3 Armenia	13
4.3 Teaching for Recovery Technique – Colombia	13
4.4 Special Projects	14
4.4.1 Gaza Child Trauma Clinic	14
4.4.2 Friends of Butabika Hospital Children’s Ward, Kampala, Uganda	15
4.4.3 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation, Lira	15
4.5 Fundraising	16
4.6 Communications and profile-raising	17
4.7 Website & social media	18
4.8 Quality assurance, audit and research	19
4.9 Safeguarding	21
5. Financial review	22
6. Annual accounts for the year ended March 2022	23

What we do and why



We have trained people in 17 countries

In this report we describe our activity during the second full year of the coronavirus pandemic. As UNICEF observes, this global crisis has had a lifelong impact on many children in the poorest countries ‘who risk being among its biggest victims’. In addition, millions of children have been displaced this year in new or renewed conflicts. Over 1 million children have fled Afghanistan and 5.2 million have been displaced by the war in Ukraine (3 million inside the country and 2.2 million outside it) which began in February 2022. Gazan children experienced two weeks of intense bombardment in May 2021. In Syria and Yemen there is now a fragile peace but living conditions in those countries continue to deteriorate. Many children are growing up without the basic security they need to develop, learn and grow into capable adults. So the work we do to repair the impact of trauma is needed more than ever.

We are enormously proud this year to have updated our materials and tools and continued training local people working with traumatised children, both online and once again face-to-face. This report provides detail of all we have achieved thanks to all our donors, and growing team of committed and highly professional volunteers listed in section 1. In addition to the one-to-one Children’s Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT), we have delivered our anxiety and resilience (A&R) group training programme, and Children & War’s Teaching for Recovery Technique, to people working in areas of ongoing instability or conflict. We have also delivered PTSD Awareness training to community leaders in order to enhance wider understanding of the impact on children and reduce the stigma associated with their troubled behaviours. Recently we have also published online a guidance paper on how to support refugee children as they arrive in new communities. Once our materials have been translated and delivered in Polish (work now in progress), we will have trained counsellors working in five out of the top six countries hosting refugee children (Türkiye, Colombia, Uganda, Pakistan and Poland).

Don’t forget: we can’t change what has happened, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.

1. Reference and administration details

Charity Name and Details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

Charity Trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney

Brenda Graham (Safeguarding Lead)

Saif Ghauri (Treasurer)

Philip Sarell

Officers

Dr Ghalia Al Asha – Middle East Operations Manager & senior trainer

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Specialist volunteers this year

Armenian translators – Narine Abrahamyan & Lilit Karapetian

Fundraisers:

Tom Anson

Rosemarie Ghazaros

Penny Jeffcoat

Amy Pope & family

Psychology assistant – Lily Holland

Website & IT support – Hector Riley & Glenn Adams

DT advisor – Kim Eakers

Journalist – Jessie Williams

Interns

Zara Bracegirdle – University of Sussex, General Operations Assistant from October 2021

Ruby Turok-Squire – University of Warwick, General Operations Assistant to September 2021

UK-based trainers active this year

Maria Chambers

Anna Kalin
Pippa Barlow

Spanish trainers active this year

Almudena Garcia Perea
Pilu Rivas Lobo

Uganda-based trainers active this year

Sister Florence Achulo
Syson Katushabe
Candia Umar
Timona Asua

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Dr Ghalia Al Asha
Fahed Al Oqaili
Mohammed El Sharef
Haitham Shamiah

2. Governance and management

This year we have succeeded in resuming overseas trips as travel restrictions eased, and in the early part of 2022 managed to fulfil all the training commitments to partner organisations, which had been postponed as a result of the pandemic. Our training model has adapted well to new conditions, but need for child trauma training and support has rocketed. So, although we are financially sound at the current scale, trustees are anxious for growth in 2022/23 that will enable us to expand activity to meet increasing demand from many agencies working directly with children. As a consequence, we have begun to focus on raising our profile and publicising what we do more widely, with evidence of its effectiveness, in order to gain recognition and attract partnerships and funding for the future. This initiative led by trustee Jenny Cuffe is explained further in section 4.6, and Section 5 provides a more detailed overview of our financial position at the end on March 2022.

From 1st December 2021 Dr Carlotta Raby released the CATT licence which we have held exclusively for 7 years, so that any organisation is now able to train people to use the protocol. Technically this means we have lost our 'unique selling point' but in practice no other organisation has the ability or experience to train overseas, and we gain greater flexibility over whom we can train and how, as well as control of our charging policy. Trustees, however, agreed to maintain the same high quality standards required by the licence and to continue to promote the humanitarian and right-based principles upon which Dr Raby designed CATT in 2005.

This year we recruited a new trustee, Simon Stewart, to help us improve our online presence and with responsibility for digital transformation, which he undertakes in a paid role for the Samaritans. Our trustee recruitment process is painstaking and takes several months, so he was not formally appointed until June 2022, thus does not appear in the trustee list in section 1. At the same time Philip Sarell, who has been a Trustee since the early days of Luna Children's Charity, retired with our very grateful thanks for all his support over the past 13 years. He made an invaluable contribution to the early development and subsequent sustainability of this small organisation. ACT International relies heavily on its trustees and specialist volunteers to lead and undertake the key tasks and obligations of running an effective and competent charity. Additional capacity this year was once again provided by interns. In the autumn, Zara Bracegirdle took over the general support role of Operations Assistant from Ruby Turok-Squire who left us to become a barrister specialising in family law and children's rights. Tom Anson, another Sussex University masters student, contributed over the summer in a fundraising role. In February 2022 Zara accompanied the CATT training team to Colombia and remained there until May in order to gain valuable overseas experience. This enabled her to gain a place for 2023 on the Global Mental Health MSc course at King's College London. We thank all four of them and wish them well. We cannot offer payment to our interns, but we do support their career development as best we can. Without their input and those of all our volunteers, ACT International simply would not exist.

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

In the past ACT International's charitable objectives have been primarily achieved through the delivery of training in the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT). However, over the past three years we have been broadening our activities so that we now fulfil our purpose through a wider range of training, both online and in person, and by supporting people working with children affected by conflict and/or trauma. These activities are:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (**CATT**) created by Dr Carlotta Raby
- Anxiety and Resilience Programme (**A&R**) compiled by Victoria Burch
- Teaching for Recovery Technique (**TRT**) developed by Children & War Foundation
- **PTSD Awareness**: bespoke training to meet needs of local culture or experience
- **Safeguarding**, based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children (e.g. trafficked girls cared for by the Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation)

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need (e.g. Alhagie Camara for the Gambia)

Developing materials for use with children (eg Tortu the Very Worried Tortoise by Victoria Burch), or to support good practice



The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Charity in the year to March 31st 2021.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and follow-up

4.1.1 CATT Counsellors Conference in Kampala

This conference was originally planned for May 2020 but could not be held due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, as restrictions on movement began to be lifted at the end of 2021 we started planning for it to take place at last, in May 2022. We are delighted that a successful conference has taken place but as it fell outside the period covered by this Annual Report, it will be reported on in full next year.

4.1.2 CATT training in the Gambia

Our first post-pandemic overseas CATT training trip took place in February 2022. This was organised and planned with our in-country partner WAYAS Counselling & Psychotherapy Service, led by Director Alhagie Camara. The experienced training team included Elias Byaruhanga from Uganda, in addition to Maria Chambers from the UK. The trip resulted in the award of 18 CATT certificates to counsellors from a variety of local NGOs and Government agencies, presented to them by the Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare. Follow-up supervision is being co-ordinated by WAYAS. There was also a wider purpose to the trip, in terms of promoting WAYAS and mental health service development within The Gambia. Members of the team accompanied Alhagie to a meeting at the National Human Rights Commission, and visited the country's single mental hospital, Tanka Tanka, plus a Government-run children's shelter. The trip was completed slightly over its £10,000 budget and at a cost of £560 per CATT certificate awarded, and was a more expensive one than our usual training courses in Africa. The reason is that training partner WAYAS had no resources of its own to contribute, as well as increased costs of travel due to the pandemic. We hope to return in 2023 to run a second course and provide trainer training to those counsellors who have been able to use CATT effectively.



Congratulations cake celebration for 18 new Gambian CATT counsellors

4.1.3 CRESS CATT team

We reported last year on the setting up by CRESS (Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan) of a specialist CATT team working with South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. This year we continued to support the work of the team by providing £1,000 to supplement CRESS funding. Over the year the CATT counsellors supported 611 children and young people¹ and carried out an extensive programme of trauma and emotional health awareness across the refugee settlements which are now home to around 950,000 people. You can read more about the work of the team on the CRESS website <https://cressuk.org/catt-news-may-2022/>

We trained two of the team as CATT trainers in September 2021, and three attended the CATT counsellors' conference in Kampala in May 2022 where they received their certificates, and made a tremendous contribution due to their extensive experience of treating child trauma.



CRESS CATT team: Rev Gale Scopas, Beatrice Kiden & Lulu Emmanuel

4.1.4 CATT training in Colombia

In February 2022 we were finally able to follow up on the online training delivered last year by sending a team of three Spanish-speaking trainers to Colombia. The trip was organised and partially funded by Children Change Colombia (CCC), with which we have developed an excellent partnership. The course took place in Bogota but the 20 participants came from all over the country and are now using their skills to help children in a wide range of challenging and life-threatening situations. Follow-up supervision is being provided by CCC with support from our two Spanish trainers. Once again, we hope they can return in 2023 to run a second course and provide trainer training to those counsellors who have been able to use CATT effectively over the past year. The total cost of the trip was under £3,000 thanks to input from CCC, so £150 per CATT certificate awarded.

¹ CRESS Annual Report 2021



Pilu Rivas Lobo teaching CATT in Bogota, February 2022

4.1.5 Training for International Rescue Committee staff in Arua, Uganda

In December 2021 a last-minute request for CATT training was received by senior trainer Candia Umar in Arua, Uganda from the local representative of IRC (International Rescue Committee). It was possible to give immediate consent to this as the terms of our Licence Agreement no longer applied, and IRC were able to fund all costs with the exception of one trainer. A total of 11 certificates were awarded and one counsellor attended the conference in Kampala in May. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to train for such a large and well-respected international organisation.



IRC staff learning CATT in Arua, December 2021

4.1.6 CATT trainer training

Crucial to the sustainability of our training model is our ability to train local CATT counsellors, who are using the technique effectively to instruct others to use it too. As part of the protocol they also learn about the importance of children's rights and psychoeducation, thus promoting child protection and reducing stigma in their communities. However, our inability to travel during lockdown left us with a backlog of people willing and qualified to train as CATT trainers, so we designed an online approach incorporating four two-hour theory sessions taught over two days, with some homework, followed by supervised local teaching practice. This took place for our two Gazan CATT counsellors in August 2021, and five Ugandan counsellors based in two locations in September. It was also an opportunity to update two Ugandan trainers who had not used their CATT training skills for several years. Online teaching was delivered by Stella Charman and Brenda Graham at zero cost, and was supported by Dr Ghalia Al Asha, Umar Candia and Elias Byaruhanga. We are delighted to have added seven new CATT trainers to our international network, now totalling 28 accredited CATT trainers.



Left to right:

- Jackson Madaya - new trainer
- Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager and senior CATT trainer
- Martha Akullo - updated trainer
- Paul Waluya - new trainer

4.2 Anxiety & Resilience Programme Training

4.2.1 Middle East

Our Anxiety and Resilience (A&R) Programme, designed for children in challenging post-conflict or post-disaster settings by our Clinical Trustee Victoria Burch, has now become an important part of our overall training 'offer' and is much easier than CATT to deliver online. It takes 15 hours, usually spread over three days and has primarily been delivered in Arabic by senior trainer Dr Ghalia Al Asha with the support of Fahed Al Oqaili, Director of the Altakaful Charitable Foundation in Jordan. This programme was delivered to staff of Altakaful (13

participants from 3 centres in Jordan) in June and later in the year to teachers in the Yemen (see following paragraph). Finally for the year covered by this report, training was given in February to staff of the Hope Revival Organisation (20 participants from 2 centres) in Jordan.

We have received feedback from all those trained, who have been able to apply at least some of the techniques they have learned to help children in their care. Whilst online training enables us to reach people who are unable to travel or living in inaccessible, dangerous areas, it is prone to internet connectivity problems and face-to-face training is inevitably more engaging and ultimately effective. So we are delighted that Dr Ghalia and Fahed have been able to being in person training again in 2022-23, which will be reported on next year.



Online A&R training with Dr Ghalia Al Asha & Fahed Al Oqaili

4.2.2 The Yemen

At the time of writing there is a fragile peace in the Yemen, but children in this country remain threatened by famine and the return of hostilities. Thanks to our partnership with Canadian NGO 'Bridges to Peace and Solidarity' led by the indefatigable Dr Kawkab Alwadeai, we have been able to build on the success of the pilot in Yemen in March last year. A&R was rolled out to two more provinces in the Yemen (Aden and Hadramout) in October, with training attended by 30 teachers and mental health workers. A&R training for the Yemen has been supported and funded by our partners IMET2000 and the British Yemeni Society with in-country input from HSA Charitable Foundation. An introductory session was also run for 15 staff from Al Wahda Milat School in the Yemen on behalf of the Tamdeen Youth Foundation. In the forthcoming year we plan to further develop our support for Kawkab's work on behalf of her home country, and have sponsored her to make an awareness-raising video in Arabic about anxiety and mental health issues among children. A previous video which she made about addiction and mental health had over 100,000 views on Facebook.



Dr Kawkab Alwadei speaking in Ottawa

4.2.3 Armenia

Following the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh in September 2020, the focus of our partner charity, the Yerevan Children’s Center, turned to supporting Armenian children who were victims of the conflict and now live with its consequences. As reported last year, we put CATT training on hold and instead provided funding for two of the Center’s psychologists to translate and deliver A&R training. At the time of writing, we are making plans for this to take place before the end of 2022.

4.3 Teaching for Recovery Technique (TRT)/Children and War Manual: Colombia

In April and May our three Spanish trainers each delivered a 14-hour online TRT training course. 25 staff of NGOs supported by Children Change Colombia (CCC) were trained remotely. They provided very positive feedback but were keen to receive further training in person once the pandemic had abated. The course and basic materials, including a manual, were developed by the Children & War Foundation, but considerable time was spent by the training team in preparing a set of colourful slides (now shared with Children & War) to support the training programme. It is aimed at groups of children, e.g. in classroom settings, to learn skills and techniques to help them deal with their experiences and to decrease their chances of needing specialist treatment. The objective of the course was to give the participants the tools to provide care for children enduring the psychological effects of disastrous events.

Following the training, candidates for in-person CATT training were identified and, thanks to the fundraising efforts of intern Zara Bracegirdle, two of the team (Almudena Garcia Perez and Pilu Rivas Lobo) travelled to Colombia in February/March 2023, accompanied by Zara, to deliver CATT training. We report on this course in section 4.14 above.

4.4 Special Projects

4.4.1 Gaza Child Trauma Clinic

The Gaza Child Trauma clinic is a joint project with IMET 2000 and Firefly International. This year has been a traumatic one for the people of Gaza, beginning with 11 days of bombardment in May 2021 which destroyed many buildings and infrastructure, including our clinic in the Adam Center on 7th Floor of Al Jawhara Tower. Thankfully our staff Mohammed El Sharef and Haitham Shamiah survived with their families, and all clinical data saved in electronic form was preserved. Following the bombardment the clinic was relocated thanks to the generosity of IMET and Firefly supporters, and all children previously treated were reassessed, with only two requiring further intervention.

An analysis was undertaken of data from 69 children treated by the clinic in 2019-20, which showed that CATT significantly reduced trauma symptom severity in children and young people experiencing cumulative and ongoing stressors from conflict, violence and associated socio-economic instability, including those with chronic symptoms. Limited data from a small follow-up group indicated that CATT may increase children and young people's psychological resilience and mitigate the impact of further traumas. Further information about this study is downloadable from our website <https://actinternational.org.uk/research>

Despite deteriorating living conditions and spasmodic recurrences in conflict, the clinic has grown over the year thanks to additional investment by IMET and Firefly, and now employs two part-time psychologists (who have been trained to use CATT) with the input of a psychiatrist (also now CATT trained). It continues to provide trauma awareness-raising and education events, receives a steady flow of referrals for PTSD treatment, including from Médecins sans Frontières and the Ma'an Development Centre, and has been visited by the International Red Cross. This growth would not have been possible had it not been for the commitment and funding of the service by IMET and Firefly. As a small training charity, this goes beyond our capacity and in January 2022 we withdrew from operational responsibility for the service. However, we continue to provide trauma training and clinical supervision via Dr Ghalia Al Asha, and to advise the Project Team.



Open Day November 2021

4.4.2 The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward

After coronavirus travel restrictions were lifted in Uganda, Dismas Lwagula was able to return to the children's ward at Butabika Hospital where he volunteers for four days per week, supporting the staff team with activities for the children. The Friends' Project continued to fund his expenses throughout the year (£900) and also sent £300 in December for a Christmas present of games and toys to be kept on the ward. Elias Byaruhanga has also kept in close touch with Reverend Dismas Besigye of St Luke's Chapel, which is formally our 'partner' for this work. Elias has visited the ward on several occasions and reported back to us on the staffing situation, raising ongoing concerns about safeguarding. Trustees Stella Charman and Brenda Graham attended the East London/Butabika Link meeting in July to inform them of these concerns, which were raised with the Hospital Director and are an ongoing item on the Link meeting agenda. Unfortunately, Rev Dismas is planning his retirement in early 2023 and we are currently seeking an alternative mechanism for ensuring regular monitoring of the ward and support for Dismas Lwagula, as well as a Project Manager for this work. More positively, Dismas Lwagula has been privately funded to attend the two-year CAMHS Diploma course in the PCO School at Butabika Hospital, beginning in August 2021. So he is developing his skills and knowledge which can be used on the ward in future to supplement the clinical team there, and we plan to increase ongoing funding for him, in recognition of this.



Toys and games provided by the Friends of the children's ward

4.4.3 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation

Over the past year Sister Florence has continued to focus her work on children (mainly young women and girls) who have been abused or trafficked, living in the local community. In April, Elias Byaruhanga visited Lira to support her and her colleagues, offer consultation and advice on individual children, and assess their overall needs. Trustees approved a special grant of £625 which was spent on a variety of educational activities, including school fees and training in practical skills to enable them to support themselves. Elias returned with Syson Katushabe in October to help Sister Florence run a PTSD Awareness course for the local community, which included a workshop on sexual violence and its effect on the mental health of families and children. It was attended by 20 people at a cost of £2,800. The key objective was to equip

them with the ability to recognize PTSD and refer children to the right people for help. As a consequence, a number of them have requested CATT training and we hope to deliver a course in the Autumn of 2022 (currently being planned). Afterwards we received the following e-mail from the Director of the Centre for Adolescent Reproductive Health in Lira. He and some of his staff attended the training. He told us: *'I was glad to attend your training workshop on post-traumatic stress disorder. I was amazed to share my experience of being a child soldier and a rebel commander. That day I as well learn a lot on how stress can be solved. Therefore I feel inspired to do more for the affected children in northern Uganda.'*



PTSD Awareness training at Bishop Asili Community Foundation's Centre at Ngetta, Lira

4.5 Fundraising

Once again we had relatively low expectations of fundraising during the pandemic but are delighted to report that this year has been our most successful one ever, with nearly £35k income achieved. None of this has come in as a result of grant bids, despite several being submitted. Primarily, it was the result of the great generosity of faithful regular donors, and some magnificent individual initiatives (see below), which have greatly increased the proportion of our income from these sources from 20% to 46%, and for which we are enormously grateful. We have also benefitted from the ongoing hard work and support of volunteer Penny Jeffcoat with all our fundraising efforts.

At the end of November 2021 the Virgin Money Giving platform closed and we transferred to CAF Donate. All regular donors were contacted and asked to transfer their giving. Thanks go to Treasurer Saif Ghauri and IT consultant Glenn Adams for making this seamless transition.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,000 Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £5,000 De Brye Charitable Trust
- £2,000 Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation
- £2,250 IMET 2000
- £2,000 British Yemeni Society

Online campaigns and fundraising events:

- £3,000 raised by Michael Coates’s Thames 26 Endurance Swim
- £1321 raised by Pippa Gray & others for the Gambia
- £1,650 Stephen Riley & Victoria Burch’s wedding
- £1,500 raised by Tom Anson, Zara Bracegirdle with help from Amy Pope & family (pub night and Brighton marathon)

Individual donors:

- £1,025 from Rosemarie Ghazaros for profile-raising
- £7,400 from miscellaneous donations made by individuals, including Neil Appleyard, Una & Alex Henderson, Ian Tegner and Yvonne North, and others who prefer to remain anonymous

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2022		
Funding source	amount	%
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	14,000	40%
Other charities	4,250	12%
Campaigns & events	7,471	22%
Individual donations	8,444	24%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	428	1%
TOTAL	34,593	100%

4.6 Communications & profile-raising

In August a subgroup of three trustees met with Rosemarie Ghazaros to think about our communications strategy. Following discussion it was agreed that a profile-raising strategy was primarily required, to ensure that more people and organisations know about the work of ACT International and specifically fundraisers, philanthropists and potential partners. Our work is relevant to many of the issues people are concerned about, i.e. children in conflict, peace building, natural disasters, refugees, mental health, prevention of terrorism, the impact of COVID-19 and disease. We agreed that our strategy needed to extend beyond the website and social media to traditional media and that we should be proactive in responding to events in the news. This approach was subsequently approved by the Board and we recruited a young

freelance journalist, Jessie Williams, who volunteered to visit Armenia. Her excellent article was published online in Open Democracy, and resulted in some social media attention and a spike in visits to our website in November.

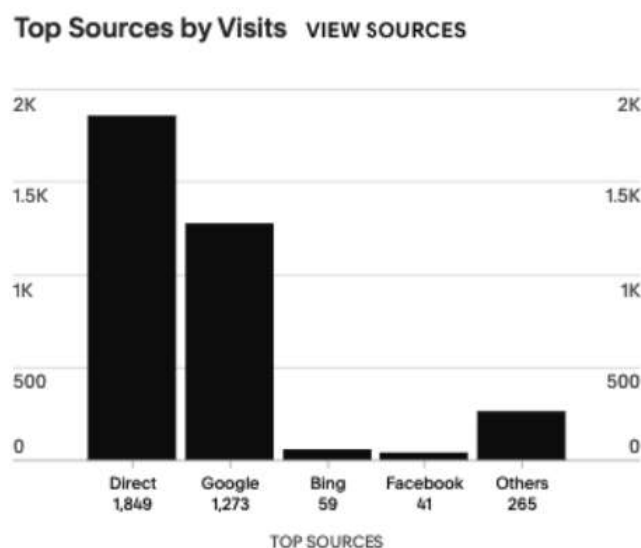
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/survivors-trauma-a-year-after-nagorno-karabakh-war/>

In November Toria Burch ran a session for the Consortium for Street Children’s Annual Network Forum which also contributed to the surge of visits to the website. As a result we were approached by UK & Ugandan charity SALVE (Support and Love via Education) which cares for rescued street children. They requested training which was scheduled in May, and will be reported on in next year’s report.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Toria was interviewed about the impact of the war on children by a reporter for Devex (the media platform for the global development community). She also put together some guidance, with the assistance of Anna Kalin and Ghalia Al Asha, about how to support children in the days and weeks after conflict. It is downloadable from the website and we are working on the translation of our materials into Polish and Ukrainian.

4.7 Website and social media

The website had 2.8K unique visitors this year - a 12% increase on last year. Our largest source of traffic remains direct visits. We have seen a 75% increase in traffic from Google but a 90% decrease in traffic from Facebook. “Trauma international” and “international children’s charities” were the search terms giving us the largest number of search impressions though the clickthrough rates for these were low relative to other search terms. Our average position in google search results was low for these terms compared to more focused terms like “catt training”, “childhood trauma charities”, “stella charman”, “carlotta raby” and “meet tortu”, which all had significantly higher clickthrough rates, placing us on the first page of google results.



Geographically, the proportion of our traffic coming from the UK decreased and the amount of US traffic doubled. The rest of our traffic is distributed globally, with increases in the Gambia, Uganda and Palestine, though fairly small numbers from each.

With the support of Simon Stewart, our new trustee who has been tasked with reviewing our digital and online profile, we are currently looking at opportunities for driving more traffic to the website and assessing the effectiveness of our social media. Through Facebook we reach 800 people and have 300 followers on Twitter. Pippa Barlow is now managing the closed Facebook group, and invitations have recently been sent to all who attended the Kampala conference or who had recently been training to use CATT. This group currently has 73 members. Yara Fardous has set up the Arabic group which both CATT and A&R trainees can join, and she is in the process of setting up an Instagram account.

4.8 Quality Assurance & Research

COVID-19 and associated lockdowns have caused so many hardships across the world this year, but the development of technology for remote training has been a definite benefit for ACT International. Over the year our clinical lead Victoria Burch has attended online conferences and webinars which would have been impossible to travel to in person, allowing some very current research and the experience of world experts in psychological trauma to be incorporated swiftly into our training programmes.

CATT course update

Re-writing and updating our CATT course was a major focus of the first few months of the year. The aims were to update the content in line with current research and best practice, simplify the language to make it easier to translate and use internationally, and to build in features which would enable the course to be taught online if necessary. The updated material was critiqued and approved by our lead trainers in the UK, Uganda and the Middle East, all of whom now have the updated slide pack. After discussion we have agreed that while theoretical aspects of CATT can be taught safely online, the practical part of the course should be delivered through face to face training wherever possible, to assure quality and safety for both trainees and the children whom they treat.

Uganda

Whilst awaiting our postponed clinical conference (section 4.1.1), improved IT access enabled several online supervision discussions with trainer/counsellors in remote areas of Uganda with questions about clinical practice. We plan to increase informal online meetings which are valued by all participants. The first pre- and post-treatment data from the CRESS CATT team who work with traumatised children in the settlement areas and camps for South Sudanese refugees, demonstrated that CATT is an appropriate tool for use by people who may themselves have had limited access to formal education, and showed how effective it is in freeing children from symptoms of trauma in this difficult setting. We look forward to reviewing more pre- and post- treatment data and case stories next year.

Gaza

In May 2021, The Children's Trauma Clinic in Gaza was tragically destroyed during 11 days of bombardment. Mercifully no one was hurt, but all written records were lost. That the clinic was able to open again only two weeks later (in temporary accommodation) was due to the swift action of IMET2000 and Firefly International, the dedication of the two clinicians, and also to excellent online record keeping. This is so important both for keeping track of patients, and for audit. The clinicians contacted all families whose children had been treated for trauma previously at the clinic. Remarkably only two of these children had signs of trauma despite high levels of trauma experienced by people in Gaza generally after the bombardment. This demonstrated, better than any research study, the impact of CATT on building children's resilience to cope with further adversity, and confirmed our view of its appropriateness for traumatised children in areas of ongoing and intermittent conflict.

Anxiety and Resilience Programme – Pilot Study

This new manualised group course was written after discussion about the needs of Syrian refugee children and families with UOSSM, a partner organisation based in Turkey. It was designed for counsellors, teachers or others who support stressed and anxious children in areas affected by violence, conflict, or disaster. After online training by our senior Arabic trainer for the Middle East, Dr Ghalia Al Asha, UOSSM ran a pilot study for the programme with 12 groups of displaced children and teenagers. Many of the children have lost a parent as well as their home, and all face ongoing hardship and adversity due to the war. Feedback from the trainers indicated that the programme was very well received by children and their parents. The children's scores on a short anxiety assessment carried out before and after the course were analysed by ACT International assistant psychologist Lily Holland, and were shown to be significantly lower after the course. We are very grateful to UOSSM for field-testing the programme, and providing such useful feedback, which led to some adjustments to the material before its use in other countries.

Feedback from trainees in Yemen and in Jordan led to further minor adjustments for online training.

Supervision

Supervision for new trainees in any mental health programme is essential for maintaining quality and safe, effective practice. Dr Ghalia Al Asha has provided online supervision to the Gaza CATT clinicians, and also to Anxiety and Resilience trainees in Yemen and the Middle East for the first six months after their training course while they become familiar with using the materials. We are hoping to find another experienced Arabic-speaking mental health professional to join us to help with training in this area. Elias Byaruhanga and Umar Candia provide regular supervision to counsellors in the refugee settlements in Uganda. All newly-trained counsellors are invited to join our private Facebook groups in English and Arabic where they can obtain useful new material and information, and share any issues of concern in a confidential online space.

Future Plans

Building networks of trainers and counsellors who can work together in their own language helps to ensure our courses are appropriate for different conditions and settings. Through our cascade model we have grown a robust network of people who train, supervise and provide consultation in Uganda. The Ugandan trainers also lead or participate in training in other countries in the region, where their knowledge of local situations helps to make our training culturally acceptable as well as clinically effective. We have a small but strong team within the Middle East operating in Arabic. We aim to build and further develop these networks, and our teams of trainers working in Spanish and Armenian.

4.9 Safeguarding

ACTI safeguarding activity covered four key areas of work this year:

- In May 2021 the Gaza Child Trauma Clinic team and Safeguarding lead trustee Brenda Graham were finalising the clinic safeguarding policy when the clinic was destroyed and had to relocate after the Israeli bombardment. However, the work they had done on creating a safe environment for children, and safe recruitment of staff and volunteers, meant they could set up swiftly in a new building and take on more staff.
- In April and November 2021 Elias Byaruhanga, Uganda Operations manager, visited Butabika Children's Ward and noted the ongoing under-staffing and continuing difficulty with resettlement of children back to their families and community due to under-resourcing of social work. His concerns about poor staffing levels and few resources for children were reported by the Safeguarding Officer Brenda Graham to East London/Butabika Link and have been raised with the Hospital Director. Safeguarding on the ward will now be a standing agenda item for the Link at its regular meetings.
- CATT training trips to the Gambia and Colombia finally took place in February 2022. As part of planning our first trips to these countries we exchanged safeguarding policies with WAYAS (Gambia) and Children Change Colombia and learned more about the risks faced by children they work with. In Colombia, street children live chaotic, dangerous lives, at risk of physical harm, neglect and exploitation. In the Gambia children experience and witness domestic abuse and sexual violence within their home and community. A whole day of training for the Gambian participants in February 2022 was dedicated to safeguarding. Discussions about safeguarding are part of CATT training and always reveal the professional and political challenges our CATT counsellors face every day.
- In March 2022 our ACTI Safeguarding Children Policy was updated, agreed by trustees and is now available for all to view via the website <https://actinternational.org.uk/policies>

Apart from ongoing concerns about the Butabika Children's ward, no other incidents have been reported to the Safeguarding Officer this year. We continue as an active member of Keeping Children Safe.

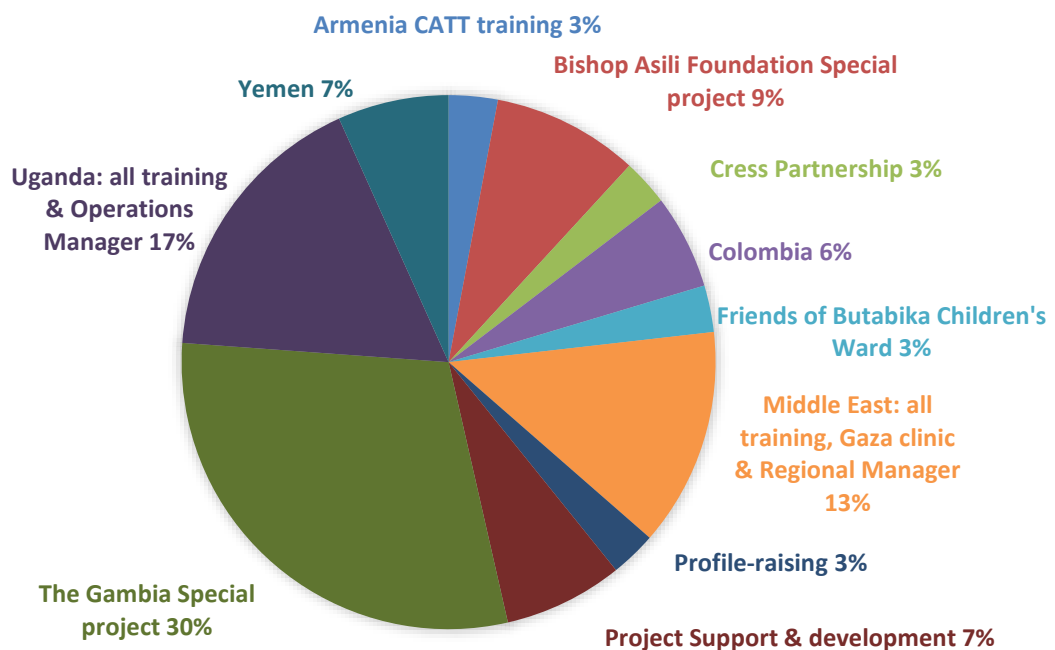
5. Financial review

The overall economic climate during the year remained challenging with the continued fallout of COVID-19 and the commencement of Russian aggression on the sovereign state of Ukraine in February 2022. The effects of war, global inflation, future waves of COVID-19, China's economic slowdown, and supply-chain disruptions are the top risks right now, according to a recent Dun & Bradstreet analysis of global business risks. We need to add to this the impact of climate change and the rise of geopolitical unrest leading to divisions and causing further misery and suffering to those disadvantaged.

ACT International, despite these challenges, has been supported by its core funders and harnessed the efforts of individual fund-raising initiatives to generate close to £ 35,000 and apply these funds across countries. At the end of 2021, the Board of trustees set an ambitious and stretched programme for 2021/22. The operational team[s] have shown tremendous resilience by mobilising and delivering strategic programmes on site. They continue to explore and reach out to provide a better future and hope for the children. Our liquidity year on year remained on level pegging. During the period, due to fund-raising efforts and the generosity of our donors, the trustees secured nearly £ 35,000 during the year ended 31st March 2022.

Looking forward, the trustees remain positive despite the back-to-back challenging times. With elevated levels of inflation and the cost-of-living implications, this could be a 3–5-year cycle and will impact the sector. Invariably the greatest impact will be borne by those who are vulnerable across the globe. Our focus and priority will remain on optimising the aim and objectives of ACT International.

HOW ACTI'S MONEY WAS SPENT 2021-22



6. Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31st March 2022

	£ 2022	£ 2021
Incoming Resources		
Restricted Funds	11,251	5,446
General Funds	23,340	15,359
Total Donations	34,590	20,805
Other income	3	19
Total Incoming Resources	34,593	20,824
Resources Expended		
Programme		
Activities: Restricted Funds	14,055	6,507
General Funds	18,975	5,100
Project Support & Development	2,148	1,970
Fund raising Support & Marketing	423	
Total Cost of Charitable Activities	35,601	13,577
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(1,008)	7,247

Balance Sheet as of 31st March 2022

	£ 2022	£ 2021
Fixed Assets		-
Prepayments	2,624	3,036
Cash at Bank and in hand	25,757	26,462
Current Assets	28,381	29,498
Accruals	301	
Current Liabilities	301	
Net Assets	28,080	29,498
Restricted Reserves	4,235	7,039
Unrestricted Reserves	23,845	22,459
Total Funds	28,080	29,498



Action for Child Trauma International (formerly known as Luna Children's Charity)



Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended March 2022

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	4
2. Governance and management	6
3. Objectives and activities	7
4. Achievements and performance	8
4.1 CATT training	8
4.1.1 CATT Counsellors Conference in Kampala	8
4.1.2 CATT training in the Gambia	8
4.1.3 CRESS CATT team	9
4.1.4 CATT training in Colombia	9
4.1.5 International Rescue Committee, Arua, Uganda	10
4.1.6 CATT trainer training	11
4.2 Anxiety & Resilience Training	11
4.2.1 Middle East	11
4.2.2 The Yemen	12
4.2.3 Armenia	13
4.3 Teaching for Recovery Technique – Colombia	13
4.4 Special Projects	14
4.4.1 Gaza Child Trauma Clinic	14
4.4.2 Friends of Butabika Hospital Children’s Ward, Kampala, Uganda	15
4.4.3 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation, Lira	15
4.5 Fundraising	16
4.6 Communications and profile-raising	17
4.7 Website & social media	18
4.8 Quality assurance, audit and research	19
4.9 Safeguarding	21
5. Financial review	22
6. Annual accounts for the year ended March 2022	23

What we do and why



We have trained people in 17 countries

In this report we describe our activity during the second full year of the coronavirus pandemic. As UNICEF observes, this global crisis has had a lifelong impact on many children in the poorest countries 'who risk being among its biggest victims'. In addition, millions of children have been displaced this year in new or renewed conflicts. Over 1 million children have fled Afghanistan and 5.2 million have been displaced by the war in Ukraine (3 million inside the country and 2.2 million outside it) which began in February 2022. Gazan children experienced two weeks of intense bombardment in May 2021. In Syria and Yemen there is now a fragile peace but living conditions in those countries continue to deteriorate. Many children are growing up without the basic security they need to develop, learn and grow into capable adults. So the work we do to repair the impact of trauma is needed more than ever.

We are enormously proud this year to have updated our materials and tools and continued training local people working with traumatised children, both online and once again face-to-face. This report provides detail of all we have achieved thanks to all our donors, and growing team of committed and highly professional volunteers listed in section 1. In addition to the one-to-one Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT), we have delivered our anxiety and resilience (A&R) group training programme, and Children & War's Teaching for Recovery Technique, to people working in areas of ongoing instability or conflict. We have also delivered PTSD Awareness training to community leaders in order to enhance wider understanding of the impact on children and reduce the stigma associated with their troubled behaviours. Recently we have also published online a guidance paper on how to support refugee children as they arrive in new communities. Once our materials have been translated and delivered in Polish (work now in progress), we will have trained counsellors working in five out of the top six countries hosting refugee children (Türkiye, Colombia, Uganda, Pakistan and Poland).

Don't forget: *we can't change what has happened, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.*

1. Reference and administration details

Charity Name and Details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

Charity Trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney

Brenda Graham (Safeguarding Lead)

Saif Ghauri (Treasurer)

Philip Sarell

Officers

Dr Ghalia Al Asha – Middle East Operations Manager & senior trainer

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Specialist volunteers this year

Armenian translators – Narine Abrahamyan & Lilit Karapetian

Fundraisers:

Tom Anson

Rosemarie Ghazaros

Penny Jeffcoat

Amy Pope & family

Psychology assistant – Lily Holland

Website & IT support – Hector Riley & Glenn Adams

DT advisor – Kim Eakers

Journalist – Jessie Williams

Interns

Zara Bracegirdle – University of Sussex, General Operations Assistant from October 2021

Ruby Turok-Squire – University of Warwick, General Operations Assistant to September 2021

UK-based trainers active this year

Maria Chambers

Anna Kalin
Pippa Barlow

Spanish trainers active this year

Almudena Garcia Perea
Pilu Rivas Lobo

Uganda-based trainers active this year

Sister Florence Achulo
Syson Katushabe
Candia Umar
Timona Asua

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Dr Ghalia Al Asha
Fahed Al Oqaili
Mohammed El Sharef
Haitham Shamiah

2. Governance and management

This year we have succeeded in resuming overseas trips as travel restrictions eased, and in the early part of 2022 managed to fulfil all the training commitments to partner organisations, which had been postponed as a result of the pandemic. Our training model has adapted well to new conditions, but need for child trauma training and support has rocketed. So, although we are financially sound at the current scale, trustees are anxious for growth in 2022/23 that will enable us to expand activity to meet increasing demand from many agencies working directly with children. As a consequence, we have begun to focus on raising our profile and publicising what we do more widely, with evidence of its effectiveness, in order to gain recognition and attract partnerships and funding for the future. This initiative led by trustee Jenny Cuffe is explained further in section 4.6, and Section 5 provides a more detailed overview of our financial position at the end on March 2022.

From 1st December 2021 Dr Carlotta Raby released the CATT licence which we have held exclusively for 7 years, so that any organisation is now able to train people to use the protocol. Technically this means we have lost our 'unique selling point' but in practice no other organisation has the ability or experience to train overseas, and we gain greater flexibility over whom we can train and how, as well as control of our charging policy. Trustees, however, agreed to maintain the same high quality standards required by the licence and to continue to promote the humanitarian and right-based principles upon which Dr Raby designed CATT in 2005.

This year we recruited a new trustee, Simon Stewart, to help us improve our online presence and with responsibility for digital transformation, which he undertakes in a paid role for the Samaritans. Our trustee recruitment process is painstaking and takes several months, so he was not formally appointed until June 2022, thus does not appear in the trustee list in section 1. At the same time Philip Sarell, who has been a Trustee since the early days of Luna Children's Charity, retired with our very grateful thanks for all his support over the past 13 years. He made an invaluable contribution to the early development and subsequent sustainability of this small organisation. ACT International relies heavily on its trustees and specialist volunteers to lead and undertake the key tasks and obligations of running an effective and competent charity. Additional capacity this year was once again provided by interns. In the autumn, Zara Bracegirdle took over the general support role of Operations Assistant from Ruby Turok-Squire who left us to become a barrister specialising in family law and children's rights. Tom Anson, another Sussex University masters student, contributed over the summer in a fundraising role. In February 2022 Zara accompanied the CATT training team to Colombia and remained there until May in order to gain valuable overseas experience. This enabled her to gain a place for 2023 on the Global Mental Health MSc course at King's College London. We thank all four of them and wish them well. We cannot offer payment to our interns, but we do support their career development as best we can. Without their input and those of all our volunteers, ACT International simply would not exist.

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

In the past ACT International's charitable objectives have been primarily achieved through the delivery of training in the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT). However, over the past three years we have been broadening our activities so that we now fulfil our purpose through a wider range of training, both online and in person, and by supporting people working with children affected by conflict and/or trauma. These activities are:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (**CATT**) created by Dr Carlotta Raby
- Anxiety and Resilience Programme (**A&R**) compiled by Victoria Burch
- Teaching for Recovery Technique (**TRT**) developed by Children & War Foundation
- **PTSD Awareness**: bespoke training to meet needs of local culture or experience
- **Safeguarding**, based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children (e.g. trafficked girls cared for by the Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation)

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need (e.g. Alhagie Camara for the Gambia)

Developing materials for use with children (eg Tortu the Very Worried Tortoise by Victoria Burch), or to support good practice



The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Charity in the year to March 31st 2021.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and follow-up

4.1.1 CATT Counsellors Conference in Kampala

This conference was originally planned for May 2020 but could not be held due to the coronavirus pandemic. However, as restrictions on movement began to be lifted at the end of 2021 we started planning for it to take place at last, in May 2022. We are delighted that a successful conference has taken place but as it fell outside the period covered by this Annual Report, it will be reported on in full next year.

4.1.2 CATT training in the Gambia

Our first post-pandemic overseas CATT training trip took place in February 2022. This was organised and planned with our in-country partner WAYAS Counselling & Psychotherapy Service, led by Director Alhagie Camara. The experienced training team included Elias Byaruhanga from Uganda, in addition to Maria Chambers from the UK. The trip resulted in the award of 18 CATT certificates to counsellors from a variety of local NGOs and Government agencies, presented to them by the Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare. Follow-up supervision is being co-ordinated by WAYAS. There was also a wider purpose to the trip, in terms of promoting WAYAS and mental health service development within The Gambia. Members of the team accompanied Alhagie to a meeting at the National Human Rights Commission, and visited the country's single mental hospital, Tanka Tanka, plus a Government-run children's shelter. The trip was completed slightly over its £10,000 budget and at a cost of £560 per CATT certificate awarded, and was a more expensive one than our usual training courses in Africa. The reason is that training partner WAYAS had no resources of its own to contribute, as well as increased costs of travel due to the pandemic. We hope to return in 2023 to run a second course and provide trainer training to those counsellors who have been able to use CATT effectively.



Congratulations cake celebration for 18 new Gambian CATT counsellors

4.1.3 CRESS CATT team

We reported last year on the setting up by CRESS (Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan) of a specialist CATT team working with South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. This year we continued to support the work of the team by providing £1,000 to supplement CRESS funding. Over the year the CATT counsellors supported 611 children and young people¹ and carried out an extensive programme of trauma and emotional health awareness across the refugee settlements which are now home to around 950,000 people. You can read more about the work of the team on the CRESS website <https://cressuk.org/catt-news-may-2022/>

We trained two of the team as CATT trainers in September 2021, and three attended the CATT counsellors' conference in Kampala in May 2022 where they received their certificates, and made a tremendous contribution due to their extensive experience of treating child trauma.



CRESS CATT team: Rev Gale Scopas, Beatrice Kiden & Lulu Emmanuel

4.1.4 CATT training in Colombia

In February 2022 we were finally able to follow up on the online training delivered last year by sending a team of three Spanish-speaking trainers to Colombia. The trip was organised and partially funded by Children Change Colombia (CCC), with which we have developed an excellent partnership. The course took place in Bogota but the 20 participants came from all over the country and are now using their skills to help children in a wide range of challenging and life-threatening situations. Follow-up supervision is being provided by CCC with support from our two Spanish trainers. Once again, we hope they can return in 2023 to run a second course and provide trainer training to those counsellors who have been able to use CATT effectively over the past year. The total cost of the trip was under £3,000 thanks to input from CCC, so £150 per CATT certificate awarded.

¹ CRESS Annual Report 2021



Pilu Rivas Lobo teaching CATT in Bogota, February 2022

4.1.5 Training for International Rescue Committee staff in Arua, Uganda

In December 2021 a last-minute request for CATT training was received by senior trainer Candia Umar in Arua, Uganda from the local representative of IRC (International Rescue Committee). It was possible to give immediate consent to this as the terms of our Licence Agreement no longer applied, and IRC were able to fund all costs with the exception of one trainer. A total of 11 certificates were awarded and one counsellor attended the conference in Kampala in May. We are delighted to have had the opportunity to train for such a large and well-respected international organisation.



IRC staff learning CATT in Arua, December 2021

4.1.6 CATT trainer training

Crucial to the sustainability of our training model is our ability to train local CATT counsellors, who are using the technique effectively to instruct others to use it too. As part of the protocol they also learn about the importance of children's rights and psychoeducation, thus promoting child protection and reducing stigma in their communities. However, our inability to travel during lockdown left us with a backlog of people willing and qualified to train as CATT trainers, so we designed an online approach incorporating four two-hour theory sessions taught over two days, with some homework, followed by supervised local teaching practice. This took place for our two Gazan CATT counsellors in August 2021, and five Ugandan counsellors based in two locations in September. It was also an opportunity to update two Ugandan trainers who had not used their CATT training skills for several years. Online teaching was delivered by Stella Charman and Brenda Graham at zero cost, and was supported by Dr Ghalia Al Asha, Umar Candia and Elias Byaruhanga. We are delighted to have added seven new CATT trainers to our international network, now totalling 28 accredited CATT trainers.



Left to right:

- Jackson Madaya - new trainer
- Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager and senior CATT trainer
- Martha Akullo - updated trainer
- Paul Waluya - new trainer

4.2 Anxiety & Resilience Programme Training

4.2.1 Middle East

Our Anxiety and Resilience (A&R) Programme, designed for children in challenging post-conflict or post-disaster settings by our Clinical Trustee Victoria Burch, has now become an important part of our overall training 'offer' and is much easier than CATT to deliver online. It takes 15 hours, usually spread over three days and has primarily been delivered in Arabic by senior trainer Dr Ghalia Al Asha with the support of Fahed Al Oqaili, Director of the Altakaful Charitable Foundation in Jordan. This programme was delivered to staff of Altakaful (13

participants from 3 centres in Jordan) in June and later in the year to teachers in the Yemen (see following paragraph). Finally for the year covered by this report, training was given in February to staff of the Hope Revival Organisation (20 participants from 2 centres) in Jordan.

We have received feedback from all those trained, who have been able to apply at least some of the techniques they have learned to help children in their care. Whilst online training enables us to reach people who are unable to travel or living in inaccessible, dangerous areas, it is prone to internet connectivity problems and face-to-face training is inevitably more engaging and ultimately effective. So we are delighted that Dr Ghalia and Fahed have been able to being in person training again in 2022-23, which will be reported on next year.



Online A&R training with Dr Ghalia Al Asha & Fahed Al Oqaili

4.2.2 The Yemen

At the time of writing there is a fragile peace in the Yemen, but children in this country remain threatened by famine and the return of hostilities. Thanks to our partnership with Canadian NGO 'Bridges to Peace and Solidarity' led by the indefatigable Dr Kawkab Alwadeai, we have been able to build on the success of the pilot in Yemen in March last year. A&R was rolled out to two more provinces in the Yemen (Aden and Hadramout) in October, with training attended by 30 teachers and mental health workers. A&R training for the Yemen has been supported and funded by our partners IMET2000 and the British Yemeni Society with in-country input from HSA Charitable Foundation. An introductory session was also run for 15 staff from Al Wahda Milat School in the Yemen on behalf of the Tamdeen Youth Foundation. In the forthcoming year we plan to further develop our support for Kawkab's work on behalf of her home country, and have sponsored her to make an awareness-raising video in Arabic about anxiety and mental health issues among children. A previous video which she made about addiction and mental health had over 100,000 views on Facebook.



Dr Kawkab Alwadei speaking in Ottawa

4.2.3 Armenia

Following the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh in September 2020, the focus of our partner charity, the Yerevan Children’s Center, turned to supporting Armenian children who were victims of the conflict and now live with its consequences. As reported last year, we put CATT training on hold and instead provided funding for two of the Center’s psychologists to translate and deliver A&R training. At the time of writing, we are making plans for this to take place before the end of 2022.

4.3 Teaching for Recovery Technique (TRT)/Children and War Manual: Colombia

In April and May our three Spanish trainers each delivered a 14-hour online TRT training course. 25 staff of NGOs supported by Children Change Colombia (CCC) were trained remotely. They provided very positive feedback but were keen to receive further training in person once the pandemic had abated. The course and basic materials, including a manual, were developed by the Children & War Foundation, but considerable time was spent by the training team in preparing a set of colourful slides (now shared with Children & War) to support the training programme. It is aimed at groups of children, e.g. in classroom settings, to learn skills and techniques to help them deal with their experiences and to decrease their chances of needing specialist treatment. The objective of the course was to give the participants the tools to provide care for children enduring the psychological effects of disastrous events.

Following the training, candidates for in-person CATT training were identified and, thanks to the fundraising efforts of intern Zara Bracegirdle, two of the team (Almudena Garcia Perez and Pilu Rivas Lobo) travelled to Colombia in February/March 2023, accompanied by Zara, to deliver CATT training. We report on this course in section 4.14 above.

4.4 Special Projects

4.4.1 Gaza Child Trauma Clinic

The Gaza Child Trauma clinic is a joint project with IMET 2000 and Firefly International. This year has been a traumatic one for the people of Gaza, beginning with 11 days of bombardment in May 2021 which destroyed many buildings and infrastructure, including our clinic in the Adam Center on 7th Floor of Al Jawhara Tower. Thankfully our staff Mohammed El Sharef and Haitham Shamiah survived with their families, and all clinical data saved in electronic form was preserved. Following the bombardment the clinic was relocated thanks to the generosity of IMET and Firefly supporters, and all children previously treated were reassessed, with only two requiring further intervention.

An analysis was undertaken of data from 69 children treated by the clinic in 2019-20, which showed that CATT significantly reduced trauma symptom severity in children and young people experiencing cumulative and ongoing stressors from conflict, violence and associated socio-economic instability, including those with chronic symptoms. Limited data from a small follow-up group indicated that CATT may increase children and young people's psychological resilience and mitigate the impact of further traumas. Further information about this study is downloadable from our website <https://actinternational.org.uk/research>

Despite deteriorating living conditions and spasmodic recurrences in conflict, the clinic has grown over the year thanks to additional investment by IMET and Firefly, and now employs two part-time psychologists (who have been trained to use CATT) with the input of a psychiatrist (also now CATT trained). It continues to provide trauma awareness-raising and education events, receives a steady flow of referrals for PTSD treatment, including from Médecins sans Frontières and the Ma'an Development Centre, and has been visited by the International Red Cross. This growth would not have been possible had it not been for the commitment and funding of the service by IMET and Firefly. As a small training charity, this goes beyond our capacity and in January 2022 we withdrew from operational responsibility for the service. However, we continue to provide trauma training and clinical supervision via Dr Ghalia Al Asha, and to advise the Project Team.



Open Day November 2021

4.4.2 The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward

After coronavirus travel restrictions were lifted in Uganda, Dismas Lwagula was able to return to the children's ward at Butabika Hospital where he volunteers for four days per week, supporting the staff team with activities for the children. The Friends' Project continued to fund his expenses throughout the year (£900) and also sent £300 in December for a Christmas present of games and toys to be kept on the ward. Elias Byaruhanga has also kept in close touch with Reverend Dismas Besigye of St Luke's Chapel, which is formally our 'partner' for this work. Elias has visited the ward on several occasions and reported back to us on the staffing situation, raising ongoing concerns about safeguarding. Trustees Stella Charman and Brenda Graham attended the East London/Butabika Link meeting in July to inform them of these concerns, which were raised with the Hospital Director and are an ongoing item on the Link meeting agenda. Unfortunately, Rev Dismas is planning his retirement in early 2023 and we are currently seeking an alternative mechanism for ensuring regular monitoring of the ward and support for Dismas Lwagula, as well as a Project Manager for this work. More positively, Dismas Lwagula has been privately funded to attend the two-year CAMHS Diploma course in the PCO School at Butabika Hospital, beginning in August 2021. So he is developing his skills and knowledge which can be used on the ward in future to supplement the clinical team there, and we plan to increase ongoing funding for him, in recognition of this.



Toys and games provided by the Friends of the children's ward

4.4.3 Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation

Over the past year Sister Florence has continued to focus her work on children (mainly young women and girls) who have been abused or trafficked, living in the local community. In April, Elias Byaruhanga visited Lira to support her and her colleagues, offer consultation and advice on individual children, and assess their overall needs. Trustees approved a special grant of £625 which was spent on a variety of educational activities, including school fees and training in practical skills to enable them to support themselves. Elias returned with Syson Katushabe in October to help Sister Florence run a PTSD Awareness course for the local community, which included a workshop on sexual violence and its effect on the mental health of families and children. It was attended by 20 people at a cost of £2,800. The key objective was to equip

them with the ability to recognize PTSD and refer children to the right people for help. As a consequence, a number of them have requested CATT training and we hope to deliver a course in the Autumn of 2022 (currently being planned). Afterwards we received the following e-mail from the Director of the Centre for Adolescent Reproductive Health in Lira. He and some of his staff attended the training. He told us: *'I was glad to attend your training workshop on post-traumatic stress disorder. I was amazed to share my experience of being a child soldier and a rebel commander. That day I as well learn a lot on how stress can be solved. Therefore I feel inspired to do more for the affected children in northern Uganda.'*



PTSD Awareness training at Bishop Asili Community Foundation's Centre at Ngetta, Lira

4.5 Fundraising

Once again we had relatively low expectations of fundraising during the pandemic but are delighted to report that this year has been our most successful one ever, with nearly £35k income achieved. None of this has come in as a result of grant bids, despite several being submitted. Primarily, it was the result of the great generosity of faithful regular donors, and some magnificent individual initiatives (see below), which have greatly increased the proportion of our income from these sources from 20% to 46%, and for which we are enormously grateful. We have also benefitted from the ongoing hard work and support of volunteer Penny Jeffcoat with all our fundraising efforts.

At the end of November 2021 the Virgin Money Giving platform closed and we transferred to CAF Donate. All regular donors were contacted and asked to transfer their giving. Thanks go to Treasurer Saif Ghauri and IT consultant Glenn Adams for making this seamless transition.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,000 Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £5,000 De Brye Charitable Trust
- £2,000 Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation
- £2,250 IMET 2000
- £2,000 British Yemeni Society

Online campaigns and fundraising events:

- £3,000 raised by Michael Coates’s Thames 26 Endurance Swim
- £1321 raised by Pippa Gray & others for the Gambia
- £1,650 Stephen Riley & Victoria Burch’s wedding
- £1,500 raised by Tom Anson, Zara Bracegirdle with help from Amy Pope & family (pub night and Brighton marathon)

Individual donors:

- £1,025 from Rosemarie Ghazaros for profile-raising
- £7,400 from miscellaneous donations made by individuals, including Neil Appleyard, Una & Alex Henderson, Ian Tegner and Yvonne North, and others who prefer to remain anonymous

Funding sources (%) year ended March 2022		
Funding source	amount	%
Charitable Trusts/Foundations/Corporates	14,000	40%
Other charities	4,250	12%
Campaigns & events	7,471	22%
Individual donations	8,444	24%
Income from activities/interest/refunds	428	1%
TOTAL	34,593	100%

4.6 Communications & profile-raising

In August a subgroup of three trustees met with Rosemarie Ghazaros to think about our communications strategy. Following discussion it was agreed that a profile-raising strategy was primarily required, to ensure that more people and organisations know about the work of ACT International and specifically fundraisers, philanthropists and potential partners. Our work is relevant to many of the issues people are concerned about, i.e. children in conflict, peace building, natural disasters, refugees, mental health, prevention of terrorism, the impact of COVID-19 and disease. We agreed that our strategy needed to extend beyond the website and social media to traditional media and that we should be proactive in responding to events in the news. This approach was subsequently approved by the Board and we recruited a young

freelance journalist, Jessie Williams, who volunteered to visit Armenia. Her excellent article was published online in Open Democracy, and resulted in some social media attention and a spike in visits to our website in November.

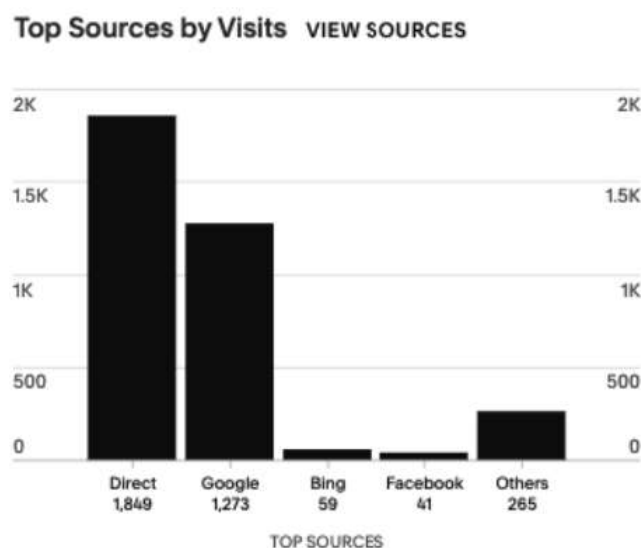
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/survivors-trauma-a-year-after-nagorno-karabakh-war/>

In November Toria Burch ran a session for the Consortium for Street Children’s Annual Network Forum which also contributed to the surge of visits to the website. As a result we were approached by UK & Ugandan charity SALVE (Support and Love via Education) which cares for rescued street children. They requested training which was scheduled in May, and will be reported on in next year’s report.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Toria was interviewed about the impact of the war on children by a reporter for Devex (the media platform for the global development community). She also put together some guidance, with the assistance of Anna Kalin and Ghalia Al Asha, about how to support children in the days and weeks after conflict. It is downloadable from the website and we are working on the translation of our materials into Polish and Ukrainian.

4.7 Website and social media

The website had 2.8K unique visitors this year - a 12% increase on last year. Our largest source of traffic remains direct visits. We have seen a 75% increase in traffic from Google but a 90% decrease in traffic from Facebook. “Trauma international” and “international children’s charities” were the search terms giving us the largest number of search impressions though the clickthrough rates for these were low relative to other search terms. Our average position in google search results was low for these terms compared to more focused terms like “catt training”, “childhood trauma charities”, “stella charman”, “carlotta raby” and “meet tortu”, which all had significantly higher clickthrough rates, placing us on the first page of google results.



Geographically, the proportion of our traffic coming from the UK decreased and the amount of US traffic doubled. The rest of our traffic is distributed globally, with increases in the Gambia, Uganda and Palestine, though fairly small numbers from each.

With the support of Simon Stewart, our new trustee who has been tasked with reviewing our digital and online profile, we are currently looking at opportunities for driving more traffic to the website and assessing the effectiveness of our social media. Through Facebook we reach 800 people and have 300 followers on Twitter. Pippa Barlow is now managing the closed Facebook group, and invitations have recently been sent to all who attended the Kampala conference or who had recently been training to use CATT. This group currently has 73 members. Yara Fardous has set up the Arabic group which both CATT and A&R trainees can join, and she is in the process of setting up an Instagram account.

4.8 Quality Assurance & Research

COVID-19 and associated lockdowns have caused so many hardships across the world this year, but the development of technology for remote training has been a definite benefit for ACT International. Over the year our clinical lead Victoria Burch has attended online conferences and webinars which would have been impossible to travel to in person, allowing some very current research and the experience of world experts in psychological trauma to be incorporated swiftly into our training programmes.

CATT course update

Re-writing and updating our CATT course was a major focus of the first few months of the year. The aims were to update the content in line with current research and best practice, simplify the language to make it easier to translate and use internationally, and to build in features which would enable the course to be taught online if necessary. The updated material was critiqued and approved by our lead trainers in the UK, Uganda and the Middle East, all of whom now have the updated slide pack. After discussion we have agreed that while theoretical aspects of CATT can be taught safely online, the practical part of the course should be delivered through face to face training wherever possible, to assure quality and safety for both trainees and the children whom they treat.

Uganda

Whilst awaiting our postponed clinical conference (section 4.1.1), improved IT access enabled several online supervision discussions with trainer/counsellors in remote areas of Uganda with questions about clinical practice. We plan to increase informal online meetings which are valued by all participants. The first pre- and post-treatment data from the CRESS CATT team who work with traumatised children in the settlement areas and camps for South Sudanese refugees, demonstrated that CATT is an appropriate tool for use by people who may themselves have had limited access to formal education, and showed how effective it is in freeing children from symptoms of trauma in this difficult setting. We look forward to reviewing more pre- and post- treatment data and case stories next year.

Gaza

In May 2021, The Children's Trauma Clinic in Gaza was tragically destroyed during 11 days of bombardment. Mercifully no one was hurt, but all written records were lost. That the clinic was able to open again only two weeks later (in temporary accommodation) was due to the swift action of IMET2000 and Firefly International, the dedication of the two clinicians, and also to excellent online record keeping. This is so important both for keeping track of patients, and for audit. The clinicians contacted all families whose children had been treated for trauma previously at the clinic. Remarkably only two of these children had signs of trauma despite high levels of trauma experienced by people in Gaza generally after the bombardment. This demonstrated, better than any research study, the impact of CATT on building children's resilience to cope with further adversity, and confirmed our view of its appropriateness for traumatised children in areas of ongoing and intermittent conflict.

Anxiety and Resilience Programme – Pilot Study

This new manualised group course was written after discussion about the needs of Syrian refugee children and families with UOSSM, a partner organisation based in Turkey. It was designed for counsellors, teachers or others who support stressed and anxious children in areas affected by violence, conflict, or disaster. After online training by our senior Arabic trainer for the Middle East, Dr Ghalia Al Asha, UOSSM ran a pilot study for the programme with 12 groups of displaced children and teenagers. Many of the children have lost a parent as well as their home, and all face ongoing hardship and adversity due to the war. Feedback from the trainers indicated that the programme was very well received by children and their parents. The children's scores on a short anxiety assessment carried out before and after the course were analysed by ACT International assistant psychologist Lily Holland, and were shown to be significantly lower after the course. We are very grateful to UOSSM for field-testing the programme, and providing such useful feedback, which led to some adjustments to the material before its use in other countries.

Feedback from trainees in Yemen and in Jordan led to further minor adjustments for online training.

Supervision

Supervision for new trainees in any mental health programme is essential for maintaining quality and safe, effective practice. Dr Ghalia Al Asha has provided online supervision to the Gaza CATT clinicians, and also to Anxiety and Resilience trainees in Yemen and the Middle East for the first six months after their training course while they become familiar with using the materials. We are hoping to find another experienced Arabic-speaking mental health professional to join us to help with training in this area. Elias Byaruhanga and Umar Candia provide regular supervision to counsellors in the refugee settlements in Uganda. All newly-trained counsellors are invited to join our private Facebook groups in English and Arabic where they can obtain useful new material and information, and share any issues of concern in a confidential online space.

Future Plans

Building networks of trainers and counsellors who can work together in their own language helps to ensure our courses are appropriate for different conditions and settings. Through our cascade model we have grown a robust network of people who train, supervise and provide consultation in Uganda. The Ugandan trainers also lead or participate in training in other countries in the region, where their knowledge of local situations helps to make our training culturally acceptable as well as clinically effective. We have a small but strong team within the Middle East operating in Arabic. We aim to build and further develop these networks, and our teams of trainers working in Spanish and Armenian.

4.9 Safeguarding

ACTI safeguarding activity covered four key areas of work this year:

- In May 2021 the Gaza Child Trauma Clinic team and Safeguarding lead trustee Brenda Graham were finalising the clinic safeguarding policy when the clinic was destroyed and had to relocate after the Israeli bombardment. However, the work they had done on creating a safe environment for children, and safe recruitment of staff and volunteers, meant they could set up swiftly in a new building and take on more staff.
- In April and November 2021 Elias Byaruhanga, Uganda Operations manager, visited Butabika Children's Ward and noted the ongoing under-staffing and continuing difficulty with resettlement of children back to their families and community due to under-resourcing of social work. His concerns about poor staffing levels and few resources for children were reported by the Safeguarding Officer Brenda Graham to East London/Butabika Link and have been raised with the Hospital Director. Safeguarding on the ward will now be a standing agenda item for the Link at its regular meetings.
- CATT training trips to the Gambia and Colombia finally took place in February 2022. As part of planning our first trips to these countries we exchanged safeguarding policies with WAYAS (Gambia) and Children Change Colombia and learned more about the risks faced by children they work with. In Colombia, street children live chaotic, dangerous lives, at risk of physical harm, neglect and exploitation. In the Gambia children experience and witness domestic abuse and sexual violence within their home and community. A whole day of training for the Gambian participants in February 2022 was dedicated to safeguarding. Discussions about safeguarding are part of CATT training and always reveal the professional and political challenges our CATT counsellors face every day.
- In March 2022 our ACTI Safeguarding Children Policy was updated, agreed by trustees and is now available for all to view via the website <https://actinternational.org.uk/policies>

Apart from ongoing concerns about the Butabika Children's ward, no other incidents have been reported to the Safeguarding Officer this year. We continue as an active member of Keeping Children Safe.

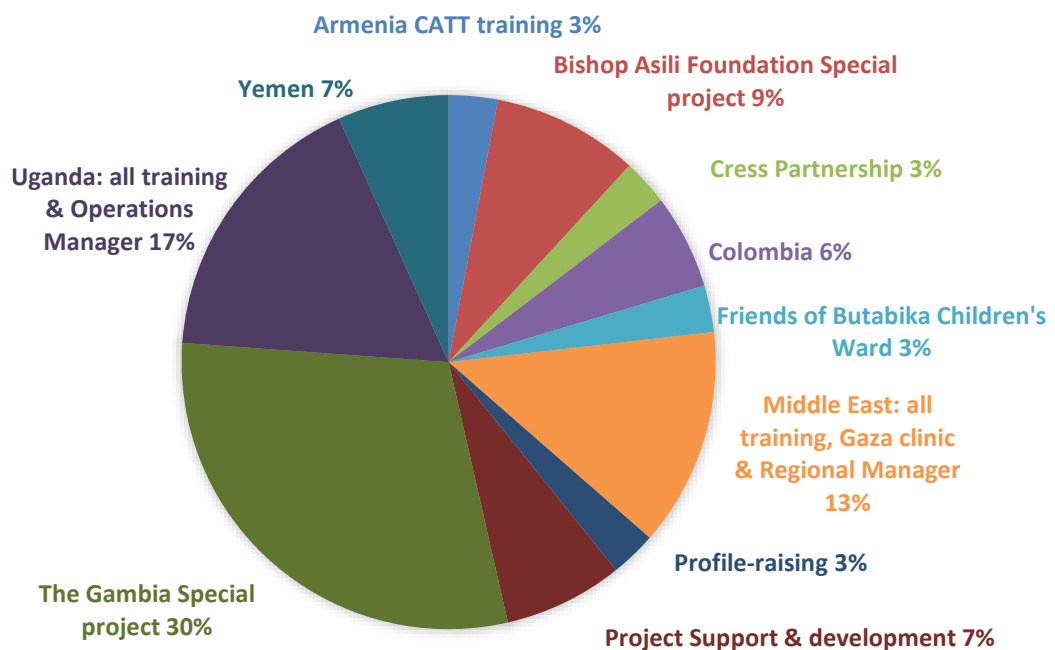
5. Financial review

The overall economic climate during the year remained challenging with the continued fallout of COVID-19 and the commencement of Russian aggression on the sovereign state of Ukraine in February 2022. The effects of war, global inflation, future waves of COVID-19, China's economic slowdown, and supply-chain disruptions are the top risks right now, according to a recent Dun & Bradstreet analysis of global business risks. We need to add to this the impact of climate change and the rise of geopolitical unrest leading to divisions and causing further misery and suffering to those disadvantaged.

ACT International, despite these challenges, has been supported by its core funders and harnessed the efforts of individual fund-raising initiatives to generate close to £ 35,000 and apply these funds across countries. At the end of 2021, the Board of trustees set an ambitious and stretched programme for 2021/22. The operational team[s] have shown tremendous resilience by mobilising and delivering strategic programmes on site. They continue to explore and reach out to provide a better future and hope for the children. Our liquidity year on year remained on level pegging. During the period, due to fund-raising efforts and the generosity of our donors, the trustees secured nearly £ 35,000 during the year ended 31st March 2022.

Looking forward, the trustees remain positive despite the back-to-back challenging times. With elevated levels of inflation and the cost-of-living implications, this could be a 3–5-year cycle and will impact the sector. Invariably the greatest impact will be borne by those who are vulnerable across the globe. Our focus and priority will remain on optimising the aim and objectives of ACT International.

HOW ACTI'S MONEY WAS SPENT 2021-22



6. Annual accounts

Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31st March 2022

	£ 2022	£ 2021
Incoming Resources		
Restricted Funds	11,251	5,446
General Funds	23,340	15,359
Total Donations	34,590	20,805
Other income	3	19
Total Incoming Resources	34,593	20,824
Resources Expended		
Programme Activities:		
Restricted Funds	14,055	6,507
General Funds	18,975	5,100
Project Support & Development	2,148	1,970
Fund raising Support & Marketing	423	
Total Cost of Charitable Activities	35,601	13,577
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(1,008)	7,247

Balance Sheet as of 31st March 2022

	£ 2022	£ 2021
Fixed Assets		-
Prepayments	2,624	3,036
Cash at Bank and in hand	25,757	26,462
Current Assets	28,381	29,498
Accruals	301	
Current Liabilities	301	
Net Assets	28,080	29,498
Restricted Reserves	4,235	7,039
Unrestricted Reserves	23,845	22,459
Total Funds	28,080	29,498

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Action for Child Trauma International

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Action for Child Trauma International for the year ended 31st March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5Xb) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- 2) The accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3) The accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Martin James Lewis Carmack

Qualification: ACMA

Address: 28 Raleigh Road, Enfield, EN2 6UB

Date: 24th August 2022

LUNA CHILDREN'S CHARITY

England & Wales - Charity number 1172010

Accounts



Action for Child Trauma International

**(formerly known as Luna
Children's Charity)**



Annual Report & Accounts

**for the year ended
March 2021**

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
What we do and why	3
1. Reference and administration details	5
2. Governance and management	7
3. Objectives and activities	8
4. Achievements and performance	9
4.1 CATT training and ongoing support: Uganda	
4.1.1 CATT Practitioners Conference in Kampala	9
4.1.2 Oruchinga Refugee Settlement	9
4.1.3 CRESS CATT Team	10
4.2 CATT training and ongoing support: Middle East	
4.2.1 Anxiety & Resilience programme training	10
4.2.2 The Yemen	12
4.3 CATT training & follow-up: Armenia	12
4.4 CATT training: The Gambia	13
4.5 TRT & CATT training: Colombia	13
4.6 Special Project: Child Trauma Clinic for Gaza	13
4.7 Special Project: Friends of Butabika Children’s Ward, Kampala, Uganda	14
4.8 Special Project: Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation, Lira	15
4.9 Tortu the very worried tortoise	16
4.10 Fundraising	17
4.11 Website & social media	18
4.12 Quality assurance and research	19
4.13 Safeguarding	21
5. Financial review	23
6. Statements of Financial Activities for the year ended March 2021	24

What we do and why



We have trained people in 17 countries

This has been a truly terrible year for the world's children. The pandemic has disrupted the education of children everywhere, many of whom have lost parents, family and support networks as a result of over 4 million deaths to date.¹ Many others have become refugees. 48% of the 82 million displaced people world-wide are under the age of 18.² That makes nearly 35 million children suffering from the anxiety of dislocation, as well as bereavement, now without a safe or secure community in which to grow up. Consider in addition the impact of ongoing or new conflicts: the Syrian war is now 10 years old, and that in the Yemen nearly 8 years old. Many children have never known peace. In Gaza and in Armenia, children have very recently been in the midst of renewed conflict and have directly experienced bombardment and death. The work done by ACT International has never been more needed, and we are proud to say we are working in many of these countries to promote and develop the skills of local people to cope with the impact of trauma.

Of course, over the past year, we have been unable to travel and our planned in-person trips out of the UK were put on hold. However, this gave us the space to develop online materials and different kinds of training to meet specific needs. This report will tell you more about our anxiety and resilience (A&R) training, which is more appropriate than the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT) for areas where there is ongoing instability or conflict, and Tortu the 'very worried tortoise' who is helping anxious children settle back to schools closed by the threat of coronavirus. We have taught Children and War's 'Teaching for Recovery Technique' entirely in Spanish online to Colombian childcare professionals, and invested more in local initiatives, run by individuals we trust, who deliver high quality training

¹ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

² Norwegian Refugee Council

and support to children in their home communities, including refugee camps. We are now delivering online trauma and anxiety management training to people in three out of the top five countries hosting refugee children (Uganda, Colombia and Turkey). This means that your money can go further and help more children without being spent on costly flights and hotel accommodation. So we have also become a 'greener' organisation in the process, and we anticipate that climate change is set to be a major cause of displacement and stress in the future. But we have really missed seeing and consoling our many friends around the world and hope that we will see you again before too long!

Don't forget: we can't change what has happened to all these children, but we can – and do – change what happens next. By healing young minds, we give them another chance at a normal life.

1. Reference and administration details

Charity Name and Details

Luna Children's Charity, working name: Action for Child Trauma International.

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in England & Wales, **Number 1272010**

Registered address: 184 Medstead Road, Beech, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4AJ

website: www.actinternational.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

Charity Trustees

Victoria Burch (Clinical Lead Trustee)

Stella Charman (Chair)

Jenny Cuffe (from 9.6.20)

Dr Yara Fardous

Anne Feeney

Saif Ghauri (from 9.12.20)

Brenda Graham (Safeguarding Lead)

Martyn Legg (Treasurer)

Philip Sarell

Officers

Dr Ghalia Al Asha – Middle East Operations Manager & senior trainer

Shellee Burroughs - Clinical Operations Manager & senior trainer

Elias Byaruhanga - Uganda Operations Manager & senior trainer

Tamara Curtis – Gaza Partnership Project manager

Specialist volunteers this year

'Among Equals' communications/PR & design team

Armenian interpreter and translator – Anush Gabrielyan

Fundraisers:

Penny Jeffcoat

Anna Jeffcoat

Rosemarie Ghazaros

Rosemary Lambert (Marine House at Beer)

Psychology assistant – Lily Holland

Website & IT support – Hector Riley

Interns

Zara Bracegirdle – University of Sussex, working on Colombia training

Ruby Turok-Squire – University of Warwick, as general operations assistant

Eve Hatcher – University of Sussex, working on Armenia research & Facebook

UK-based trainers active this year

Pippa Gray

Lola Perez-Gavino

Spanish trainers active this year

Almudena Garcia Perea

Pilu Rivas Lobo

Uganda-based trainers active this year

Sister Florence Achulo

Syson Katushabe

Alice Janet Namaganda

Candia Umar

Middle-East based trainers active this year

Dr Ghalia Al Asha

Mohammed El Sharef

2. Governance and management

The pandemic year 2020-21 has been a challenging year for all charities, many of which have seen revenues fall, projects curtailed and staff made redundant. For once our small size has helped us to weather the adversities, as in the absence of significant overheads and only voluntary staffing, our expenditure is easily reduced in line with income. Section 5 provides a more detailed overview of our sound financial position.

We have used this year, in which we have been unable to travel, to develop new training materials and to improve our online presence and skills. In addition, we have strengthened our policies and procedures and built new relationships with umbrella organisations such as Keeping Children Safe and the Consortium for Street Children. We have both benefitted from their resources and expertise, and contributed ours to them. Partnership working with like-minded agencies that share our objectives is an important plank of our strategy for sustainability and growth. This report illustrates how over the course of the year we have worked with many other charities to ensure skilled psychosocial support reaches more children.

This year we recruited two new Trustees. Jenny Cuffe is a BBC-trained freelance journalist who has travelled extensively to countries or regions experiencing conflict or political turmoil and environmental disaster. Since 2000, she has made several programmes about asylum seekers in the UK, as well as a series of programmes about migration from sub-Saharan Africa. She is also a visitor for the Southampton & Winchester Visitors' Group and has befriended and supported a number of asylum seekers. Saif Ghauri is a business graduate and qualified accountant with 40 years' experience, including 20 years in the shipping sector. Since 2006, he has worked as a management consultant in the UK and internationally, spending time in the Gambia and Uganda on behalf of the Medical Research Council. In April 2021 he replaced Martyn Legg as Treasurer. Martyn assisted in Saif's recruitment and handed over his responsibilities in the full knowledge that he would not be able to continue beyond March 2021. Very sadly, Martyn passed away in June. He had been our Treasurer since 2015 and was responsible for setting us up as a CIO in 2017. Martyn was a dependable and much respected Treasurer and Trustee, and we would not be in such a sound position today without him. We pay tribute to him here.

Sussex University has once again been a source of two capable volunteer interns providing operational and project support: Eve Hatcher and Zara Bracegirdle. Eve combined follow-up work on our training in Armenia with the research dissertation for her Masters in Human Rights and also took over the Facebook page from Lucy Rolington. It is a pity she was unable to travel to Armenia as originally planned. Zara, who has been studying Spanish in addition to International Development and Psychology, has been supporting training by the Spanish team in partnership with Children Change Colombia. In addition, Ruby Turok-Squire, a Warwick University International Development Law and Human Rights Masters student, has been helping with general operational tasks and, particularly, analysing feedback from the growing number of online training courses. Without the additional management capacity and youthful energy and skills provided on a voluntary basis by these interns, we would have been unable to achieve so much in 2020/21, and we are so grateful to them all.

3. Objectives and activities

ACT International exists to advance the rights, education and health of children and young people affected by conflict and trauma. Formally, its objectives are:

- i) The advancement of education and preservation of good health of children and young people affected by conflict and/or trauma
- ii) To advance the education of the public in children and young people's rights in part, but not exclusively, under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

In the past ACT International's charitable objectives have been primarily achieved through the delivery of training in the Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (CATT). However, over the past two years we have been broadening our activities so that we now fulfil our purpose through a wider range of training and support to people working with children affected by conflict and/or trauma. These activities are:

Training of people working with children in their communities, both in person and online:

- Children's Accelerated Trauma Technique (**CATT**) created by Dr Carlotta Raby
- Anxiety and Resilience Programme (**A&R**) compiled by Victoria Burch
- Teaching for Recovery Technique (**TRT**) developed by Children & War Foundation
- **PTSD Awareness:** bespoke training to meet needs of local culture or experience
- **Safeguarding,** based on Keeping Children Safe guidance for relief and development charities, and integrated into all our training as appropriate to the local culture or context

Special projects offering wider support in areas of particular need or for specific types of children (e.g. trafficked girls cared for by the Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation)

Supporting individuals who work unaided or in isolation, in areas of need (e.g. Alhagie Camara for the Gambia)

Developing materials for use with children (eg Tortu the Very Worried Tortoise by Victoria Burch), or to support good practice



The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty, under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and regulations on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the Charity in the year to March 31st 2021.

4. Achievements and performance

4.1 CATT training and ongoing support for practitioners: Uganda

4.1.1 CATT Practitioners Conference in Kampala

We were well down the road with the planning for a 2-day conference in May 2020 at Butabika Hospital, for 50 of our Ugandan CATT practitioners, when the pandemic struck and we were unable to travel. Discussions were held about the possibility of transferring this to an online event, but we concluded that this was unlikely to be successful due to unreliable internet connectivity in Uganda. Furthermore, the Ugandan team was keen to have colleagues from the UK present in person. Since then, Uganda has experienced a challenging third wave of infections and a second lockdown, and has been placed on the UK's 'red list' for travel, so we sadly have no dates for this postponed event as yet.

4.1.2 Oruchinga Refugee Settlement

Between the two lockdowns, Elias Byaruhanga has been able to travel within Uganda. In August 2020, he and Syson Katushabe delivered CATT training to 15 health workers and counsellors working in this settlement in southern Uganda, which is home to more than 6,800 refugees from Burundi, DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) and Rwanda. 13 people completed the training successfully. Elias continues with regular supervision of CATT practitioners here.



View of training room at Oruchinga Refugee Settlement, August 2020

4.1.3 CRESS CATT team

860,000 South Sudanese refugees live in Uganda (UNHCR February 2021). In partnership with CRESS (Christian Relief and Education for South Sudan), we trained 19 CATT practitioners back in 2019, who now form the South Sudanese CATT team based in Northern Uganda. CRESS obtained funding for the ongoing work of the team, to which we also contributed this year. It has helped a total of 91 children and young people with CATT. Most of them are school drop-outs and orphans, many of whom have been raped, trafficked, tortured or are the victims of neglect and war. Many have unmet basic needs due to escalating poverty in their refugee settlements in the north of Uganda, increased by coronavirus and lockdowns. This year the team has run an emotional health and PTSD awareness programme for the South Sudanese community, and as a result enough South Sudanese refugees and Ugandans nationals have shown interest to be trained as CATT practitioners to run another course in 2021/22.



Photograph courtesy of CRESS

4.2 CATT training and ongoing support: Middle East

4.2.1 Anxiety & Resilience Programme Training

The new Anxiety and Resilience (A&R) Programme was designed for children in challenging post-conflict or post-disaster settings by our Clinical Trustee Victoria Burch, after discussion with our Middle East partner charity UOSSM. By early 2020 it had been translated into Arabic and was ready to be piloted when the surge in Covid cases forced most of our partner organisations across the world to halt face-to face work, or to concentrate on pandemic-related support. Training in new methodologies was no longer a priority. However, we realised that there was a great need for training in ways to help children and families cope with the anxieties caused by the pandemic and the economic and social hardships associated with it. So we quickly developed a short single session course in managing anxiety in the context of a pandemic, with ‘tools’ from the A&R programme. Over the winter, this was delivered online to CATT counsellors working in Northern Uganda, then in Arabic to 3 partner

organisations in the Middle East. An adapted version was delivered as part of the annual conference of the Consortium for Street Children (CSC), to which we are affiliated, to staff of NGOs in the CSC network across 4 continents. These short courses were well received and provided valuable learning experiences for the ACT International team as we took our first steps into online training.

Early in 2021 UOSSM invited ACT International to train mental health professionals in Syria in the full Arabic A&R programme. This had to be an online course, and led us to realise that by working online we can reach and support our partner organisations in areas to which it would be impossible to travel. The UOSSM training was delivered in early March by our Middle East Operations Manager and senior trainer, Dr Ghalia Al Asha. Initial feedback from the trainees was very enthusiastic, both for the quality of teaching and the course itself. UOSSM mental health staff have started to work with groups of children, and feedback suggests that the programme has been well received and is benefitting the children. We are now eagerly waiting for the full results of the pilot study on its effectiveness. Meanwhile 3 further NGOs working with Syrian and local children in the Middle East have requested A&R training for their staff, which we plan to deliver later in 2021.

Online training is not easy. Inconsistent internet connections pose frequent challenges, with poor sound quality, signals dropping out, and trainees needing to catch up on sections they have missed. Due to the situations in which they are working, trainees may sometimes be very stressed themselves, so we have learned to build extra time for self-care and for discussion into the courses. We also realise how essential it is to have at least 2 trainers for each online course, so that one trainer can deal with IT issues or provide extra support for a trainee, while the principal trainer delivers the course.

Dr Ghalia is an expert teacher and we thank her for all the work she has put into preparing the A&R training materials for online teaching, and for teaching so superbly in often trying circumstance: she consistently receives very high praise for her teaching, support and good-humoured unflappability in feedback after courses. In March 2021 we were pleased to welcome Mohammed El Sharif from our team in Gaza as an Arabic-speaking A&R trainer, and will shortly be recruiting additional trainers for this programme.



Online A&R training in Arabic with Dr Ghalia Al Asha

4.2.2 The Yemen

In December 2020 we were introduced to Kawkab Alwadeai, a Yemeni refugee in Canada, by our sister charity Firefly International. She is a researcher and mental health counsellor seeking mental health training for her network of mental health workers, psychologists and teachers in the Yemen. Our A&R programme in Arabic (see 4.2.1 above) was the 'perfect fit' for this, but working in a war-torn country with poor internet presented us with real logistical difficulties. Dr Ghalia and Mohammed El Sharef managed to deliver a pilot course in March 2020 to people in the province of Taiz, but learned that we would have to find a way of bringing trainees together somewhere with a reliable connection, if we were to roll out this training to other parts of the country. Thanks to the support and networking capability of the British Yemeni Society, we now believe we have overcome these difficulties and are planning to extend the training to four other provinces in 2021/22, with additional funding from IMET 2000.

4.3 CATT training & follow-up: Armenia

Following our CATT training trip in November 2019, intern Eve Hatcher contacted the new practitioners with the help of interpreter Anush Gabrielyan, to find out how they were using CATT and who we might train as trainers of the future. Sadly, plans for her to visit Armenia were cancelled due to the pandemic, as was the follow-up trip with the training of trainers course scheduled for the end of 2020. Of the 26 professionals who had completed the CATT training, 16 agreed to take part in Eve's research, which involved a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. All those who took part agreed that it had helped them in their day-to-day work with children and were actively using the technique. The full report plus a summary of it is available on our website.

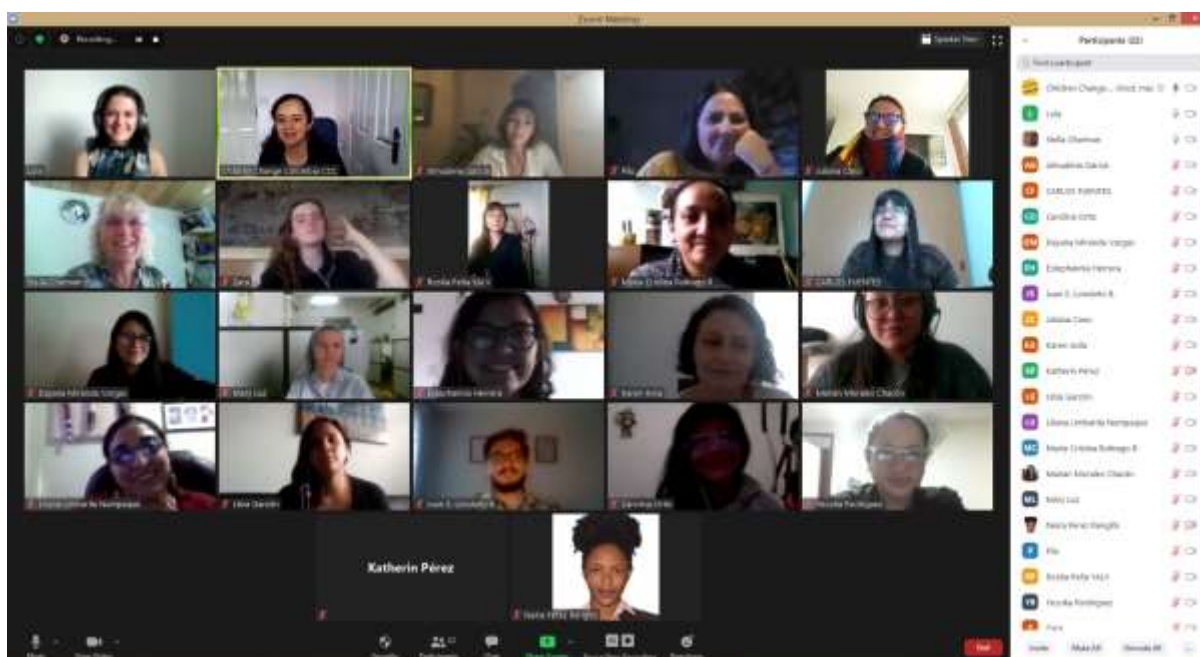
In September 2020 Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, and the focus of our partner charity, the Yerevan Children's Center, turned firmly to the Armenian children subjected to bombardment, and now trapped in the enclave which was captured by the Azeris. So we have put CATT training on hold and are planning instead to deliver A&R training as soon as we can, as it is more suited to helping children deal with ongoing insecurity and fear.

4.4 CATT training: the Gambia

Throughout the year, we have continued to work in partnership with WAYAS, a Gambian-registered NGO, with the aim of offering a CATT training programme for 20 social workers and community nurses towards the end of 2021. Tom Anson, an intern from the University of Sussex, will lead on fund-raising for this project. In March, we introduced Alhagie Camara, Executive Director and founder of WAYAS, to therapist Pippa Gray who then ran four online training sessions for independent sexual violence advisors. We will build on the success of this programme to explore further opportunities for child-focussed mental health training in a country where services are chronically under-developed.

4.5 TRT and CATT training: Colombia

Over the course of the year we have been developing our relationship with Children Change Colombia (CCC), and fundraising for a TRT and CATT training trip to be delivered by our three Spanish-speaking trainers. In September, we held an online introductory session to help us assess need among the staff of the NGOs supported inside Colombia by CCC, and to design the training we should offer. However, with coronavirus infections surging in South America, it was decided not to wait until we could travel again, but to go ahead with online TRT courses as soon as possible to meet immediate need. A tremendous amount of work took place to improve and update the Spanish teaching materials provided by Children and War, and arrangements made to hold the training for up to 30 people in April and May. A full account and evaluation of this work, which hopefully will include in-person CATT training in Colombia in early 2022, will be provided in next year's Annual report.



Introductory session for Colombian child care workers, September 2020

4.6 Special Project: Child Trauma Clinic for Gaza

In July 2020 the child trauma service for Gaza, which was set up with the support of our partners IMET2000 and Firefly International, celebrated its first birthday. It offers PTSD awareness sessions for caregivers and CATT treatment to children with PTSD, and is run by a clinical team of two: Mohammed El Sharif and Haithem Shamiyah, supported by volunteer Project Manager Tamara Curtis and Clinical Supervisor Dr Ghalia El Asha (see below). By the end of the period covered by this report, to March 2021, and despite COVID-19 restrictions, it had treated 94 children at a cost of just over \$300 per child, with overwhelmingly positive outcomes.



The Gaza team held a virtual 1st birthday party!

A study was conducted on the first 69 children treated to December 2020. It showed that CATT was an effective treatment for symptoms of trauma in children and young people, including several who had lived with the effects of PTSD for 4 or more years, and despite continued exposure to potentially traumatising events. Parents and children also reported progress in life skills and psychosocial adjustment after CATT. A small group of children were seen for a follow-up review six to seven months after finishing CATT. No child in the group of 69 showed an adverse mental health event (e.g. marked mood swings or high levels of anxiety) during the treatment period, indicating that CATT is a safe treatment in this environment. You can read more about this study in section 4.11 of this Report, and it is also downloadable from the research and audit section of our website.

Unfortunately, a further finding of this study, that CATT may help children and young people to develop their psychological resilience to cope with further traumatic events, was dramatically put to the test in May when Gaza suffered 11 days of continuous bombardment. The clinic was housed in the Adam Center on 7th Floor of Al Jawhara Tower, which was destroyed on the second day. We received daily reports from Mohammed and Haitham who thankfully survived with their families, and all clinical data, saved in electronic form, was preserved. As this occurred outside the period of this Report, the full story of how the service has responded and been rebuilt will appear in the 2021-22 Report. But we pay tribute here to the courage and resilience of Haitham and Mohammed, and their determination to bring new hope to Gaza's children.

4.7 Special project: The Friends of Butabika Children's Ward

The Friends' Project continues, albeit without a Project Manager, so activity is limited to funding Dismas Lwagula to work on the children's ward for four days per week, and providing him with equipment. Unfortunately, during Uganda's first coronavirus lockdown, which lasted

for several months from April 2020, he was unable to work on the ward, as he was not designated a key worker. We were unable to send anyone to visit the ward until November 2020, when Elias Byaruhanga took funds and met with Reverend Dismas of St Luke's Chapel, which is formally our 'partner' for this work and supervises Dismas Lwagula. Elias was able to visit for a second time in April 2020, He reported that the ward is kept clean and the children (around 30 inpatients) are properly fed. However, there are ongoing staffing and safeguarding concerns, which we are attempting to address with Butabika hospital management via the Uganda/East London NHS Health Link. We will make this a priority in the coming year.



4.8 Special project: Bishop Asili Community Development Foundation

During this very challenging year in Uganda, the Foundation, led by Director Sister Florence Achulo, has faced locusts, floods and the coronavirus pandemic. However, it has valiantly continued its work of providing counselling (including CATT) and education for the poorest and most disadvantaged families and children in the area around Lira. Sister Florence has been focusing her work on children who have been abused or trafficked, and in the early part of 2021 she identified over 40 trafficked children (mainly sexually-trafficked girls aged 10-15) in her local community who desperately needed help, and for whom she required funds. ACT International did not send any funding to the Foundation during 2020-21, but in March the Trustees decided to respond to this appeal and sent £600 in April. In addition, Elias Byaruhanga was asked to visit Lira to offer consultation and advice on individual children, assess the overall need and, in particular, to advise us on training needed by Foundation staff, volunteers and the local community. A full report on his visit and its outcome will appear in next Year's Annual Report.



Elias and Sister Florence (behind drivers) set off to visit local villages around Lira by boda boda, April 2021

4.9 Tortu the Very Worried Tortoise

All over the world there have been high levels of concern about the impact of the pandemic, and the restrictions and changes linked to it, upon children's mental health. In April 2020 there was a call from various teaching bodies for materials for teachers to use to support children with Covid-related anxiety in the UK. Clinical Trustee Toria Burch thought that Tortu, a lively but anxious small tortoise who is the central character of the ACTI Anxiety and Resilience Programme, might be able to help children in the UK as well as in refugee camps.

An excellent team of volunteers came together to develop a story to about Tortu and his little friends, some at school, some at home on Mum's phone or a laptop, all with questions and worries about the pandemic, and also full of ideas about how to feel better when they are low or anxious. The story helps adults caring for young children to talk to them about what makes them feel sad, anxious or cross, especially things related to the pandemic and school. It teaches children a bit about emotions and introduces some simple ways for them to manage difficult feelings and feel better. There are notes for teachers and parents, and follow-up activities for children. The story was updated after Christmas to reflect changes in the Covid situation. In March this year, communications agency 'Among Equals' offered to help us update the story again, as children went back to school. We are very grateful to Rachel Su, artist and designer at Among Equals, for updating the pictures based on the original drawings by Lily Holland.

The stories seem to have struck a chord with many people and have been downloaded (for free) from the ACTI website and the TES Resources website all over the UK, and in countries as diverse as UAE, Italy, South Africa and Bulgaria. Tortu now has his own little website:

www.meettortu.org and there are plans to develop more Tortu materials for children with normal childhood anxieties. All funds generated will go to ACT International.

With many thanks to:

Lily Holland: Character development and artist

Charlotte Frere-Cook: Education consultant

Hector Riley: IT and design assistant

Rachel Su: Artist /designer

And all at **amongequals.com**



Tortu.mp4

4.10 Fundraising

We had expected 2020-21 to be a poor one in terms of fundraising, but by the year end the total (approaching £21k) was rather better than we had expected, thanks to the ongoing generosity of our supporters and volunteers. Penny Jeffcoat prepared a number of grant bids for us, which have not borne fruit as yet but we remain hopeful. Without funding from international aid sources, we were unaffected by the recent government cuts which have so badly impacted upon larger international charities.

Donations from corporate sponsors, charitable and grant-giving foundations:

- £5,000 from Joan Ainslie Trust
- £2,482 East London/Butabika NHS Health Link

- £2,000 from Marine House at Beer Art Gallery
- £1,000 from Chartwell Industries Ltd/Cripps Foundation

Churches, clubs and societies:

- £6,000 from United Church Winchester for Middle East training

Campaigns and events via Virgin Moneygiving:

- £725 raised by Zara Bracegirdle for Colombia
- £420 raised from an art exhibition by the Sopwith Family
- £260 from the Friends of Butabika Children’s Ward

Individual donors:

- £363 Funeral proceeds
- £2307 from miscellaneous donations made by individuals, including Neil Appleyard, Ian Tegner and Yvonne North, and others who prefer to remain anonymous

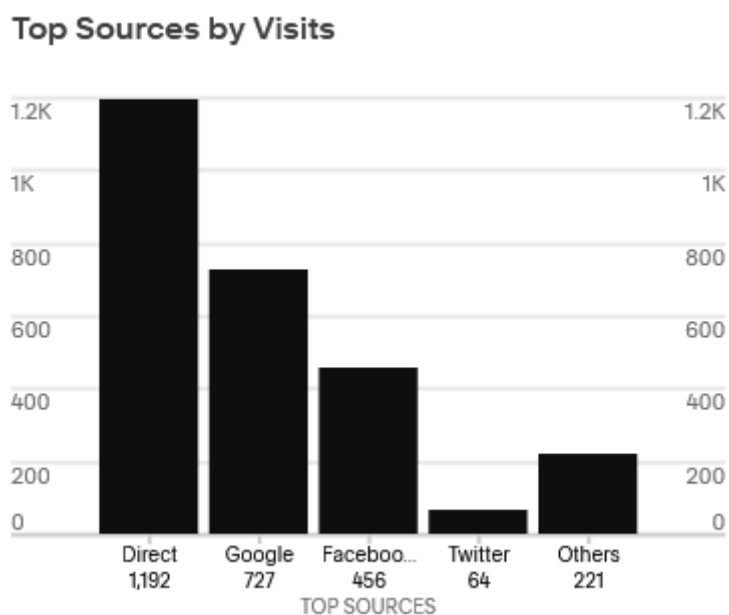
Funding sources (%) year ended March 2021		
Funding source	amount	%
Charitable Trusts/Foundations	10,684	51%
Corporate donors	0	0%
Schools, youth groups, colleges & universities	0	0%
Churches, clubs & societies	6,000	29%
Campaigns & events	1,451	7%
Individual donations	2,670	13%
Earning from activities/interest	19	0%
TOTAL	20,824	100%

4.11 Website and social media

The website <https://actinternational.org.uk/> is now functioning well as our ‘front door’ and had 2.5k unique visitors (i.e. not counting repeat visits) over this year. The largest source of these was direct visits, but Google also accounts for a large number of visits (i.e. people who found ACT International as a search result) and also visits occurred via our public Facebook page, with a few from Twitter – see the table on the next page.

The original Tortu post (‘Developing resources to help children with COVID related anxiety’) was the second most popular page on the website after the home page (i.e. where everyone is first sent when they go to the website).

75% of visits to the website have been from the UK. Other significant sources of traffic are the US, Canada, The Netherlands, and China. There are visitors, in smaller numbers, from other parts of Europe, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.



784 people follow our public Facebook page³ and we have increased the number of posts this year so that it provides lively and up-to-date publicity about our work. The private group, for CATT practitioners only, now has 68 members and provides information and resources related to trauma treatment for children and publicises opportunities for extended training and trainer training. 244 people or organisations now follow us on Twitter⁴ and our tweets also appear on the home page of the website, so visitors can see that we are active and committed to our work and read about our latest fundraising initiatives.

4.11 Quality Assurance & Research

ACT International has a multi-pronged approach to ensuring quality. Our training courses have been developed by knowledgeable and experienced clinicians and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect new knowledge and thinking in the field of international children's mental health. Our lead trainers are clinically experienced and well-trained as trainers. We gather and analyse feedback on each training course about the effectiveness of the training and the appropriateness of the materials. We try to offer clinical support to all new CATT trainees for the first few months after each course, and they are invited to join our closed Facebook group. We request clinical feedback from counsellors in the form of case studies, and periodically we gather more information about cases for more formal audits with data for statistical analysis. Despite the difficulties and restrictions due to Covid, we have been as busy as ever over the last year.

The pandemic and the economic and social hardships associated with lockdowns and curfews have, of course, had an enormous impact on the communities with which we work, and our thoughts have been with our colleagues, many of whom were already working in very challenging environments. As lockdowns and curfews began to effect Uganda and the Middle East, home to many of our partner organisations, our closed Facebook group (see previous

³ <https://www.facebook.com/ActionChildTraumaInternational/>

⁴ <https://twitter.com/LunaChildren>

section) was used to share some ways to support children emotionally during the pandemic. In December 2020, aware of the rise of Covid-related anxiety across the world, we sought to give our CATT counsellors, especially those who do not have extensive mental health training, additional tools for supporting children through short courses in anxiety management delivered via Zoom in English and Arabic.

Gaza 'CATT' study:

In Gaza, since the opening of the Children's Trauma Clinic in July 2019, despite periods of pandemic-related closure of the clinic and the need to support children and families by phone or video, by the end of December 2020, our two clinicians Mohammed El Sharif and Haitham Shamiyah had completed CATT treatment for 69 children. A short assessment for symptoms of psychological trauma ('CRIES-8') was given to each child as part of their individual assessments before and after CATT, with high scores indicating PTSD. The drop in scores from before to after treatment for this group was analysed by ACTI volunteer psychologist Lily Holland, and showed that CATT significantly reduced trauma symptom severity.

Some children had suffered disabling PTSD symptoms for as long as 4 years before coming to the clinic, and were now able to return to school, to sleep without nightmares, to play with friends again, and begin to enjoy life free of trauma symptoms. Children and young people in Gaza experience cumulative and ongoing stress from intermittent conflict, violence and associated socio-economic instability. Showing that CATT can successfully treat PTSD in these difficult conditions has implications for treatment of trauma in children in other areas with continuing, intermittent conflict.

The assessments of 10 children seen by clinic staff over the winter for follow-up, six-to seven-months after finishing CATT, showed that their treatment had long-lasting positive effects. It also high-lighted several children who needed additional psycho-social support. All children seen at the clinic will now be given a follow-up review. We are very grateful to the clinicians for collecting this data despite many challenges, and to Dr Ghalia Al Asha (Clinical supervisor) and Tamara Curtis (Project Manager) for their support for the team through this very difficult year.

Uganda:

Face-to-face work with children in Uganda has been suspended due to travel restrictions and lockdowns for several periods during the last year, as the authorities sought to contain the Covid pandemic. Elias Byaruhanga has provided a valuable point of support and contact for CATT counsellors, remotely and in person when this has been possible. We are grateful for his time and expertise in supporting the work of his colleagues, which helps to maintain high standards of work with the children.

The CRESS team of CATT counsellors, supported by Fiona Sheldon of CRESS UK, have continued to see child refugees from South Sudan, are supervised clinically by Umar Candia and collect case data whenever possible. We are look forward to receiving information about the cases they have seen later in 2021.

Anxiety and Resilience Programme study:

Our partners in Turkey, UOSSM, have agreed to pilot the new A&R Programme in centres for children affected by the war in Syria. Children's levels of anxiety will be assessed on a short mental health scale before and after they attend this group programme, and group leaders will feed back their views on the programme, and those of the children and their parents/carers. As well as indicating how effective the programme is, this will help us to see if any changes are needed before offering it more widely.

Online training:

As Covid-related travel restrictions continue, it has become clear that much of our training over the next year or so may need to be online. We have started to adapt CATT for online training. We thank Dr. Dom Plant of Trauma Psychology Global and CATT licence-holder Dr. Carlotta Raby of Trauma Psychology UK for sharing with us materials that they have developed for their online courses. This is a big task, but it provides an opportunity to review and update all our CATT materials in line with new research and developments in the field of international trauma work. We hope to be ready to train online by early Autumn 2021.

Future challenges:

Offering supervision and support/consultation for counsellors, especially new trainees, is important for maintaining standards of work but can be challenging when many trainees live in remote areas and may be quite isolated. We are continually adding relevant papers to the Research section of our website (<https://actinternational.org.uk/research>) and we aim to develop the closed Facebook group as a more effective tool for this. However, these methods do not help people in areas with limited or no IT. Finding ways to provide consultation for trainees who request support for their work with children will become more of a challenge as technology allows us to train in more challenging areas such as the Yemen and will be one focus of our work next year.

4.12 Safeguarding

Strategic and practical work on safeguarding has continued, although there have been no overseas visits requiring a risk assessment.

ACTI joined the Keeping Victims and Survivors Safe programme of KCS (Keeping Children Safe – the UK organisation assisting international charities with safeguarding policy and practice). A KCS workshop online for trustees in October was a valuable refresher and enabled KCS to get to know ACTI. Brenda Graham, trustee lead on safeguarding, is working with KCS to risk assess and upgrade our safeguarding policies for both children and vulnerable adults. Our policies must take account of ACTI moving to online delivery of training, to ensure the welfare of beneficiaries and volunteers. KCS membership gave us access to an online worldwide conference with inspiring workshops by small charities working to promote children's rights and implement safeguarding measures.

Trustees approved updates to the Trustee and Volunteers Recruitment policy that strengthen our application and selection process. We require self-disclosure by the candidate if they have been the subject of a safeguarding concern or investigation, and a statement from referees

on the trustworthiness of the candidate. We aim to demonstrate our commitment to safe recruitment and to deter or reject unsuitable people.

ACTI has developed a memorandum of understanding with Children Change Columbia by sharing safeguarding policies, and agreed to a joint safeguarding risk assessment once a trip to Columbia can be planned.

We continue to advocate for the welfare of children at Butabika Hospital in Uganda. In partnership with Rev Dismas (see section 4.7), we monitor safeguarding standards on the children's ward. ACTI operations manager Elias Byaruhanga visited the ward in November and reported a number of continuing concerns, including reduced staffing, although the physical care of children was satisfactory. ACTI has asked the East London/Butabika NHS Link for action to support ward staff with implementing the hospital's updated safeguarding policy, and to follow up its commitment to establish oversight of safeguarding practice.

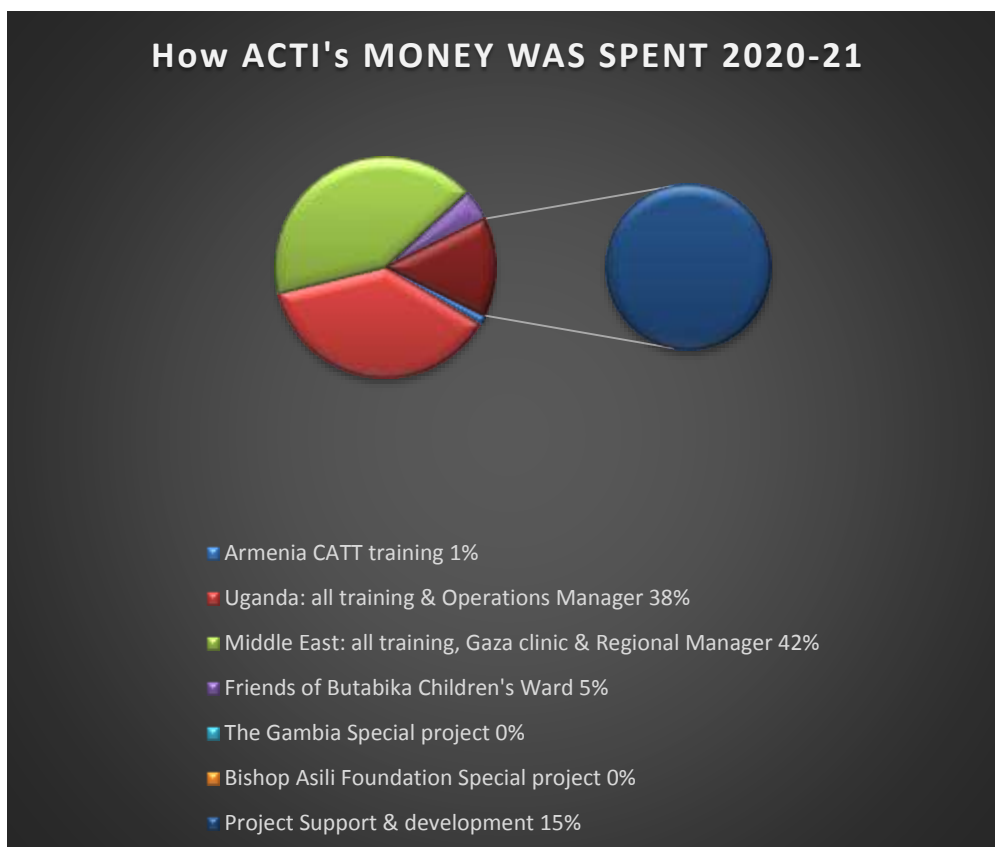
The Gaza Child Trauma clinic has used the KCS model to develop their safeguarding policy. Project managers have worked with the clinicians to produce a policy based on their professional practice and KCS standards, which includes a code of conduct and guidelines for safe recruitment. Work will be completed in spring 2021.

5. Financial review

Like many sectors, the disruption caused by COVID-19 and related uncertainty has had an impact on the planned activities of ACT International. We have been agile and responsive to the challenges and have substituted online training programmes for overseas trips wherever possible. Some initiatives are on hold and others are being tested for viability. Need and demand for the ACT International's training remain strong. Many charities have not fared well under the various support schemes and some are stressed. Equally there is a need for a cautious approach as countries and markets open up to the continuing risk on several fronts, including that of climate change.

Our income year on year has been significantly impacted, but this is not a surprise. Operations have been optimised to add best value. There are smart savings in operations due to changing the mode of delivery, and we also have an increase in liquidity due to programmes on hold. We have ended the year with a surplus of income over expenditure of over £7,000, and with net assets shy of £30,000. Our 2021/22 programme is ambitious and will be stretching. The team is looking at various options to fund the feasible programmes under review and consideration.

The pie chart below shows how our funds were spent during the year.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE!

6. Statements of Financial Activities - year ended 31st March 2021

Income and Expenditure Statement Year Ended 31st March 2021

	£	£
	2021	2020
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
Voluntary donations - Unrestricted funds	15,359	22,515
Restricted funds	5,446	13,208
Total Donations	20,805	35,723
Other incoming resources	19	59
Total Incoming Resources	20,824	35,782
<u>Resources Expended</u>		
Programme activities - Unrestricted funds	5,100	3,915
Restricted funds	6,507	11,454
Project support & development	1,969	2,940
Fundraising support and marketing		7,963
Total costs of charitable activity	13,577	26,272
Net Surplus/(Deficit) Resources For The Year	7,247	9,510

Balance Sheet
As at 31st March 2021

	£	£
	2021	2020
Fixed Assets		-
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Prepayments	3,035	3,035
Cash at bank and in hand	26,462	19,215
<u>Current Liabilities</u>	-	-
Net Current Assets	29,497	22,250
Net Assets	29,497	22,250
<u>Funds</u>		
Restricted Funds	7,039	9,911
Unrestricted Funds	22,459	12,339
Total Funds	29,497	22,250