

Action for Child Trauma International



Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended March 2023

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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 netss shown 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		
<u>Funding source</u>	<u>amount</u>	<u>%</u>
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.

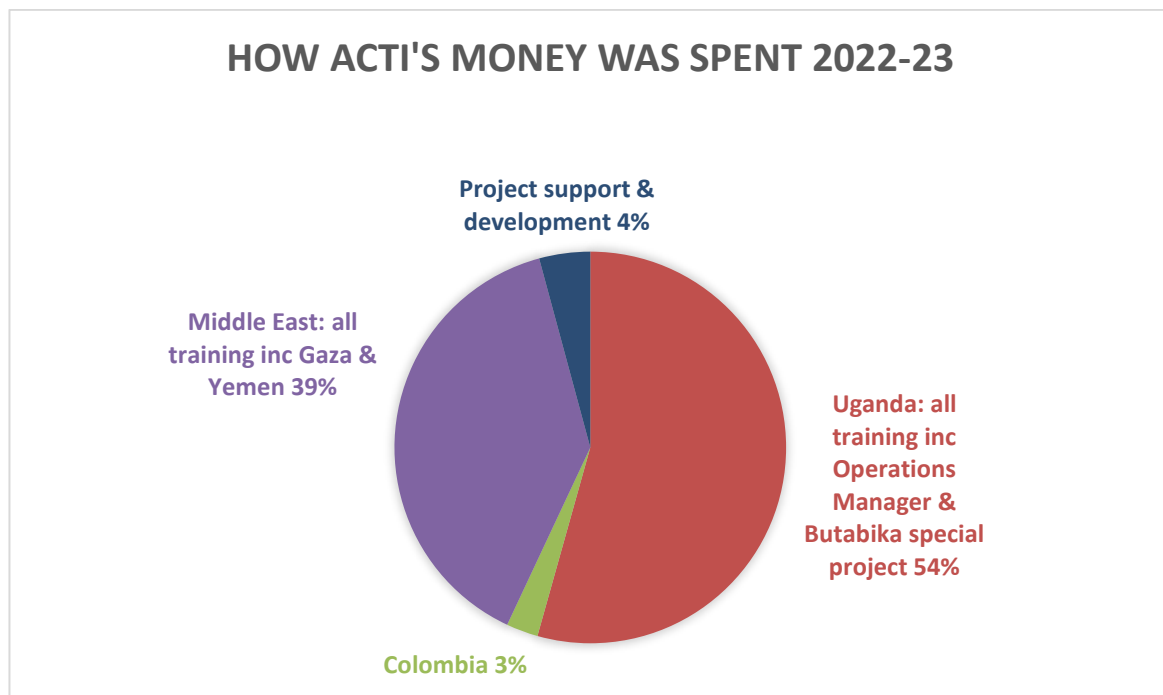
5. Financial review

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
Fundraisingsupport & 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