

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 Nakirya 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

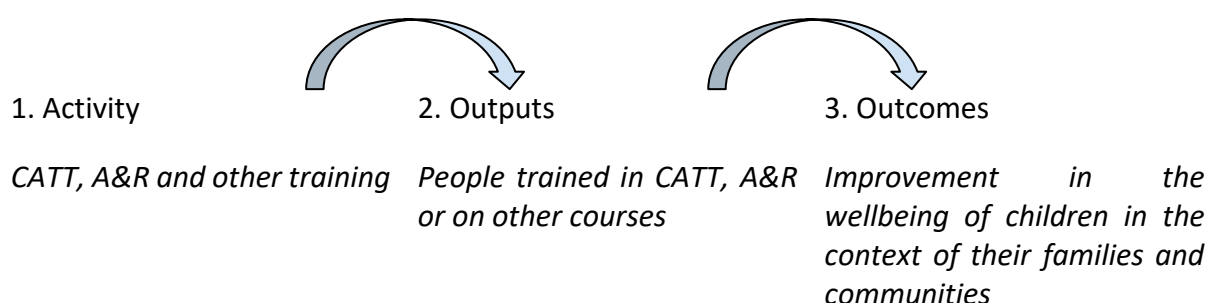
We had 3.7k visitors to our site in the last year, significantly down on previous years. Most of the reduction is in direct traffic to the site, which continues to be our largest source of traffic. This may be explained by reduced promotion of the site to our audiences. In particular, we have introduced 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.

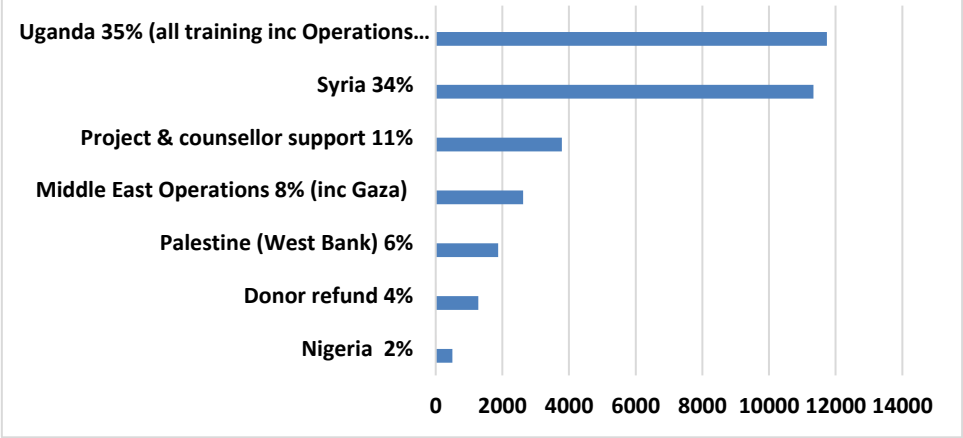
In 2023/24, the trustees setup a project to explore opportunities in complementary operations via partnership or suitable and equitable merger propositions. This strategy is making inroads in 2024/25. These are positive steps particularly when the operational environments domestically and internationally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

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

	£ <u>2024</u>	£ <u>2025</u>
Incoming Resources		
Restricted Funds	17,721	17560
General Funds	18,457	17643
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 2025

	£ <u>2,024</u>	£ <u>2,025</u>
Fixed Assets		
Prepayments	863	
Cash at Bank and in hand	16,289	19768
Current Assets	17,152	19,768
Current Liabilities		(446)
Net Assets	17,152	19,322
Restricted Reserves	3,887	4949
Unrestricted Reserves	13,265	14373
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