



Models and practical examples of networking and collaboration for increased synergy, resource sharing and impact in the relief and development sector

Prepared by Johanna Korhonen, January 2020



fidainternational



@fidainfo



@fidainternational



fidaTV



Background

- Aim of paper is to provide **some basic information and practical examples** for Pentecostal actors in the route for **increased collaboration, resource sharing** and **impact** in development and relief sectors. Most of all the focus is to provide practical information on **possibilities, costs** and **benefits** that are associated to different kinds of collaborations.





Contents of presentation...

- *The first part* maps out the field by presenting **basic models** of collaboration, costs and benefits of collaborations and issues to consider in successful collaboration building.
- *The second part* brings **practical examples** for each chosen collaboration type. In addition to open written materials, people working for faith-based organisations and faith-based collaborations have been interviewed to bring some more insights and opinions.
- *The third part* concludes the paper by summing up the main findings and gives some **recommendations** for future action.





Terminology

- Variety of terms to describe themselves: collaborations, coalitions, networks, alliances, corporations and so on. Two main looser collaboration types– ***networks*** and ***alliances*** - have been chosen as the main focus and ***corporation model*** will be presented as a comparison.



Models

Networks are the loosest form of collaboration. The primary function is knowledge and information sharing but it doesn't have to be limited to that as networks are created for variety of purposes and embody of variety of structures. The core of a network is the relationships among its members.

There are also communities of practice, sectoral networks, social change or advocacy networks and service delivery networks to name a few examples.





Models

- **Alliances** take collaboration one step further. Members synchronise their efforts and resources. Alliances have capability to provide even bigger benefits for members in certain field of co-operation.
- **Corporations** require changes in organisational control and/or in structures. They share many of the characteristics of looser collaboration types but can provide even bigger benefits in sharing efforts and resources as well as increased profile and leverage. Possible downsides are that is that decision-making may be more centralized and more time-consuming. Thus, may be difficult to react quickly when sudden opportunity/needs arises.



-
- The main difference between **network** and **alliance** is that while both rely greatly on member's active participation alliances have a higher level of joint coordination of actions.
 - Alliances are usually more focused in their scope of intent, they provide more opportunities of operational collaboration for their members and have more homogenous membership.
 - **Corporations** on the other hand involve higher degree of control, branding and organizational capacity.



Benefits of collaboration

- **Increased Access** to information, expertise, financial resources, etc.
- **Increased Efficiency** – By leveraging their numbers and allowing for some specialization based on comparative advantage, members can reduce costs, as well as duplication of efforts. At the same time, the sharing of lessons-learned and best practices can keep CSOs from reinventing the wheel all over again.
- **A Multiplier Effect** –Members can achieve greater accomplishments through utilization of the multiplier effect.
- **Solidarity and Support** is an important benefit.
- **Increased Visibility** of issues, good work and best practices, and contributions of under-represented groups (such as youth and people with disabilities).
- **Increased Credibility** – Since many types of collaborations have some form of regulated membership, participation in a collaboration can assure other CSOs and networks considering partners that the CSO will be a capable contributor to a partnership. Membership can also open doors to both the policy and donor communities.





Costs and risks associated with collaboration

- Levels of risks and costs often depend and levels of engagement in collaboration.
- If poorly constructed and managed, collaboration can:
 - 1) create more work than provides added value
 - 2) take some attention and energy away from the grassroots or local levels
 - 3) create inequalities within the structures (e.g. the most enthusiastic can dominate)
 - 4) representation challenges (e.g. if a member represents the network in an improper way)
- CSOs considering network membership must be honest and realistic with themselves about the degree of interdependence that they are willing to accept.



Critical early stages

- **Pace:** Even if there is need to create certain urgency for the cause, it is wise not to rush to define things that can reduce options later. E.g. lack of flexibility in the coalition's identity or public position can limit room for manoeuvre or space for dialogue and might be very difficult to change later.
- **Purpose:** A group of organisations come together to work as a collaboration (network, alliance) if they have some agreement on a problem that needs to be addressed - and on what needs to be done about it. Thus, a coalition needs to have formulation of its purpose that can be used to focus collective work and explain to external partners. The formulation created in the early stages of the collaboration will serve as an important frame for future steps.
- **Ownership:** Consultation and communication are important to ensure that good decisions are made but also to create sense of ownership in the collaboration.



Issues to resolve at early stage

- **Common call or constitutional documents:** A collaboration is usually created around *a common call or statement*, a shared language that serves both to direct the coalition and define its boundaries. More formal collaborations also require members to accept and respect *constitutional documents* – articles that lay out the rights and responsibilities of members and the formalised administrative processes of the coalition.
- **Member responsibilities:** Common membership responsibilities include expectation for members to be active in the collaboration and to use collaboration's brand with consideration.
- **Membership fees:** Some collaborations fund their work by membership fees. Even though some organisations might be pushed away because of membership fees, they also generate income for the collaboration and ensure the membership to have deeper buy-in in the collaboration.





Governance and structure

- Too little structure – Danger of collaboration not meeting needs of participants (*ineffective*).
- Too much structure – Danger of draining away energy from activities (*inefficient*).
- As governance and structures are issues that very often raise tensions among the members, relationships built around **trust** are vitally important – that is the case especially with looser types of collaborations with less formal structures. Trust among looser collaborations will also enable more dynamic and agile responses to arising opportunities.





Governance and structure

- **Administrative body**– acts as the 'engine room' of collective strategy, planning and direction.
- **Working groups**, wider '**advisory groups**' and co-chairs can all be used to address the needs and to provide more flexible and dynamic structures through which work can get done.
- **Staff** - If resources allow, a coordinator, staff team or secretariat working on behalf of the collaboration rather than serving the interests of one of its members can be a major asset.
 - Staff can forward the coalition agenda, facilitate the work of different working/advisory groups and the membership, mediate between different organisations and provide an impartial speaker for the coalition.
 - Care should be taken that staff won't do all the work, with collaboration members taking a back-seat role.





Practical examples



1. Definition
2. Parties involved
3. Founded
4. Purpose
5. Form of agreement
6. Structure and governance
7. Benefits for organizations
8. Responsibilities and obligations
9. Funding
10. New initiatives and trends



EU-CORD Network



- EU-CORD Network consist of Christian organisations collaborating for a transformed, just and equal world
- 24 NGOs from 12 European countries engaged in humanitarian, development, peace and justice concerns.
- European identity is of fundamental importance. Humanitarian principles are a very European concept. Logistically face-to-face meetings are easier to organise.

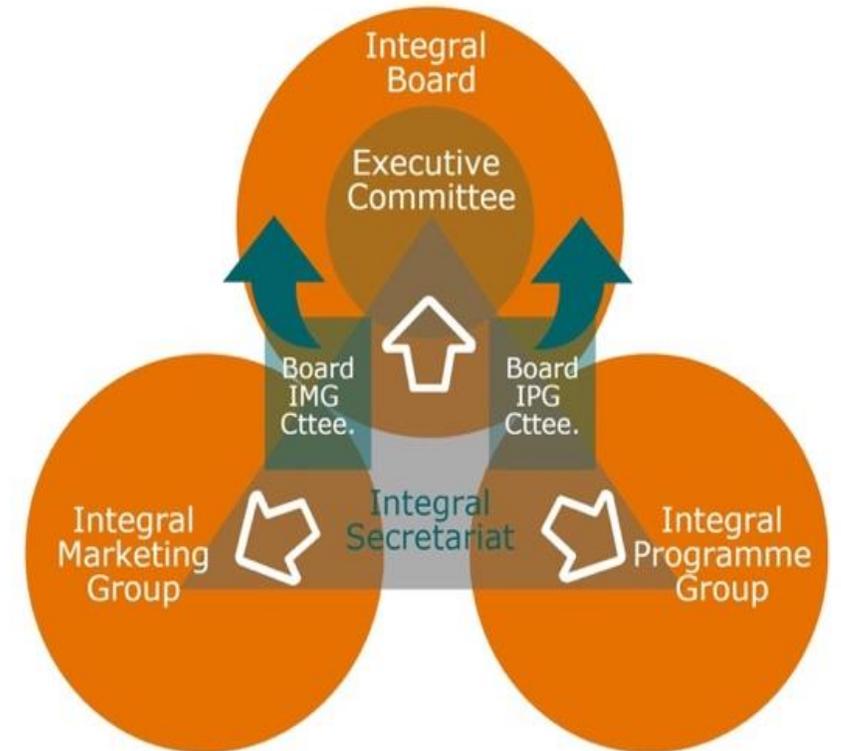




Integral

Responding Faster.
Reaching Further.
In Christ.

- Alliance of relief and development agencies, working together to present a more effective response in disaster management, mainly following major disasters
- 22 Christian relief and development agencies with their headquarters in 14 countries (including Europe and North America).
- New members by invitation only
- Integral provides concrete opportunities for Members to maximise their efficiency and effectiveness particularly following a major disaster.

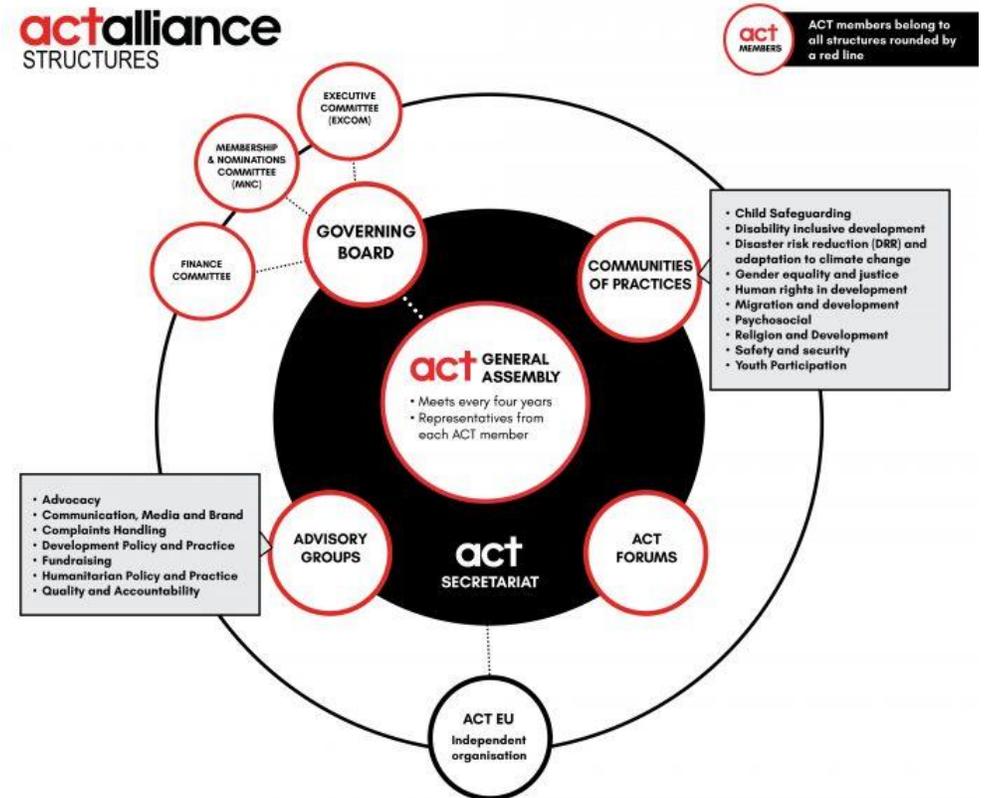




actalliance

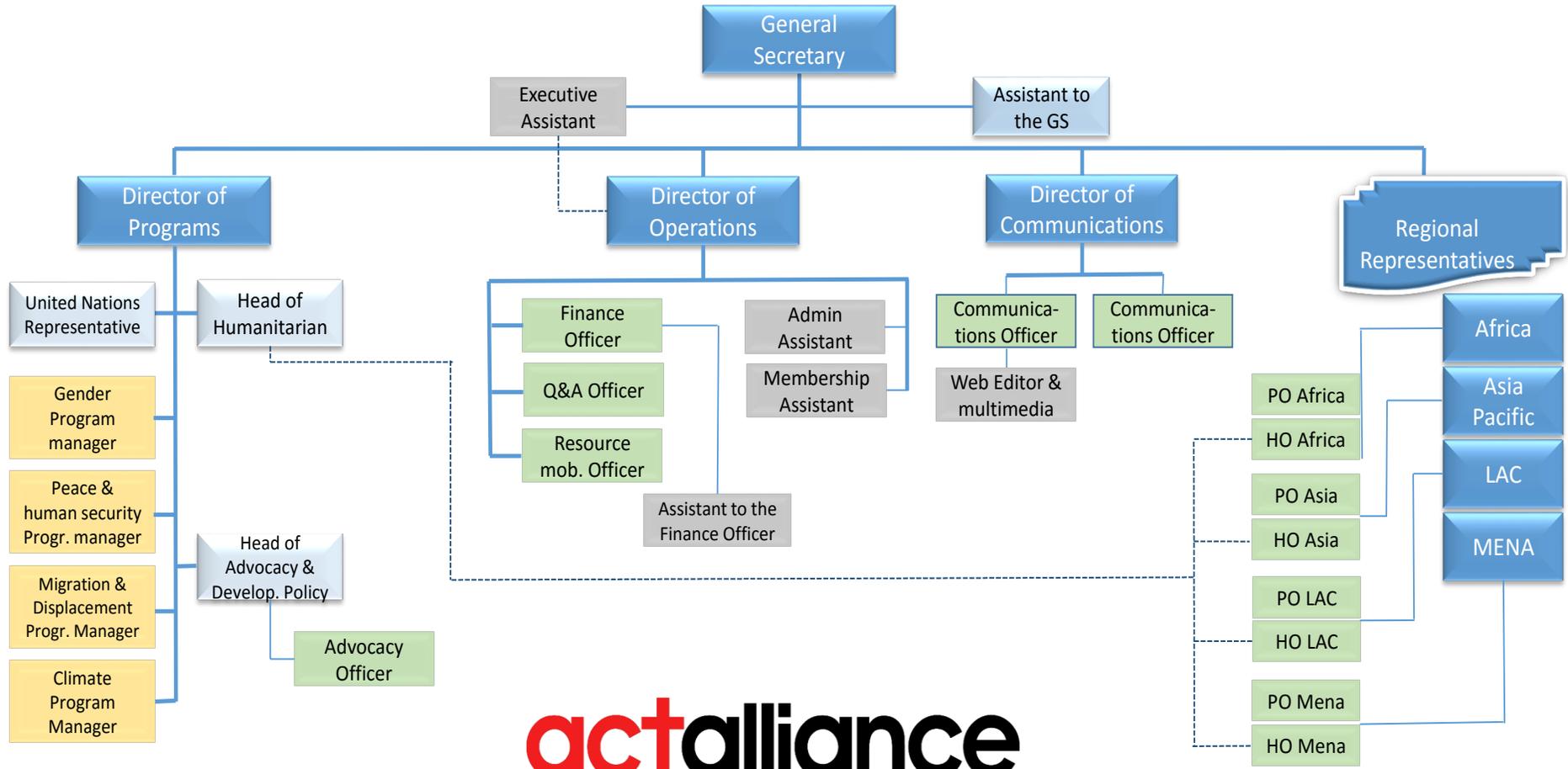
- Largest coalition of Protestant and Orthodox churches and church-related organisations engaged in humanitarian, development and advocacy work in the world.
- Members are associated with the World Council of Churches or the Lutheran World Federation.
- Membership consists of as much as 155 organisations working together in over 140 countries and supported by 30 000 staff
- Parties mobilise about \$3 billion yearly.
- Most (65% of the organizations) are from the global South.

actalliance STRUCTURES





ACT Alliance Secretariat Core Organigram



actalliance



World Vision International (“Federation”)

- Christian humanitarian aid, development and advocacy organization
- The World Vision federation consist of multiple national offices, many of which are governed by their own boards.
- National offices are bound together in interdependence through a common mission statement and shared core values.
- The federation is called “the World Vision Partnership” - though it is not a partnership in a legal sense.
<https://www.wvi.org/locations>
- Support and field offices (+100)
- 40,000 employees
- 2,6 billion USD turnover



Where We Work





Summary of findings

- The only common character with all the 4 examples is found in **funding**. All our 4 example collaborations are funded by membership fees in which revenues of the member organisation are taken into consideration.
- All follow similar governance structure: a highest decision body (*a Council or General Assembly*), *administrative council*, *secretariat (with staff members up to 2 people)* and a number of various *working groups and larger advisory groups*.
- Contents and frequency depend on the needs of the collaboration. With the larger collaborations the highest decision bodies meet only every 3-4 years. Smaller ones meet 2 or 3 times a year.
- Variety in working and advisory groups; advocacy, constituency engagement, resource and funding, humanitarian response, youth participation, etc. working groups to membership working groups, youth participation advisory groups etc.
- Differences geographical focus: all have active engagement at leadership and HQ level, active and fruitful collaboration in regional or field locations varies.



Benefits of collaboration

- **Increased access to information, expertise and financial resources** most common benefits. **Advocacy** important benefit especially for EU-CORD and ACT Alliance.
- Leverage in multiple political levels is valued especially by ACT Alliance and World Vision members.
- **Support and sharing** are important benefits in all looser collaboration types (EU-CORD Network, Integral Alliance and ACT Alliance).
- **Joint projects and funding applications** have benefitting members especially in alliance and corporate models, less in network model. E.g. Integral requires a considerable amount of resources, but benefits such as joint and co-funding funding for shared projects are viewed as extremely valuable by members.
- Respondents from looser collaborations significantly stress **importance of active participation** of member organisations. According to them, there is a clear correlation with active participation with how much organisation gets out of the collaboration.



Expected commitments

- All collaboration models expect members to agree and commit themselves to a number of **common policies and standards** as well as **active participation** in the collaboration.
- International standards range from the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to minimum standards of NGOs in Disaster Relief and NNGO Charter.





Importance of building trust

- **Trust** is seen essential in all the collaboration models but particularly in the looser collaboration types
- Collaborations invest in face-to-face meetings in order to create **trusting relationships** which are the very base for beneficial collaboration in networks and alliances.





Concluding thoughts and recommendations

- Network and alliance models are flexible, member-centred models that can be formulated according to the members' needs. Even if there are some differences in the models, **high level of trust** is the most important base in both of them. **Time and effort** are needed for creating trusting relationships among members.
- Organisations are encouraged to carry out truthful **cost/benefit calculation** on how much autonomy they are willing to give away and what kind of risks they are willing to accept in exchange of mutual benefits.
- Early choices can have repercussions for the collaboration's future. Enough time should be taken to **define core matters** (e.g. name, purpose, membership, member responsibilities, structure, governance etc.) with reasonable flexibility that won't lock the work in the future and that still are focused enough to motivate the members. In many cases a group of active people have been helpful in the early stages of various collaborations.

