

ActNow Alliance

ICT for Development Opportunities

A Non Profit Civil Society Alliance

“We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, (...) declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life, premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting fully and upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Declaration of Principles, Geneva 2003

Document Objective

This document describes the **Act Now Alliance**, an **Alliance of Non-Profit Associations** and other actors of Civil Society interested in using ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) and their applications.

The document sets out the purpose, objectives, and actions of the Alliance.

The idea of the Alliance was born from the experience of collaboration that some Non-Profit Associations fostered within the MediaSpace project, with ESA and Alcatel Alenia Space and the interactions with UNESCO and ITU, for the utilization of ICT applications via satellite by non-profit organizations around the world.

1. ICT and Development

1.1. Meeting Global Development Challenges

The information revolution presents a concrete opportunity for development. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)¹ recognized that ICTs play a key role as “enablers” for sustainable development and for the reduction of poverty as set out in the Millennium Development Goals.

The ICTs should not be seen only in terms of their economic potential, but as a platform that can help the construction of an equitable global information society in order to achieve goals of individual and collective development.

1.2. Strategic Factors for Development

ICTs can offer a specific contribution for development in many sector of the human development² and through their generic and transformative power can make a difference in a number of crucial areas.

For example ICTs can facilitate:

- **Reduction of Poverty:** offering an efficient, adaptable and sustainable way for the distribution of goods, services and information to people, governments and businesses.
- **Dissemination of Initiatives:** with the dissemination of investment and development initiatives, both in terms of planning, implementation and monitoring, and in terms of increasing accessibility to services.
- **Participation of Civil Society:** with the strategic involvement in the debate and in the formulation of state policies of a vast number of participants, from

¹ See: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/promotional/outcome.pdf>

² WSIS Geneva 2003: Plan of Action - C7

the social sector to local enterprise, civil society and researchers, political analysts and journalists, students and teachers.

- **Good Government:** by improving efficiency, transparency, responsibility and participation in process of government.
- **Efficacy of actions:** by increasing the efficacy of aid by facilitating the coordination of the various participants involved and the sharing of information and knowledge.

The positive potential of ICTs cannot be expressed in an automatic way: the ICTs need to be firmly aligned with and anchored in broader development and poverty reduction strategies.

Only by bringing together all actors – governments of developed and developing countries, the private sector, civil society and international organisations – can ICT be scaled up to unleash their full potential for development.

2. ActNow Alliance

Act Now Alliance is an **Alliance of Non-Profit Associations** and of other members of Civil Society interested in **collaborating** in using ICTs and their applications for the development in line with the Millennium Development Goals ³, in a search for peace, dialogue and universal fraternity.

2.1. The spirit

The Alliance would be a tool for partnerships between Alliance's associations and between associations and governmental agencies and the private sector in order to support and increase access and use of digital services as a means of social development.

The Alliance is based on an agreement among participating organisations: it is intended to be a facilitator for its members, not a centralized point of activity and would not interfere in their autonomous and independent action.

The Alliance is particularly attentive to sustaining the direct cooperation between Organizations in the South.

³ The "Millennium Development Goal " (<http://www.developmentgoals.org>) are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

2.2.Objectives

The Alliance aims to supporting and increasing the dynamic cooperations among members of Civil Society in order to create new opportunities in the development and use of digital networks and services in order to:

- to offer a context in which the Civil Society sector can work in collaboration with industry and governmental and international organizations
- to create a working forum which elaborate a common vision of programs, rules and financial strategies
- to provide a source of information for increasing awareness and effectiveness of initiatives
- To support a *multi-stakeholder* model in projects and programs that can be used to promote *capacity building* and development.

2.3.Working Projects

The Alliance projects are oriented to:

- **Linking requests/necessities/projects**
 - o To develop missions with greater efficiency, avoiding duplication of studies, and gathering the various necessities, developing similar platforms in order to reduce costs.
 - o To reach critical mass in order to attain sustainability and reduce costs.
 - o To optimize the effects of all actions, making better use of funds and other resources, in order to best develop the missions rather than the networks/services.
 - o To contribute to the development of a truly global network, low-cost and standardized, as a “mission enabler.”
- **Creating a dynamic cooperation among organizations**
 - o To avoid duplication of development studies and actions.
 - o To develop synergies, create new ideas and concentrate energies.
 - o Establish common long term strategies.
- **Creating cooperation dynamics with private sector**
 - o To joint actions with long term development visions.
 - o Think Global: to avoid parallel networks, islands of services, lack of unification.

3. Alliance Actions

In order to realize the objectives, the Alliance works in the following actions:

3.1. Sharing

- **ICT Resources and Tools**

In order to provide a direct contact with existing experiences that allows access to the know how accumulated in the following sectors:

- o Hardware resources, with particular attention to:
 - i. Low cost and reusability
 - ii. Availability in the countries of intervention.
- o Software resources, with particular attention to:
 - i. free and open source
 - ii. multilingual tools.
- o Specific tools for videoconferencing, distance-learning, e-medicine, etc.
- o Communication channels, with particular attention to Satellite, Mobile, Wireless and X-DSL technologies.

- **ICT best practices**

Description of applications contexts of the actual solutions implemented.

- **ICT capacity building in the countries of intervention**

- o Opportunity of a direct contact with locally available expertises
- o Presence of the structures of training on ICTs in developed countries.

- **Models of sustainable development**

- o Models and examples of projects
- o Accessibility and availability of financing.

- **ICT Projects and infrastructures**

- o Specific projects
- o Infrastructure of communications and tools locally available.

- **Partnership**

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- o International organizations
 - o Governmental agencies
 - o Private sector

3.2.Necessities

- **ICT Resources and Tools**
 - o Hardware and software tools, communications channels
- **ICT capacity building**
- **ICT projects and infrastructures**

3.3.Activities

When appropriate, the Alliance can begins specific activities of integration of programs of the NGOs already in existence and in response to specific necessities, with the help of joint actions with perspectives of development of long-term goals in order to contribute to the development of **standardized tools** of true **global** communication, at low cost, as *enablers* of the missions.

- **Resources and Tools**
 - o Dynamic collaboration on modular objects created ad hoc, usable in the individual projects (for example tools for videoconferencing, distance-learning, e-Medicine, etc.)
- **ICT “capacity building”**
 - o To collaborate in the creation of opportunities for *capacity building* in the countries of intervention.
- **ICT Projects and infrastructures**
 - o Dynamic sharing of satellite communications channels ad hoc with tools and management (DVB-S, DVB-RCS, etc.).
 - o Communications infrastructure
- **Partnership with:**
 - o the Private sector

- o to work in strict collaboration with the appropriate organisations of the United Nations for the development of ICT applications in their respective fields.
 - o the Governmental agencies.
- **Working groups**
 - o Creation of appropriate working groups for meeting specific requirements and necessities
 - o Periodical meetings between the ONGs about specific ICT needs and solutions and for offering a concrete possibility of an exchange of expertises.
 - **Financing**
 - o Create ad hoc initiatives.

4. Alliance Participants

List of actual participant associations

<i>Name</i>	<i>Web site</i>	<i>Intervention area</i>
Action pour un Monde Uni - Luxembourg	www.amu.lu	Africa – Asia – Latin America
AECOM		Africa – Congo
AFN - Azione per Famiglie Nuove	www.famiglienuove.org	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
AMU - Azione Mondo Unito	www.azionemondounito.org	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
Binario Etico	www.binarioetico.org	Italy
CIPSI	www.cipsi.it	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
Community of St Egidio	dream.santegidio.org	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
CONASAN		Central African Republic

Name	Web site	Intervention area
COSPE	www.cospe.it	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
Davide.it	www.davide.it	Italy, Africa
Doctors with Africa - CUAMM	www.doctorswithafrica.org	Africa
E-evolutions	www.e-evolutions.net	Africa, Europe
Focolare Movement	www.focolare.org	worldwide
INTERSOS	www.intersos.org	Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America
LATS		Africa - Cameroon
MdC - Medicine, Dialogue and Communion	www.mdc-net.org	worldwide
MISNA	www.misna.org	Africa
Movimento per la Lotta contro la Fame nel Mondo	www.mlfm.it	Africa
NETONE	www.netone.org	worldwide
New Humanity	www.new-humanity.org	worldwide
Progetto Toscana		Italy
Sguazzi	www.sguazzi.com	Italy, Africa
Sportmeet.org	www.sportmeet.org	worldwide
Teens For Unity	www.teens4unity.org	worldwide
Web 4 unity	www.web4unity.net	Italy
Webmaster cattolici	www.webcattolici.it	Italy