

Church of Sweden Psychological First Aid Survey Results Summary

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Leslie Snider, MD, MPH

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Executive Summary

Using its long-standing thematic experience in Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS), Church of Sweden aims to improve the service delivery to beneficiaries by ACT Alliance members in the aftermath of crisis events through capacity building in Psychological First Aid (PFA). As part of a pilot project to develop a standardized approach to capacity building in PFA, a broad survey of ACT Alliance members was conducted to determine to what extent PFA is known about and used by different actors within the alliance.

A variety of organisations within ACT forums in 34 countries were represented in the survey, demonstrating worldwide interest in PFA capacity across the alliance. Of the 122 overall respondents, the majority were project managers who directly support field staff and senior managers, with some respondents identifying as field staff or staff working in gender, advocacy, communications, education, social services.

Just over 2/3 of respondents had heard of PFA before. Of those, most could choose the correct description of PFA from a list (a few perceived PFA as higher-level care provided by mental health professionals), and just over half of those had received a PFA orientation previously. However, the quality, intensity and length of the orientations, as well as whether or not they afforded participants the opportunity for practicing PFA skills, were unclear.

The great majority of respondents support distressed people in their work, and nearly all felt that training in this would be useful (3/4 “very useful”). They felt a variety of people could benefit from PFA training, from community members, clergy and volunteers to field staff of all kinds, and middle and senior managers. This underscores the need for PFA training across the ACT Alliance and the receptiveness to a capacity building roll-out for PFA mainstreaming. In addition, some respondents felt “post-PFA” types of training (e.g., how to refer beneficiaries in need of higher level counseling) would be useful, particularly for psychosocial support programme staff, and that PFA skills and knowledge could contribute to much-needed staff support and wellbeing.

In sum, there is high Interest in PFA capacity building among ACT Alliance members, across various regions and forums, and mainstreaming efforts are likely to be well-received. PFA training could benefit staff from field level to senior management, as well as partners and community members, and engagement may be increased by clarification of what PFA is. The scale and seriousness of distressing events faced by beneficiaries and staff point to the need for both PFA skills and knowledge, as well as further training in mental health and psychosocial support approaches for the “next steps” after PFA. Furthermore, PFA capacity building may contribute to staff support and wellbeing.

Background to the Project

Background to PFA:

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is the recommended frontline approach to helping people who have recently suffered a crisis event.¹ PFA is currently widely implemented in crisis settings worldwide and there are increasing calls to evaluate its effectiveness.

PFA is not only an intervention to be delivered by psychosocial staff. It is also a set of basic, support skills that can be mainstreamed across sectors to improve interactions with, and service delivery for, crisis-affected people. These basic support skills help all staff to know what to say and do – and not to say and do – when working with very distressed people who have recently been exposed to a crisis event. It ensures that interactions respect the safety, dignity and rights of the people being helped. It also helps frontline workers to ensure their own safety; to gain basic support and referral skills; to know their boundaries and when to refer to more advanced support; and to practice effective stress management and self- and team-care strategies.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID IS:

“A humane, supportive and practical response to people suffering exposure to serious stressors and who may need support. It is an approach to help people recover by responding to their basic needs, showing them concern and care, in a way that respects their wishes, culture, dignity and capabilities.”²

¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies. (2007) Geneva: IASC.

² Psychological First Aid: Guide for Field Workers (2011) World Health Organization, World Vision International and War Trauma Foundation. Geneva: WHO.

Aim of the Capacity Building Project:

Using its long-standing thematic experience in Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS), Church of Sweden aims to improve the service delivery to beneficiaries by ACT Alliance members in the aftermath of crisis events through capacity building in PFA.

Objectives:

- 1.** Mainstream capacity in PFA to ACT members, both those focused upon CBPS implementation and those working in other humanitarian sectors.
- 2.** Build capacity of local partners to scale up and respond to ongoing needs for PFA training in country/regional humanitarian crises.
- 3.** Evaluate at individual provider and systems level, the impact of the roll-out of capacity building in PFA.

Project Stages:

The project will develop a standardized approach to assessment, engagement, implementation (with management and staff) and capacity building within the ACT Alliance. The project plan outlines four stages:

STAGE 1: *Assessment and documentation*, including a broad survey of ACT Alliance members to determine to what extent PFA is known about and used by different actors within the ACT Alliance.

STAGE 2: *Engagement* of country offices and regional communities of practice for adaptation, design and planning of PFA implementation and M&E strategies at staff and systems levels.

STAGE 3: *Implementation of a pilot capacity building initiative* in 1-2 country sites, including managers' orientation, staff training, follow-up support, collaborative indicator development and staff and systems levels, baseline and follow-up data collection, and future planning.

STAGE 4: *Roll-out of PFA capacity building* within the ACT Alliance based upon the pilot experience and data collection.

This report covers Stage 1 of the project – a broad survey of ACT Alliance members to determine to what extent PFA is known about and used by different actors within the ACT Alliance. The survey was sent to ACT members around the globe through the Psychosocial Community of Practice newsletter (that reach all ACT members who are subscribed). (See Annex 1 for the invitation to survey.)

Detailed Results

The findings are presented in the order the questions were posed to respondents:

- 1.** Have you heard of PFA before? (skip question, if yes – answered #2 and #3)
- 2.** How do you understand what PFA is? (if yes to question #1)
- 3.** Have you ever received a training or orientation in PFA? (if yes to question #1)
- 4.** How confident do you feel in handling situations (what to say and do) when you're with someone who is distressed
- 5.** How often do you need to offer emotional support to distressed people in your work?
- 6.** How useful would it be for you to receive training or further information in how to provide emotional support to distressed people?
- 7.** Open-ended responses (explanations to question 6).
- 8.** How useful would it be for your country programmes to receive training in emotional support for distressed people?

9. If useful, what kind of staff members would most benefit from this kind of training?

10. Please select the title that best fits your job description. (drop down menu)

11. Which ACT Forum do you belong to? (drop down menu)

12. What is the name of your organization within the ACT Alliance? (open-ended)

The questions were posed in English, Spanish and French, and respondents answered in their native language.

The total number of respondents was N=123, although one respondent only answered questions about their job description and affiliation (questions 10–12). Therefore, as indicated below, most questions use N=122. Only those who answered “yes” to question 1 (N=84) were directed to questions 2 and 3; the others skipped to question 4 directly.

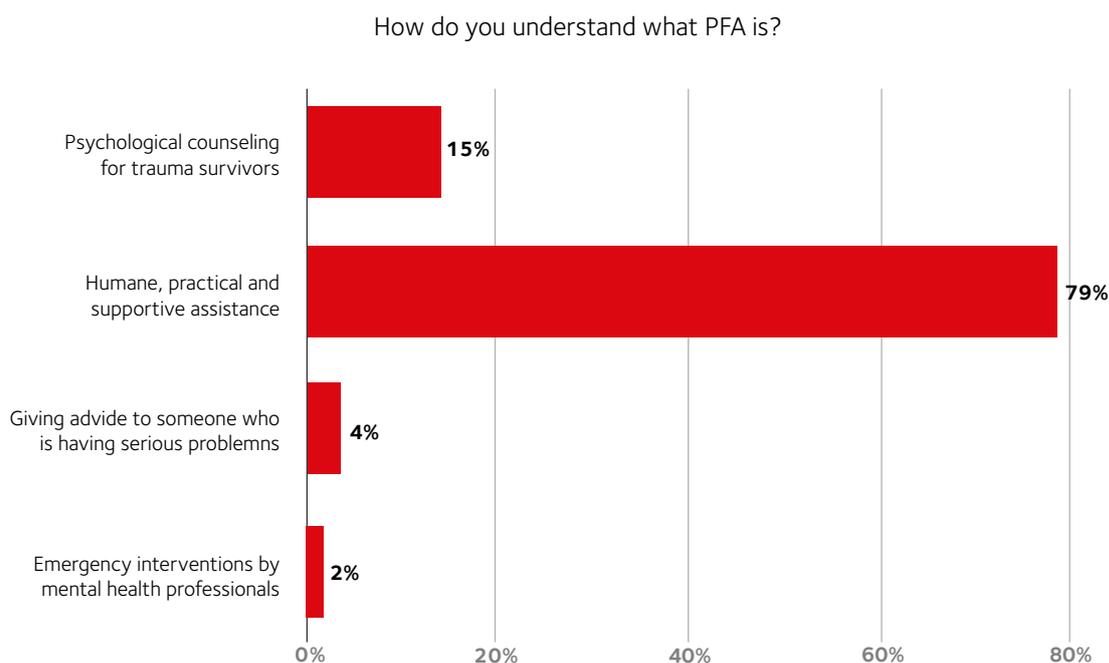
Question 1: Have you heard of PFA Before?

The majority of respondents (69%, N=122) reported they had heard of PFA before.

The 84 respondents who had heard of PFA were then asked questions 2 and 3. The 38 respondents who had not heard of PFA skipped to question 4.

Question 2: How do you understand what PFA is?

The majority of respondents (79%, N=84) correctly answered that PFA is: “humane, practical and supportive assistance to distressed people following a crisis event.” However, 15% of participants incorrectly understood PFA to be “psychological counseling for trauma survivors”. In fact, PFA is NOT counseling, and is NOT only provided by mental health professionals. A very small percentage of respondents understood PFA to be “giving advice” or “emergency interventions by mental health professionals”.



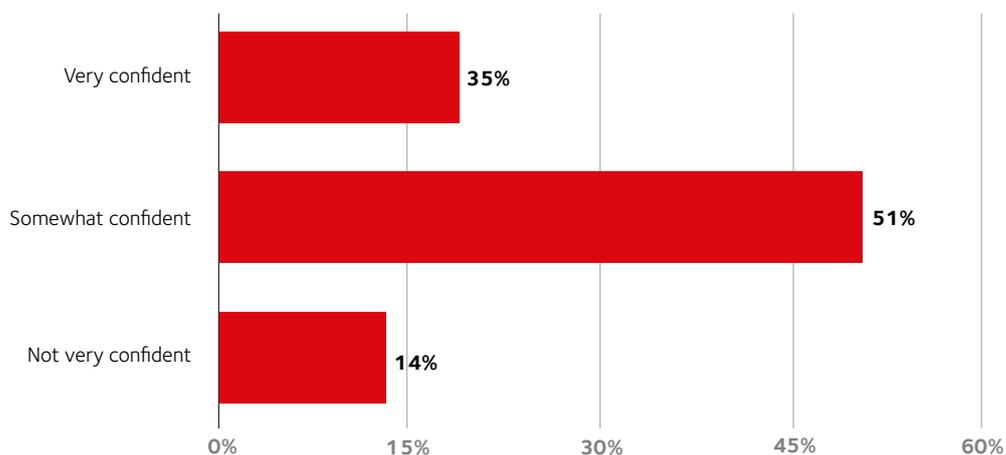
Question 3: Have you ever received a training or orientation in PFA?

Just over half of respondents who have heard of PFA (56%, N=84) have received a PFA orientation.

Question 4: How confident do you feel in handling situations (what to say and do) when you're with someone who is distressed?

This question relates to the core of what is covered in PFA orientations – what to say and do as well as what NOT to say and do when encountering someone who is distressed. All respondents were asked this question, and 122 responded. Just over half of respondents selected the middle response, that they feel somewhat confident, and more than a third of respondents felt very confident. The number of those who felt very confident reflects the same number of participants who received a PFA orientation; although it is not clear if those who have received a PFA orientation selected “very confident” as their answer – nor do we know details of the orientation they received (e.g., length, intensity, skills-based exercise, opportunities for practice).

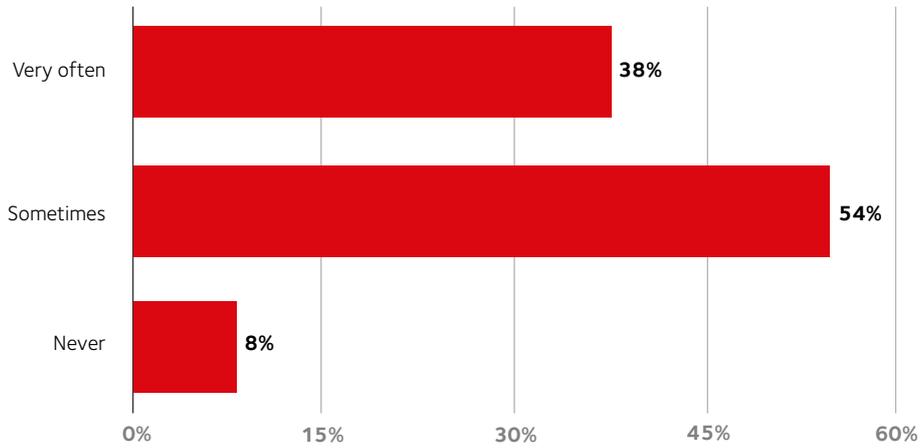
Confidence in what you say and do for someone who is distressed (N=122)



Question 5: How often do you need to offer emotional support to distressed people in your work?

Most respondents (92%) often need to offer emotional support to distressed people in their work – nearly 40% doing so very often.

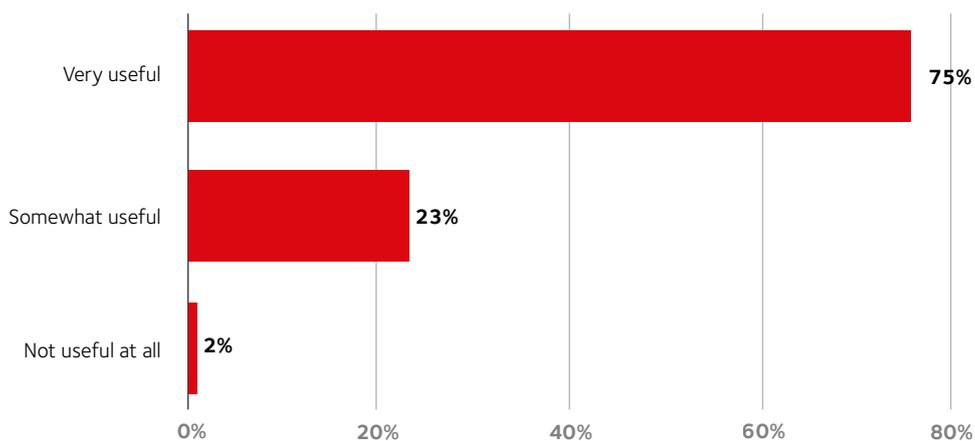
How often do you support someone who is distressed in your work? (N=122)



Question 6: How useful would it be for you to receive training or further information in how to provide emotional support to distressed people?

Nearly all respondents felt it would be useful to have training or more information in how to provide emotional support to distressed people – with 75% reporting this would be very useful.

Usefulness of receiving capacity building in how to support distressed people (N=122)



Question 7: Open-ended responses

In this question, respondents could explain the reasons for their answers to question 6.

A small handful of respondents noted that they do not have direct contact with distressed people in their work, and therefore felt training or information about PFA would not be relevant to them. One respondent noted that PFA was “interesting as a replicable life skill, but not relevant to my own role” and another that: “I already have some guiding documents about PFA that I can regularly refer to.” However, several noted that such training or information would be useful for the field staff or implementing partners who do have regular and direct interface with distressed people – both for assisting people who are distressed and for staff safety and security.

The great majority of respondents felt that training and information about PFA is very important both for their work, as well as for the support of staff working in highly stressful situations. Several respondents noted the need to build their skills and confidence to manage extremely stressful situations in which they work, and to be able to meet beneficiaries impacted by serious critical events “at their point of need”. These situations include armed conflict, violence and displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, poverty and deprivation. Respondents noted the need to “recognize signs and know what to do” and “to have an experience of how to act in such a situation.” One respondent noted that they have had no formal training to deal with the high levels of distress they encounter with beneficiaries, and another that: “I don’t have a basic knowledge; I am doing followed by common sense, but I strongly believe this can be harmful”. Several respondents also noted how important it was to them to increase their knowledge and skills in general for the psychosocial work that they do, and to receive training at regular intervals.

Respondents noted the need for PFA skills and knowledge within varied thematic areas in which they work: peace-building and conflict transformation, health and HIV/AIDS, education projects, water and sanitation, work with orphans and other vulnerable children, and so on. Respondents noted skills and knowledge in PFA would be beneficial for their work with faith leaders, teachers (who

” If it would be my own staff, as a manager it’s always good to have tools to sort our different kinds of situations. It could be a security issue, if you drive into a situation where there are distressed people. And, of course, working with beneficiaries, you might end up in situations very suddenly where these skills could come in handy.

” I work with colleagues who on a daily basis pass through stressful or depressing situations. We encounter beneficiaries who are suffering, or who are most likely to suffer distressing situations. As a front-line staff, I need to be prepared with required skills to handle such people in a professional and humane way. It also equips me with coping mechanisms for such scenarios.

” This skill is useful in any position. The person under distress could be a colleague, a beneficiary, or even a soldier at a checkpoint.

” Knowledge of PFA...will make me a better person as we work toward helping the affected populations to recover from the trauma they are undergoing and to also prepare for unpredicted crises that may occur.

work with distressed children), people with disabilities, people affected by drought, elders, unaccompanied children, and others. Some respondents noted a desire to be able to pass along the PFA skills and knowledge to those with whom they work, and to use PFA as a starting point for other types of psychosocial support.

In addition, respondents working with human rights violations noted the need for such training and information, in order to “better understand the psychological issues”. Several respondents also highlighted the importance of PFA skills and knowledge in being able to promote dignity and humanity in their work with beneficiaries. One respondent noted how PFA training should be further supplemented by additional training related to culture, rights and dignity (see comment in text box).

In terms of staff care, several respondents mentioned a need to prevent burnout among staff who are working in enduringly stressful circumstances, and that they view PFA training as an important vehicle for both support of staff as well as enhancing their personal wellbeing. Several mentioned the importance of being able to support colleagues and for managers to be able to support field staff working in stressful conditions using PFA skills.

Some respondents indicated that they had received some PFA training in the past, but would like to know more. One respondent expressed concerns about whether or not what was provided in PFA orientation they had received was sufficient and of quality (see comment in text box).

Some respondents indicated a need for training and information that goes beyond PFA, including “post-PFA next steps” particularly in the absence of available, trained counselors. Some saw PFA as an important first step on the spectrum of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in emergencies, that includes more specialized interventions, and a few participants noted this particularly in terms of chaplaincy training or related to the work of faith leaders. In these cases, PFA was viewed as a complement to the spiritual support they regularly provide. However, a few respondents seemed to confuse PFA with higher level skills such as “counseling skills” or “technical counseling” or “trauma recovery”.

” The training can also help in how to handle people’s rights and also to avoid abusing people.

” In the training recently on PFA in Jinja, Uganda, for PFA [provider] to offer help responsibly, he/she should consider survivor rights, dignity, and cultures of individuals. Therefore, I would need training on human rights education, and behaviour and culture of different communities where ACT Alliance operates.

” Humanitarian staff and professionals should be trained in comprehensive PFA, because in [country] I noticed that they are receiving very basic PFA. The facilitator needs to pass the PFA tools and modules in a proper way, participants to fully understand how to identify, how to communicate and comfort the person who suffers from traumatic events.”crises that may occur.

” Training in this field is important and highly useful if trauma mitigation following a crisis is what we intend before provision of any other type of assistance, including expert / specialized psychosocial recovery...but the training will help me to intervene at the psychosocial level.

” Working with church leaders, teachers and health professionals on addressing violence, many of the first cohort trained staff and participants have expressed the need for counseling skills...whenever they have to manage the cases brought to them by the survivors. In my understanding, all this counseling that people are talking about come after the PFA, as the name implies. The communities need to know what to do at the

A couple of respondents noted that there is a need for new knowledge “on a scientific basis” to respond to ever-changing threats in the environments and to support people in ways that ‘do no harm’: “I think that the provision of psychological support will vary according to the disaster suffered by the individual. There are new disasters that we have not experienced before and [in which] we cannot provide psychological support, such as the exposure of a child to a terrorist incident”.

first contact with a survivor...to avoid further traumatizing a person.

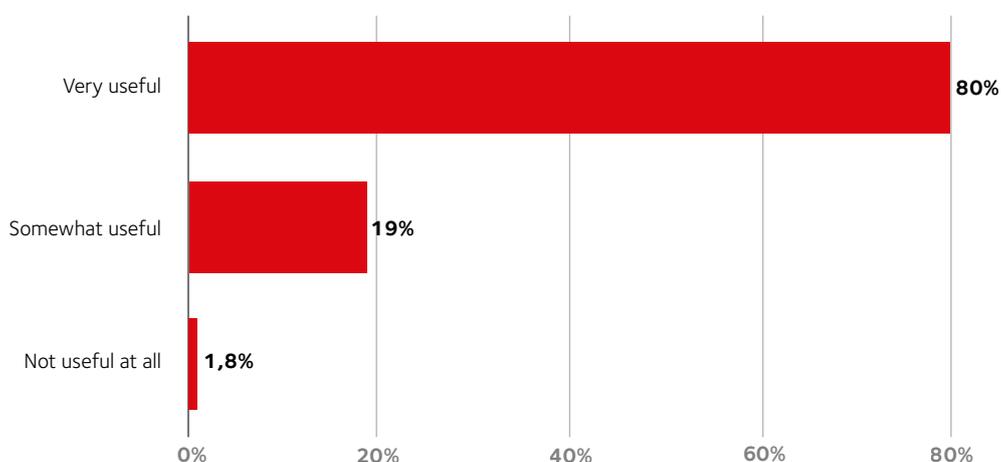
” I work full time in the churches in the area of disaster recovery, including disaster recovery chaplaincy training and coordination. We use elements of PFA but go beyond it. The basic course will be two days intensive work with people who are already in full time ministry. As such we are working to teach emotional support and pastoral care in crisis, taking elements of PFA and more (including critical incident stress management, debriefing* and peer support.

” Note that PFA was developed by WHO as a Do No Harm alternative to debriefing, demonstrated to be ineffective and sometimes harmful.

Question 8: How useful would it be for your country programmes to receive training in emotional support for distressed people?

This question was designed to elicit interest in receiving an orientation in the principles of PFA. The vast majority of respondents felt this would be useful – with 4/5 stating they felt this would be very useful. Only 1% of respondents felt it would not be useful to receive training in how to provide emotional support for distressed people.

Usefulness of training in PFA pincipies to country progeammers (N=122)



Question 9: If useful, what kind of staff members would most benefit from this kind of training?

Respondents mentioned a wide variety of staff – from field level to senior management – as well as partners who work directly with beneficiaries in difficult contexts (e.g., humanitarian settings).

Many felt that it was important for field staff to be equipped with PFA skills and knowledge, particularly those on the front lines of humanitarian/disaster work. This includes those working directly with refugees, IDPs or vulnerable local populations. One respondent mentioned the need to have skills to support refugees in their country who are hostile, as well as to work with the citizens of their country such as youth involved in criminal activity. Other staff who work directly with survivors of distressing events and may benefit from this kind of training include: gender-based violence officers, drivers, guards, WASH staff, protection staff, community mobilizers, nutritionists, nurses, PMER staff, and other field-facing staff and partners. As one respondent stated: “All staff who have some encounter with the survivors due to their work should participate in psychosocial training workshops.” One respondent noted that both new staff as well as professional staff who need a refresher (“re-training”) may benefit.

Partner organisations were mentioned by several respondents specifically as being able to benefit, particularly those who implement emergency response projects. Some respondents noted that PFA was also useful in development contexts, such as contexts of extreme poverty, drought or sickness in which they work. In addition to community workers, respondents mentioned physicians, nurses, social workers, teachers, community faith leaders, pastors and other carers, and (church) volunteers.

Furthermore, staff and supervisors working in psychosocial support and mental health programmes - at both country and field office levels – were mentioned as being able to benefit from PFA orientation. This would include those who do on-the-ground work, technical staff who supervise and support field staff, and those who must monitor and report on activities.

In addition, line managers and middle managers were mentioned by several respondents, including coordinators

” In the context of our country, that is very vulnerable to disaster (both natural and human-induced) and the socio-economic condition is very poor due to widespread poverty that contributes to the people’s vulnerability and distress, it is very useful to have people who have more skills in PFA. In the organization, all staff (from managerial position down to those who are working in the community level) must be equipped in PFA.

” All staff working in my organization would benefit from this training including both program and support staff since they are either directly or indirectly involved in dealing with the vulnerable populations that the organization supports.

” For workers or social technicians who promote community development in rural communities as well as project and program management personnel.”

” Middle managers in the field of protection and humanitarian assistance; first line responders could also be targeted, but due to risk of high turnover, it may be better to focus on middle managers / ToTs.

” Project officers directly linked with community services and managers to whom this person reports. Additionally, this will enable managers to design project related to the community work.

and advisors. One reason for focusing on managers was to have a cadre of PFA trainers who can train field staff on an ongoing basis (due to high rates of field staff turnover). Another reason highlighted was for support of staff who are working on the front lines and who may experience stress or secondary traumatisation. For this purpose, it was also felt that human resource staff could benefit from PFA orientation in order to influence wellbeing policies and their implementation, and staff counselors in order to provide appropriate staff support.

Many respondents mentioned the need for senior management to have orientation in PFA in order to ensure ownership, fundraising, planning, resource allocation and budgeting for PFA activities. ACT Forum coordinators were also mentioned specifically as they may need to incorporate PFA in appeals, and therefore should have a solid understanding of it.

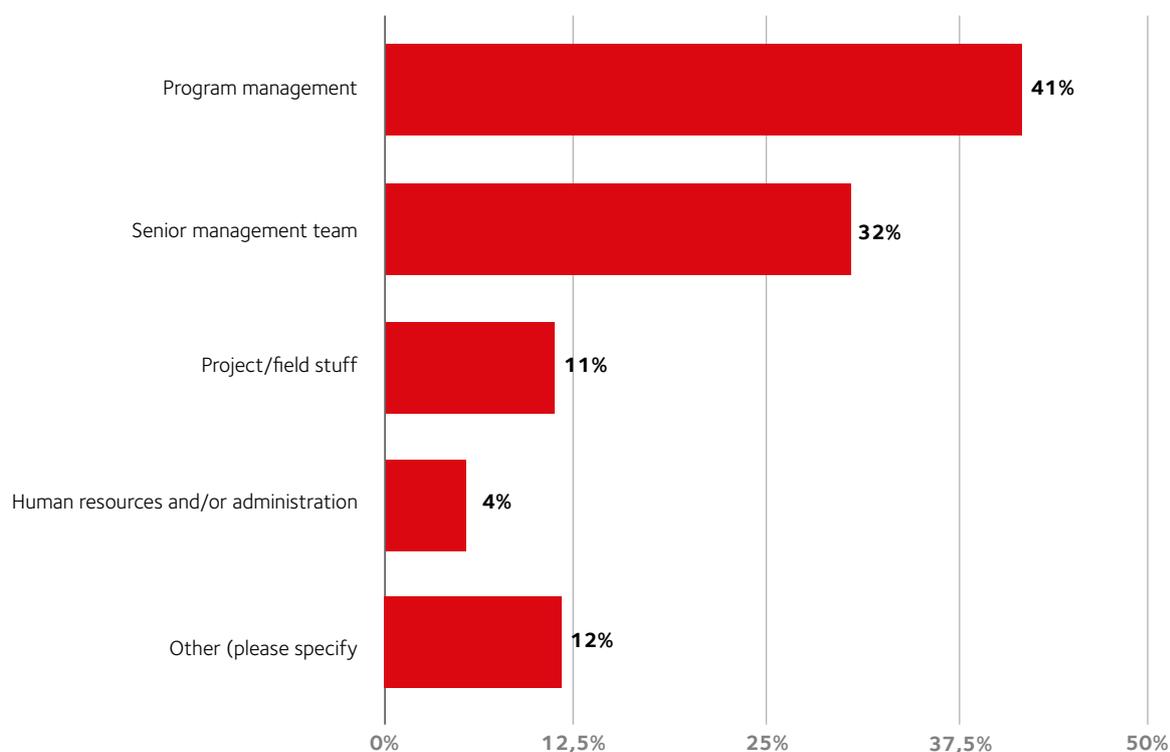
” The kind of staff who can benefit from PFA training includes: Country Representatives – MCC, Program Support Officer, Logistics Officer, Finance Officers, Human Resource Officers, then all the partners staff: HIV/AIDS Officer, Field Officers, and Community-Based Facilitators.

10. Please select the title that best fits your job description.

Most respondents described their job title as program management (41%) or senior management team (32%). Only 11% of respondents were project / field staff, and a very small percentage worked primarily in human resources or project management. Twelve percent of respondents selected the “other” category and described their job titles as:

Community education and resource gathering	Project management/Chef du Projet a l'ECC Sud-Kivu
Technical advisors	Thematic specialist/advisor, education
Communication (2 respondents)	Social service officer
Advocacy officer	Finance and administration
Humanitarian programme officer	Director of Theology, Family Life and Gender Justice
Gender advisor	

Select the title that best fits your job description (N=123)



11. Which ACT Forum do you belong to?

Of the total respondents, N=118 selected the ACT forum to which they belonged. Respondents belonged to ACT forums in 34 countries spanning the globe. The most highly represented were South Sudan (15.3%), Europe (12.8 %), JSL / MENA / or Iraq (8.5%), and Uganda forums (7.6%). Nineteen ACT forums were not represented. See table below for more information.

ACT Forums Represented and # Respondents

ACT Forum	#	ACT Forum	#	ACT Forum	#
South Sudan	18	El Salvador	2	Honduras	1
Europe	15	Guatemala	2	India	1
JSL, Mena or Iraq	10	Madagascar	2	Indonesia	1
Uganda	9	Nicaragua	2	Liberia	1
Asia-Pacific	8	Angola	1	Mozambique	1
Kenya	8	Argentina	1	Myanmar	1
DRC	6	Armenia	1	Nepal	1
Malawai	5	Bazil	1	Philippines	1
Ethiopia	4	Burundi	1	South Africa Regional	1
North America	4	Cambodia	1	Sri Lanka	1
Palestine	3	Caribbean	1		
Central America	2	Haiti	1		

ACT Forums Not Represented

Bangladesh	Ghana	Peru	Thailand
Bolivia	Lami	Sierra Leone	Vietnam
Burkina Faso	Nigeria	Somaila	Zambia
Chile	Pacific (PANZ)	South America	Zimbabwe
Dominican Republic	Pakistan	Tanzania	

12. What is the name of your organization within the ACT Alliance?

Responses to this question are detailed below:

NAME	#	NAME	#
ACT Alliance	1	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church – Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission Refugee and Returnee Affairs Department (EOTC-DICACA/RRAR)	2
ACT Alliance Uganda Forum, based in Dan Church Aid Kampala	1	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus – Development and social Service commission (EECMY-DASSC)	1
ACT Forum Malawi	1	FELM	1
Act for Peace - National Council of Churches in Australia	3	Finn Church Aid	3
ACT Secretariat - MENA Regional Office	2	Global Aim which is implementing partner of ICCO cooperation	2
ACT Secretariat Regional Office Nairobi	2	Global Aim South Sudan	2
ALFALIT De El Salvador	1	Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization(GWED-G)	1
All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)	1	Hungarian Interchurch Aid	1
Amity Foundation	1	Inter Church Organizations for Development Cooperation (ICCO) Kerk in Actie	4
Anglican Board of Mission, Australia, Ltd	1	ICCO & KiA	1
Anglican Diocese of Upper Shire	1	Iglesia Luterana Costarricense	1
Australian Lutheran World Service	1	Lutheran World Service India Trust	1
Bishopric of Public Social Services	1	Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	6
Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission	1	Federacion Luterana Mundial	1
Bread for the World	1	The Lutheran World Federation Maban South Sudan	1
Cc	1	LWF Uganda	3
CEDEPCA	1	LWF - WS	1

CEDES-Ecumenical Committee for Social Development - ACT Forum Representative	1	Lutheran World Relief (LWR)	1
Church of Sweden	4	Mennonite Central Committee(MCC) South Sudan & Sudan	2
Christian Aid	4	National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK)	4
Christian Aid, South Sudan	1	National Council of Churches in the Philippines	1
CIEETS	1	Organization for Nonviolence and Development (ONAD)	1
Comision de Accion Social Menonita (CASM)	1	Norwegian Church Aid	4
Coptic Orthodox Church	1	Norwegian Church Aid Ethiopia	1
Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas Pro Alianza Denominacional (CEPAD)	1	Norwegian Church Aid Malawi office	1
Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba, Miembro del Foro Cuba de ACT T	1	PEAB	1
Concejo Ecueménico de Guatemala	1	Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency (PRDA)	1
Church World Service	1	Philanthropy, Charitable Foundation of Serbian Orthodox Church	1
Dan Church Aid (DCA)	6	Russian Orthodox Church	1
DCA South Sudan	1	SAF/FJKM	2
Diakonia (Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe)	4	WCC Armenia Round Table Foundation	1
Diakonia - RDC	1	World Renew	1
DSPR	1	UMCOR	1
DSPR – Gaza Area, Near East Council of churches committee for Refugee work	1	Uniting World (Australia)	1
Eglise du Christ au Congo, ECC	1	Yakkum Emergency Unit	1

Summary of Findings

Just over 2/3 of respondents have heard of PFA before, and of those, most were able to choose the correct description of PFA from a list of choices. However, 21% chose an incorrect response – namely, that PFA is psychological counseling for trauma survivors, giving advice or emergency interventions by mental health professionals. Thus, there is some misconception among respondents (even those who are aware of the term) that PFA is only relevant as a higher-level intervention by professionals and not as a skill set that can be mainstreamed among a variety of different types of responders, staff and community members.

Of those who had heard of PFA before, just over half had received an orientation, but the quality, intensity and length of the orientations were and whether or not they afforded respondents the opportunity for practicing skills related to PFA (e.g., good communication). One respondent actually raised the question of the quality of PFA orientation they had received, describing it as “basic PFA” and noting the need for orientation to be delivered in a proper way by facilitators. Some respondents may have received PFA as part of community-based psychosocial skills training, and therefore the PFA part of the module would have been covered in a short time.

The great majority of respondents noted that they must support people in distress in their work, with 40% stating they do this often. Reflecting this, nearly all participants felt that training in the skills and knowledge to support distressed people would be useful in their work (75% felt this would be “very useful”, 23% “somewhat useful”). Many felt that PFA capacity is essential for front-line field staff – both those working in MHPSS programmes as well as those in other sectors (gender-based violence, protection, education) and other field support staff (drivers, logistics officers). Others who it was felt could potentially

benefit included partner organizations and community members (e.g., clergy and volunteers), and middle and senior management. The wide variety of people that respondents felt could benefit from PFA skills and knowledge underscores the need for this type of training across the ACT Alliance and the receptiveness to a capacity building roll-out for PFA mainstreaming.

In addition, some respondents noted the need for “post-PFA” types of training, particularly for those who are working in MHPSS programmes and who may need to provide basic counseling or refer beneficiaries for specialized support. Many also pointed out that PFA skills and knowledge could contribute to much-needed staff support (peer support as well as support by supervisors and managers) and promote staff wellbeing.

The majority of survey respondents described themselves as project managers who would be directly supporting field staff (41%), followed by senior management (32%) and then field staff (11%). The “other” category (12%) was characterized by diverse disciplines, with respondents working in gender, advocacy, communications, education and social services, among others.

ACT forums in 34 countries were represented in the survey, demonstrating interest in PFA capacity building worldwide across the ACT Alliance. In descending order, most respondents were from Forums in South Sudan, Europe, JSL/MENA/ Iraq, Uganda, Asia-Pacific, Kenya, DRC, Malawi, Ethiopia, North America, Palestine, and then followed by several Central American countries. It is possible that there was high representation from South Sudan, as well as from Uganda, because of a current PFA capacity building initiative being undertaken with CoS partners from these two countries. A range of organisations were represented within these various ACT forums.

Conclusions

Interest in PFA capacity building is high among the ACT Alliance in general, across varied regions and ACT forums. The scale and seriousness of distressing events faced by beneficiaries and staff point to the need for both PFA skills and knowledge, as well as further training in MHPSS approaches for the “next steps” after PFA. Furthermore, PFA was seen as important

for staff support and wellbeing and for reducing burnout. Mainstreaming efforts are likely to be well-received, and many respondents recommend training initiatives from field level staff to senior management; however, advocacy may be needed to engage senior and middle managers in some places because of possible misperceptions of what PFA is.

Annex A. Invitation to the Survey

News from Psychosocial Support Community of Practice

[View this email in your browser](#)

Dear ACT Alliance Members,

The ACT Alliance Psychosocial Support Community of Practice and Church of Sweden (CoS) aim to build ACT Alliance members' capacity in delivering services to people affected by crises. Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an important tool which can help humanitarian and development agencies improve the reach and quality of their services.

In order to best understand the experiences of ACT Alliance members – at various levels of their organizations – we invite you and your implementing partners (if applicable) to respond to a survey about your knowledge and experience with PFA via the link below. We are interested in the input of staff and managers who work in different sectors within the ACT Alliance humanitarian and development response initiatives (see below). The survey will help us in assessing the scale and use of PFA and to plan for a PFA capacity building roll out which we will share with all survey participants.

Click [here](#) to access the survey.

Who should take this survey?

- Staff and managers at all levels in your organization are welcome to input into the survey – including senior managers, programme managers, project and field staff, human resource and administration and others. Please forward this email to the appropriate people within your organization and your implementing partners if applicable.

How long with the survey take?

- The survey should take about 5 minutes.

When can I take the survey?

- The survey link will be active from October 1st until October 27th, 2017

What happens next?

- The Psychosocial Support Community of Practice will share with you the results of the survey, along with eventual plans for capacity building in different regions. Information will be shared on ACT Alliance website and through the CoP

For any questions, please email, [Carina Hjelmsam Winberg](#), member of the Psychosocial Support CoP and CoS Psychosocial Advisor in Emergencies International Department.

Thank you kindly for your assistance!

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