

## Case study

# Aid to the Church in Need International



### Strategic Plan

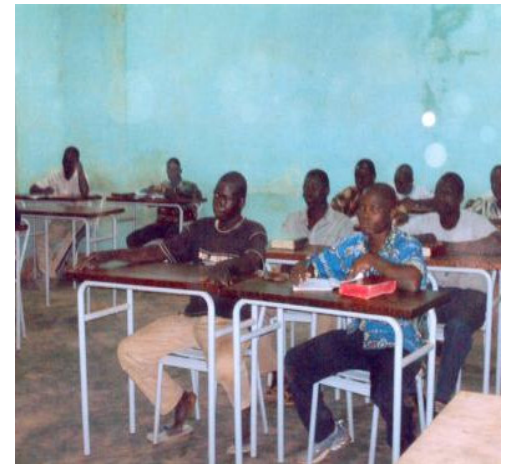
**The background:** Founded in 1947, ACN International is involved in thousands of projects helping poor and persecuted churches with prayer, pastoral relief and material assistance. In 2004 it raised around 70m euro, entirely from donations, and the money was distributed in 137 different countries. ACN receives no public or official Church monies, but relies on the generosity of more than 700,000 benefactors around the world. Aid to the Church in Need has made an enormous contribution to the suffering Church over the years, and has grown to become a substantial and complex organisation in an increasingly complex world.

**The brief:** Action Planning was asked to work with the International Secretariat's Strategic Planning Group to develop an International Strategic Plan. In developing the International Strategy their aim was to identify the priority issues and to provide a clear framework for working in a united and appropriate way to address these issues. With so much to be done, the group recognised that it was essential to set clear priorities for action, whilst still holding true to the spiritual principles of the Work.

**The process:** Action Planning's Chairman David Saint facilitated an extensive review of the international context of Aid to the Church In Need in terms of its history, its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and social, technological, economic and political factors. The topics within this analysis covered the widest possible areas, from organisational structure, through communications and databases to International Church factors. The Strategic Planning Group met regularly in Konigstein, near Frankfurt, to pursue their review and during this time there were meetings, presentations and discussions to involve the General Council, National Directors and staff of the International Office in Germany. They were able to use the resulting information from this detailed analysis to inform the International Strategy. The sub-headings of International Objectives, Marketing, Projects Strategy, Management Strategy and Finance Strategy gave detailed planning and procedures for the way forward. Staff at ACN International were assigned agreed responsibilities and tasks to implement the plan.

**The outcome:** ACN's first Strategic Plan was completed in 2002 and in 2004 the Strategic Planning Group reconvened, together with David Saint, to review progress with implementation. The Group reviewed the International Objectives from the Strategic Plan, as well as the additional priorities that had emerged since the plan was prepared. Limited progress had been made in a few areas, but overall it was recognized that progress had been disappointing. It was noted that there were not enough people with the right skills mix to implement the plan, and that the action plans relied too much on a few individuals, although the agreed actions had seemed reasonable at the time.

Having recognised the relative lack of progress, the Strategic Planning Group was keen to ensure that things did not slip any further. **Action Planning** has since been asked to provide training to National Directors on Strategic Planning, and worked with the new Secretary General to ensure that effective implementation is achieved.



**'BURKINA FASO: Renovation of a training centre for catechists'**



**David Saint, Chairman, Action Planning**

"I heartily welcome the vital input and managing of this strategic process by Action Planning. Aid to the Church in Need would not have got as far as we have done without this external referee and motivator who was very personal, personable, challenging and yet practical and encouraging!"

**Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director ACN UK**

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