

## **THE RE-BRANDING STORY OF ACT!**

Pact Kenya has come of age. We embrace our future with a new name, a new look, a new positioning, a new voice.

ACT! is now who we are. It is a name and identity that has evolved through many contributions and discussions with our 80 strong staff team, the board and partners. The name change has been one important step in a rebranding process that everyone in the organisation understands and supports.

What ACT! does is not changing but rather improving. Right from the start of our story lies the desire to replace a project approach to development with a long-term commitment to community transformation.

Titus Syengo, a key player in ACT!'s development since its launch 10 years ago and current CEO, reflects: "We could see how appreciative people were of our capacity building and the way relationships became stronger, what we wanted to avoid was having to walk away and let these relationships die."

Around these relationships have been built strong management processes, financial systems, monitoring and evaluation structures. All these actions are the products of three core values – integrity, continuity and accountability.

ACT! is a young organisation but over the last decade it has won and maintained the trust of many donors and partners. Its closest relationship has been with the USAID funded Pact Inc., which enabled ACT! to provide local ownership and direction to capacity building.

One aspect of this rebranding programme is ACT's repositioning as an independent Kenyan NGO. This decision is a great source of satisfaction for Bill Polidoro, a former Pact Inc director for Africa.

"There is a personal delight in seeing PK mature, change its name, refine and strengthen its focus," he explains "It is the embodiment of what development should be!

It is from this new position of independence that ACT! wants to help develop greater trust in Kenya's civil society sector. The world is changing fast, many donor countries are experiencing acute economic pressures which in turn generates greater scrutiny of foreign aid budgets. If investment levels are to be maintained civil society has to build a reputation for integrity and accountability.

In addition other sources of revenue have to be won. The role of the private sector in social responsibility issues is critical. In the developed world many big brands and companies have placed the value of citizenship at the heart of their strategies. They are seeking partnerships with key civil society players to enable them to contribute to key social concerns like environmental conservation, public health and food safety. This will become an increasingly important trend in Kenya.

ACT! wants to be at the forefront of this new world. We are obsessed about long term transformation. If this is to be achieved then we must have the skills, profile and voice to maintain existing relationships and build new ones. This requires boldness and energy- and that is what we hope our new identity communicates.

ACT's reputation as a capacity building and grant making organization that can be trusted internationally will be strengthened by keeping on doing what we have done in the past. How we do it though is changing significantly. Our voice will become stronger and bolder. We want to shake things up, provoke debate and create a civil society culture of greater self determination, pride and confidence.

At the heart of every powerful brand is uniqueness and trust. Not only must a brand know and nurture what makes it different, it must communicate that difference to others and get them to believe. That is ACT's challenge and the challenge for each staff member who works for us. The name and identity changes have been relatively quick and easy. The final and longer stage of our rebranding is underway. As to its ultimate success you will be the final judge.