

15 July 2023

# Practical steps to scale and sustain the humanitarian response in Sudan

Sudan Crisis Coordination Unit  
(SCCU)  
BRIEF #1



The Peters Projection Map

# About the SCCU

The Sudan Crisis Coordination Unit (SCCU) aims to facilitate the coordination of resources and efforts among various groups and networks, including diaspora organisations, humanitarian aid agencies, local civil society organisations, and government agencies.

By enhancing communication and coordination among these entities, we aim to ensure a more effective and efficient response to the crisis, maximising the impact of available resources



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# Summary

Since the eruption of violent clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on 15 April 2023, hundreds of people have been killed, thousands injured, and hundreds of thousands displaced by the fighting, internally within the country and to neighbouring countries. While international and regional powers have tried to broker a ceasefire and resume political talks, the situation remains volatile and uncertain.

Local groups, such as the Emergency Response Rooms (ERR), have mobilised in response to the conflict, working at different levels to respond to immediate needs.

It is critical that all groups, organisations, and governments involved in the humanitarian response in Sudan realise that an effective response to the current crisis requires a real shift in how they operate, given the depth and breadth of the crisis and international actors' failure, thus far, to secure humanitarian corridors to deliver aid.

Ensuring the delivery and scaling of the localisation of humanitarian response empowers local actors in Sudan to lead in designing, delivering, and evaluating humanitarian assistance in their own contexts. It entails shifting power, resources, and decision making from international actors to national and local ones, strengthening their capacities and accountability.

There are practical solutions at hand, with different stakeholders having different roles. At the same time, the response to the crisis can differ across the country depending on the nature of needs and availability.

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The humanitarian situation in Sudan is complex and requires innovative and context-specific solutions to ensure access and assistance to affected populations.

Some of the solutions recently proposed or implemented include:

Issue one: Empowering and supporting the rebuilding and strengthening of Sudan's civil society is critical to the country's recovery in the coming months and years. To empower civil society, however, we must avoid falling back into old habits, simply scaling up the work of international actors. A localised approach is the only way to ensure that the needs and aspirations of affected populations are met. We must support the rebuilding of Sudanese civil society in Sudan and neighbouring countries, as they are the backbone to ensuring sustained support for the people.

**Proposal one: Provide direct funding and training and ensure the presence of Sudanese civil society in all for making decisions that affect their lives. The coordination unit can be the hub to facilitate this, as a centralised base for organisations and groups, both established or in process, to regroup and be able to scale their work.**

Issue two: A regional approach that considers the dynamics and needs of neighbouring countries, host communities, and local realities and capacities within Sudan. This approach will foster coordination, cooperation, and complementarity among the different actors and stakeholders involved in the response.

**Proposal two: Facilitate humanitarian coordination among local groups and the Sudanese diaspora capable of feeding into other coordination mechanisms. Otherwise, the cluster system can overwhelm groups with mechanism, language, and bureaucratic demands. The coordination unit can facilitate the streamlining of these processes.**

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Issue three: Cash programming that leverages digital payment systems not dependent on internet access, such as mobile money, prepaid cards, or vouchers. These systems can help reduce reliance on physical cash, increase financial inclusion and empowerment, and facilitate monitoring and accountability.

**Proposal three: One way to overcome these barriers is to decentralise cash distribution by engaging trusted groups—such as local organisations, community leaders, or diaspora networks—who can act as intermediaries between humanitarian agencies and recipients. These groups can use their own resources and connections to facilitate the electronic transfer process while ensuring transparency and accountability through verification mechanisms. This approach can increase the reach, efficiency, and effectiveness of cash programming dependent on electronic transfer in humanitarian crises.**

Issue four: It is crucial not to underestimate the importance of how to communicate. Addressing linguistic diversity and the type of materials shared with affected populations, especially in remote or hard-to-reach areas, is critical and involves using appropriate, accessible, and culturally sensitive languages, formats, and channels of communication.

**Proposal four: Collaborate with local partners with expertise and experience in the languages, formats, and channels of communication suitable for target groups. This involves ensuring that materials are translated, adapted, and delivered in a way that is accessible, understandable, and sensitive to the needs and preferences of the affected population.**

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Issue five: Addressing the obstruction of aid delivery, whether caused by bureaucratic hurdles, security challenges, or political interference, requires a coordinated approach. Such an approach involves advocating for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and humanitarian principles, alongside engaging with authorities and other influential actors, to facilitate access for and the protection of humanitarian workers and affected populations.

**Proposal five: By continuing and scaling data-driven advocacy, humanitarian actors can communicate more effectively and persuasively with decision-makers and stakeholders, influencing them to help facilitate and protect aid delivery.**

Issue six: Protection at borders and in neighbouring countries hosting Sudanese migrants and third-country nationals is critical. This involves establishing a dialogue with authorities in these countries, explaining the aid mission's humanitarian objectives and principles, and advocating for regulatory changes that allow a more effective response. Such a response should include skilled local and diaspora professionals and humanitarian actors.

**Proposal six: It is important to ensure that advocacy is sustained to identify pathways for durable solutions, such as facilitating temporary waivers for medical professionals, access to education, and livelihood opportunities.**



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