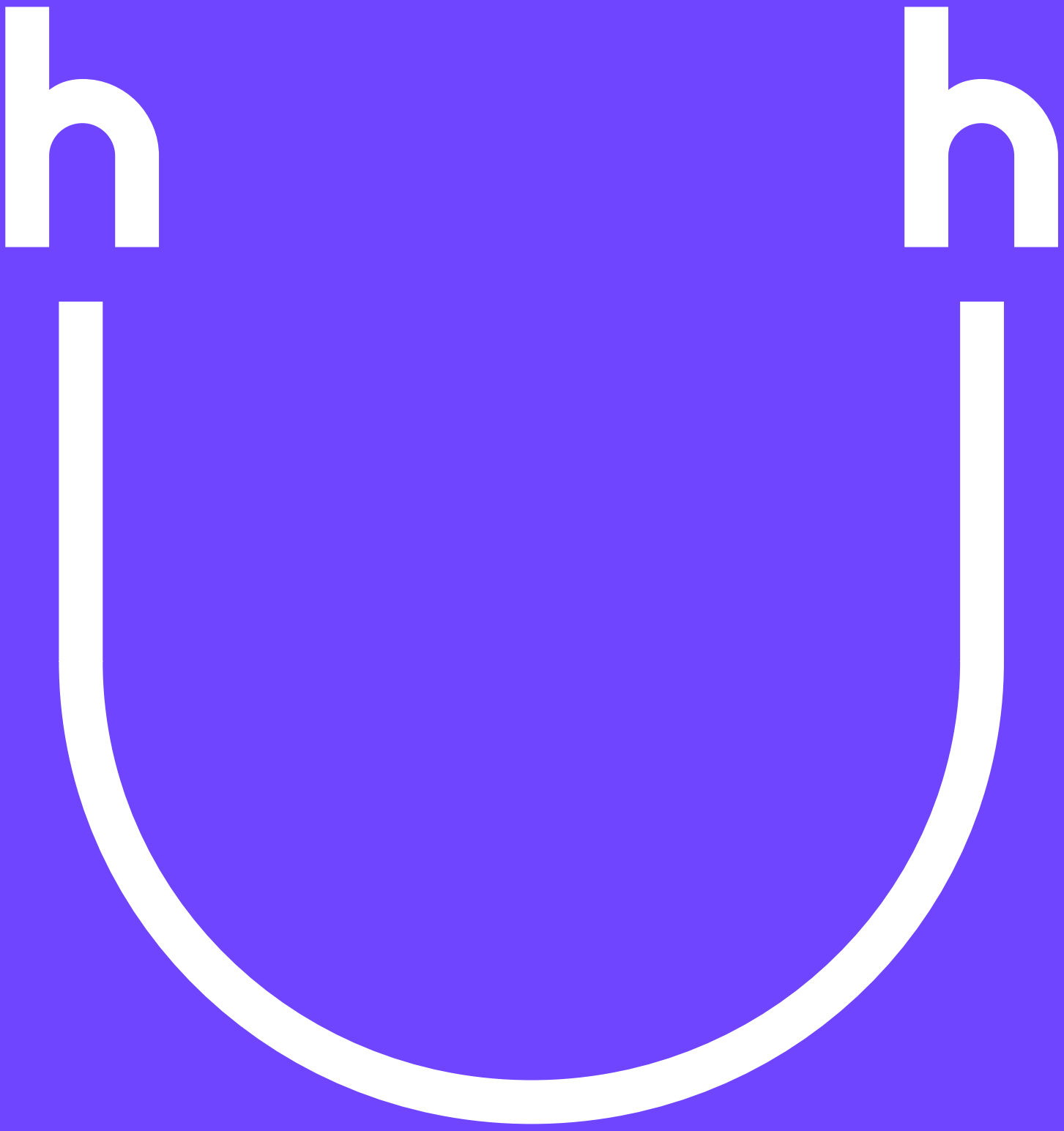
H2H Fund Activation:
Sudan 2023
Case Study

March 2024



Humanitarian
Action Support

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1. Introduction

1.1. Context

On 15 April 2023, long-simmering tensions between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) escalated into violence, with millions of civilians caught under airstrikes and artillery fire. Beginning in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, the fighting quickly spread to major cities in the regions of Darfur and Kordofan, adding to pre-existing conflicts between rebel groups and militias across the country.[1]

One month later, the violence had killed 700 people, injured at least 5,200, forced 218,000 to flee across the borders to neighbouring countries and displaced 730,000 people within Sudan. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance had reached 24.7 million, a 57% increase from the 15.8 million in need prior to the conflict in November 2022. Most of the fighting in these initial weeks took place in major cities with populations greater than 100,000 people. Civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, was destroyed and damaged in Khartoum, Darfur and Kordofan. Heavy use of artillery fire caused hundreds of civilian deaths and casualties and left behind associated unexploded ordnance. Intercommunal violence erupted in West Darfur, leading to significant casualties, displacements and looting.[2]

Civilian needs stretched across the spectrum of humanitarian response. As of 17 May, OCHA estimated that several million people were in need of assistance for each major sector of the international humanitarian system:[3]

Sector	People in need (millions)
Food security and livelihoods	19.9
WASH	14.9
Health	11.0
Mine action	10.0
Education	8.6
Shelter and non-food items	5.7
General protection	5.4
Child protection	4.3
Gender-based violence	4.2

1 The New Humanitarian, The humanitarian backdrop to Sudan's unrest, 17 April 2023.

2 OCHA, Revised Humanitarian Response Plan, Sudan, 17 May 2023.

3 Adapted from OCHA, Revised Humanitarian Response Plan, Sudan, 17 May 2023.

In response, the UN revised its Humanitarian Response Plan on 17 May, requesting USD 2.6 billion to (i) provide timely, multi-cluster, life-saving assistance to crisis affected people to reduce mortality and morbidity, and (ii) mitigate protection risks and response to protection needs through humanitarian action. The plan covered the period until 31 December 2023, and it was revised in June to cover the regional response in both Sudan and neighbouring countries. It was revised again in December 2023 to cover a continuous response into 2024.

Humanitarian access, however, was severely challenged by the fighting.[4] Following the targeting of aid workers and facilities, many humanitarian organizations suspended operations in parts of the country, including most parts of Darfur, with some organizations evacuating their staff to other countries in the region. In Khartoum, international operations were stalled by fighting, especially after armed clashes in the area around the airport delayed aid flights.[5]

Preliminary assessments conducted by the H2H Network in consultation with coordination actors highlighted three key areas where H2H Services had the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the response:

- **Analysing the humanitarian consequences of the conflict**, including new humanitarian needs, harm to the civilian population, forced displacement within and outside of the country
- **Identifying resources and technical expertise** to help operational humanitarian actors address security risks, access constraints and logical issues
- **Improving availability and access to reliable information for civilians** affected and displaced by the conflict, creating effective communication and engagement with communities to avoid misinformation, and reporting to highlight the role of civil society in addressing the crisis.

1.2. Fund activation

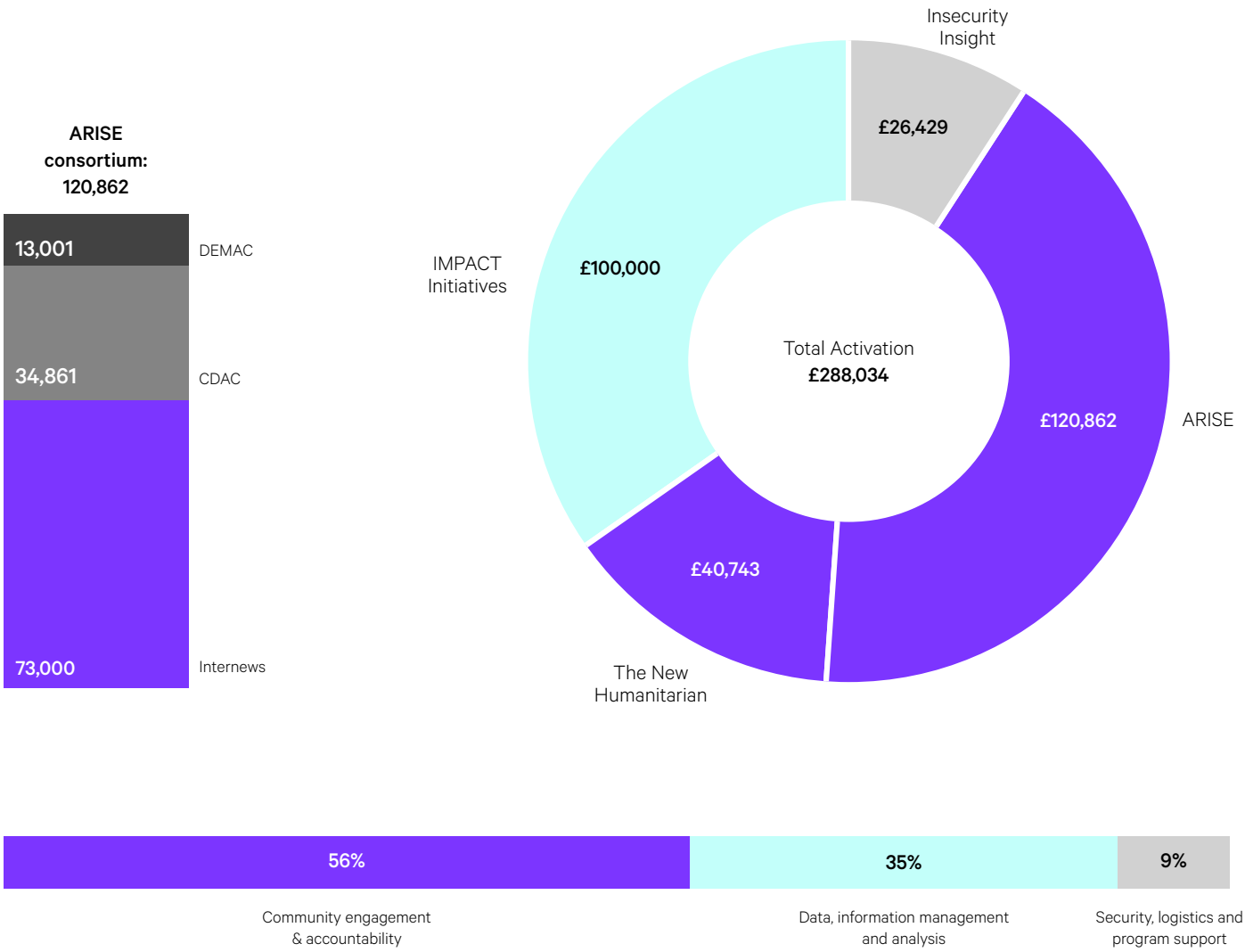
In this context, the H2H Fund launched a call for proposals on 8 May 2023, with applications received on 15 May, project selected on 19 May. Four projects were funded, with one project including three separate H2H Members under the "ARISE" consortium (Internews, CDAC and DEMAC). Six H2H Members received funding.

A total of £288,034 was awarded across the four projects. Implementation took place between 1 June and 31 October 2023, with all four projects starting and being implemented concurrently. Three of the four H2H Service categories were deployed in this response, with just over one half of the funding going to **community engagement & accountability**, one-third going to **data, information management and analysis**, and one tenth to **security, logistics and program support.**

4 As defined by UN OCHA, c.f. OCHA, Revised Humanitarian Response Plan, Sudan, 17 May 2023.

5 OCHA, Revised Humanitarian Response Plan, Sudan, 17 May 2023.

Figure 1: Fund allocation by service area



The ARISE consortium was composed by Internews, CDAC and DEMAC, specifically for the Sudan H2H Fund activation. It brought together three H2H Members with complementary activities in the community engagement and accountability space in Sudan. Funding within the consortium was divided across each member according to their proposed activities and budget needs.

2. Case study purpose and method

2.1. Objectives

As part of its monitoring, evaluation and learning activities, the H2H Network aims to measure and document how the services and resources produced by its member organizations contributed to improving the quality, effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response in the contexts where it activated the H2H Fund.

To this end, this Case study aims to provide evidence on the results, effects and achievements the H2H Fund activation during the Sudan crisis in the period 1 June – 31 October 2023. It features examples of changes to the humanitarian response which can be reasonably said to have been influenced by both the individual projects themselves and the wider H2H Fund activation as a whole. In particular, evidence of improvements to the quality, effectiveness and accountability of the humanitarian response has been identified, in line with the strategic objectives of the H2H Fund.

2.2. Methodology

The Case study was constructed on the basis of the pre-existing MEAL resources developed by the H2H Network. These include a MEAL framework outlining the key elements of the Case study data collection with associated information sources, a key informant interview guide, a coding table and a Case study template.

The following information sources were used for this Case study:

Table 1: Information sources

Project documents		**71**
Funding documents (8):	Call for proposals	1
	Project proposals	4
Project deliverables (49):	Thematic reports, media articles and briefing notes	59
H2H Fund management documents (12):	Stakeholder engagement plan	1
	Contacts list	1
	Project narrative reports	4
	Minutes of meeting between H2H Network and Sudan INGOs	1
Key informant interviews		**22**
	H2H Members' staff	9
	End-users and coordination actors	8
Email correspondence		
	End-users and coordination actors	5

All key informants were identified by the consultant in consultation with the H2H Network and its members. H2H Members' staff were selected according to their degree on the basis of their involvement in the design and implementation of the H2H Fund activities. End-users were selected on the basis of their use of the products and services developed with the support of the H2H Fund. Coordination actors were selected on the basis of their engagement with H2H Members, regarding the gap analyses and dissemination activities associated with the products and services in question. Interviews were conducted using Zoom and transcribed using Grain.

Transcriptions and written comments received by email were then coded using MaxQDA, based on a coding structure built from the H2H MEAL framework and Case study report structure. The results of the coding process were analysed by the consultant, triangulated where possible, and set into context in the findings below.

2.3. Limitations

The Case study invited 23 end-users and coordination partners for interview, in addition to the interviews held with H2H Members. In total, only 8 end-users and coordination partners were interviewed. The main reason cited for non-responsivity was availability, particularly for local responders active inside Sudan at the time of the Case study, but also for those working on the crisis from regional offices in Nairobi. The low response rate risked minimizing the voices of those closest to the affected populations in the analysis of the H2H Network's impact. In response, the consultant sent out email requests for written comment on the products and services used by end-users and coordination actors. Five actors responded with written comments on the availability, usability and usefulness of the products and services. These comments were then used to help complete the coding table alongside the transcripts of the key informant interviews.

Both the key informant interview and email correspondence lists were built using purposive sampling methods, in consultation with H2H Members, themselves. This carries the risk of highlighting end-users and coordination actors who were especially engaged in, or receptive to, the work of the H2H Network in this crisis. Consequently, the observations described below are examples of output and outcome-level changes where they have been observed; but they are not measurements of the size or scale of change achieved across the wider population group. Given the limited number of consultations conducted, other outcomes are likely to have occurred. And given the small size of the H2H Fund activation, other factors are likely to have influenced the effectiveness of the humanitarian response in Sudan during the reporting period. These outcomes and impacts could not be captured by this Case study, and it would require significant further data collection to do so.

3. H2H Services

3.1. Data, information management and analysis

3.1.1. Services and resources produced

IMPACT Initiatives provided rapid humanitarian situation monitoring and needs assessments both inside Sudan and in neighboring countries, to help inform the scale-up of the humanitarian response to the crisis. This included four rounds of primary data collection to understand the needs of civilian populations inside Sudan, as well as refugees and returnees in Chad and South Sudan. The assessments covered a wide range of sectors and included information about top priority needs and assistance preferences. Cross border assessments sought to understand the needs of people crossing the border, as well as those who they had left behind inside Sudan. In addition to the rapid needs assessments conducted in the first few months of the crisis, IMPACT Initiatives also provided analysis on priority needs inside conflict hotspots and hard-to-reach locations across East, Central and South Darfur regions, as well as flood risk assessments in refugee camps in Eastern Chad.

Design of the assessment methodologies and thematic/geographic areas of focus was built from a combination of the methodological knowledge by IMPACT Initiatives' previous multi-sector needs assessment in Sudan in 2020, as well as consultation with international response actors including the INGO forum, FEWSNET, IOM, ACTED and others. IMPACT Initiatives co-chaired the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) with OCHA and IOM during the H2H Fund activation, which led to the organization developing standardized assessment methodology guidance and tools for other actors to use in needs analysis and emergency prioritization. Through this work, IMPACT Initiatives was able to consult with AAWG and Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) members to ensure that the assessment tools and methods used for the analyses provided through the H2H Fund activation were relevant and appropriate to the needs of other actors involved in the response. Product scoping was also enhanced through consultation with the diaspora group Shabaka, a network of Doctor's Unions, and Ground Truth Solutions (an H2H Member), which helped focus efforts on priority information gaps. In the case of Ground Truth Solutions, IMPACT Initiatives coordinated with them regarding needs analysis among Sudanese refugees in Chad, where Ground Truth Solutions was operating.

Each assessment was used to develop a range of presentations, reports and factsheets for dissemination among humanitarian decision-makers and stakeholders. Data presentations were made as soon as possible after assessments were completed, and targeting key decision-making fora involved in the Sudan response, including:

- The ICCG
- The Information Management Working Group
- The INGO forum
- The WASH and Protection clusters
- Key donors and coordination partners including BHA, the IASC and OCHA Regional Office for East Africa.

Findings were also shared with the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) team, notably from the assessments conducted in Darfur in June 2023, which was used as an information point for the IPC update in November 2023.

In total, IMPACT Initiatives produced six reports from the information collected under the H2H Fund activation:

Table 2: IMPACT Initiatives needs analyses

#	Title, Date	Report type	Purpose
1	Returnee/Refugee Household Survey, 14 June 2023 South Sudan – Round 2	Factsheet	Inform the set-up of response services in South Sudan by highlighting the levels of need
2	Area of Origin: Reports on the situation in settlements in South Darfur State: Round 2, 23 June 2023	Factsheet	Highlight severity of need in South Darfur to inform planning activities and advocate for more support
3	Area of Origin: Reports on the situation in settlements in Khartoum State: Round 2, 23 June 2023	Factsheet	Highlight severity of need in Khartoum State to inform planning activities and advocate for more support
4	Regional Cross-Border Assessments, July 2023, Sudan – Central African Republic, South Sudan, Chad	Situation Overview	Inform strategic planning by highlighting key trends in movement patterns and needs
5	Spontaneous Displacement Sites on the Chad-Sudan border, July 2023, Chad	Factsheet	Identify the sites most susceptible to flooding and predicted increase in population flows to inform planning
6	Chad Situation Overview: West Darfur, 7 July 2023	Situation Overview	Inform decision-makers on refugee needs in Chard and needs of remaining populations in West Darfur

The reports were disseminated through a Sudan-specific mailing list of over 80 individuals working in international organizations involved in the Sudan response[1], as well as globally via the IMPACT Initiatives Sudan Crisis social media thread and the global resource hub.

1 The mailing list included individuals working within coordination bodies and clusters, UN agencies, INGOs, and donors.

3.1.2. Effect on the response

The cross-border needs assessments conducted by IMPACT Initiatives in June and July played a key role in filling data gaps during the early stages of the conflict and raising awareness of the urgency of food security needs. At this point in the conflict, information on displacement patterns and priority needs both within and outside of Sudan were very limited. The cross-border reports provided humanitarian actors with critical information about the needs of people left behind in Sudan, including populations trapped by the conflict in both urban and rural areas. INGO staff, in particular, cited the value of the presentations to the ICCG and INGO forum on food security, which were credited with a key role in bringing the need for urgent action on food security to the attention of international actors with no presence inside the country.[1]

The assessments contributed to an evidence-based prioritization of the Darfur region and Khartoum State by international agencies, which helped to increase the reach of the international response to people most in need. Early-stage responses to the conflict focused on the needs of people trapped in the city of Khartoum, where the fighting was initially most intense. As the conflict spread and became protracted, the needs of people grew across Khartoum State, as well as in cities in Darfur, such as Nyala, and rural areas across the west of the country. IMPACT Initiative's assessments helped to bring these evolving needs to the attention of the international community. Changes in the focus of the Humanitarian Needs Overview, OCHA Situation Reports and annual strategy of donors including BHA, all reflected these changes. IMPACT Initiative's assessments were described as one of the key contributing parts of the evidence-base that influenced these changes.[2]

In addition, by co-chairing the Assessment and Analysis Working Group (AAWG) with OCHA and IOM during the H2H Fund activation, IMPACT Initiatives was able to contribute to the development of a standardized assessment methodology guide and toolset for needs analysis and emergency prioritization in the Sudan response. Working through the AAWG helped IMPACT Initiatives to influence wider needs analysis practices beyond the H2H Network, whilst also ensuring its own tools and methods developed for its own work were in line with current best practice and well-suited to the needs of the key response actors involved in the response. Other organizations on the AAWG cited IMPACT Initiatives' work as critical in the development of this standardized methodology during the initial phase of the crisis response.[3]

Lastly, the assessments were used as part of the evidence-base for the update to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) in November 2023. This update provided international actors with a timely assessment of the severity of food insecurity across Sudan and included a statement of the need for continued funding and support from the international community as the conflict transitioned to protracted status. IMPACT Initiative's assessments were credited as providing one part of the evidence-base for this update.[4]

1 Email correspondence with INGO staff member involved in the early stages of the Sudan crisis response.

2 KII with international response agency staff member.

3 KII with international response agency staff member; KII with H2H member agency.

4 Email correspondence with international response agency staff member.

3.2. Community engagement & accountability

3.2.1. Services and resources produced

H2H Members provided a range of products and services in the area of community engagement and accountability during the Sudan activation. Firstly, The New Humanitarian reported on the situation in overlooked regions of Sudan, which centered local perspectives and the Sudanese mutual aid response. Secondly, the ARISE consortium provided a mix of social media monitoring aimed at informing the international response about community engagement and accountability priorities as well as the Sudanese diaspora organizations' work. The following text presents these activities in further detail.

The New Humanitarian delivered eighteen pieces of journalistic content under the H2H Fund activation. This included written articles, one podcast and one first person story:

Table 3: The New Humanitarian content produced

#	Title, Date	Report type	Producers
1	Snapshots: How Sudan's conflict is impacting Darfur	Written article	National
2	Rethinking Humanitarianism | How mutual aid in Sudan is getting international support	Podcast	International
3	Chad offers a tenuous lifeline for Sudanese fleeing a vicious war	Written article	International
4	'Everything is destroyed': Refugees recount the battle for Darfur's largest city	Written article	National (South Sudan)
5	Long hours and low budgets: Meet the refugee groups supporting Sudanese displaced in Egypt	Written article	International
7	How Dafuris displaced by past conflict are coping with Sudan's war	Written article	National
8	'Every checkpoint could be your last': The perilous road to safety for Darfuri refugees	Written article	International
9	A South Sudanese returnee's story, from Khartoum to their childhood home	Written article	National (South Sudan)
10	War has destroyed my Darfur town – but I will keep fighting for justice	First person stories	National
11	How mutual aid networks are powering Sudan's humanitarian response	Written article	National & international
12	Sudanese aid workers face hundreds of job losses	Written article	National & international
13	Urgent help needed for stranded South Sudanese returnees	Written article	International
14	For Sudanese fleeing to Egypt, a hard border and an uncertain future	Written article	National & international
15	Obstacles to aid pile up as Sudan's conflict rages on	Written article	National & international
16	The civil servant documenting sexual violence in Sudan's conflict	Local actor interview	National
17	As Sudan's humanitarian crisis deepens, donors must dig deeper	Written article	International
18	Sudan refugees struggle to exit to Ethiopia, while aid workers trying to enter are turned back	Written article	International
19	Sudanese volunteers on supporting hospitals and opposing the war	Written article	International

The content produced by The New Humanitarian focused to a great deal on centering Sudanese voices in the coverage of the conflict and its effects. The New Humanitarian did this by (i) focusing on mutual aid networks and affected person perspectives in the response, and (ii) leveraging its pre-existing networks of Sudanese reporters based in Khartoum, Port Sudan, and Nyala, as well as a partnership with Ayin Media, a Sudanese news service. The decision to do this was made primarily by The New Humanitarian's own team, both in the region and at headquarters, though it also reflected discussions with international actors, including OCHA, who highlighted the importance of the local mutual aid groups known as Emergency Response Rooms.[1]

The ARISE consortium combined the activities of three H2H Members, each offering different services within the communication, community engagement and accountability (CCEA) space. CDAC organized a regional forum for decision-makers to agree on priority actions to help elevate communication and engagement with affected communities in the international response. It also developed three written resources on CCEA issues and challenges in the Sudan crisis, and it delivered two short training sessions on communicating with marginalized and monitory groups for the Sudan Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Working Group. Internews conducted social media monitoring of affected people's feedback on the international response, including rumors and misinformation, and it shared analysis through six written reports and 55 presentations to humanitarian response actors and coordination bodies. DEMAC conducted a map of 60 Sudanese diaspora organizations active in the crisis response and a real-time review of diaspora group activities and support provided in Sudan in the first six months of the conflict.[2]

A total of 11 original CCEA resources were published by the ARISE consortium under the H2H Fund activation:

Table 4: Social media monitoring reports produced by the ARISE consortium

#	Title, Date	Organization	Purpose
1	Elevating communication and engagement in Sudan's growing humanitarian crisis: Priority actions for decision-makers and practitioners, August 2023	CDAC	To encourage collective CCEA in the regional response to the Sudanese crisis
2	Communication, community engagement and accountability in Sudan's regional response: Outcomes of the high-level meeting to discuss elevating collective CCEA in the regional Sudan conflict response, October 2023		
3	Diaspora Humanitarian Engagement in Sudan Real-Time Review	DEMAC	To provide independent review of diaspora organization activities and results
4	Snapshot of Diaspora Humanitarianism: Sudan, October 2023		To provide a short overview of diaspora organization activities in Sudan
5	Sudanese Diaspora Humanitarian Response: Snapshot Report, August 2023		
7	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #1	Internews	To share local community feedback, concerns and needs with the international community
8	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #2		
9	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #3		
10	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #4		
11	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #5		
12	Sudan Humanitarian Flash Update #6		

1 KII with H2H Member staff.

2 The sixty organizations identified came from a wide range of diaspora locations: 32% were based in the UK, 26% in the USA, 18% were identified as having a "global" base, 5% were European (excluding the UK) and 2% from the Gulf States.

ARISE consortium members consulted with key coordination actors in the design of their activities, although the space for participatory design was somewhat limited by access and time constraints. CDAC coordinated with the AAP Working Groups for both Sudan and the East Africa region, as well as OCHA Regional Office for East Africa. This coordination strongly influenced the design of the CCEA training activities, most notably by helping identify needs and constraints for CCEA among the AAP Working Group membership, and by helping prioritize training participants. The CCEA Forum that CDAC organized was co-convened with the ARISE consortium partners (Internews and DEMAC) as well as OCHA, UNICEF and the Sudan INGO Forum. This level of co-ownership was cited as a contributing factor to the success of the event, as well as the engagement it enjoyed with technical experts and decision-makers from over 30 different agencies and network bodies. DEMAC consulted with the Sudanese diaspora organizations in their pre-existing network before deciding on the real-time review (RTR) and organizational mapping tools, as well as discussing with OCHA, DRC Sudan and the INGO Forum, to help identify needs. These consultations helped identify the need for concrete information covering as many diaspora organizations as possible, in response to the limited amount of information that international organizations had about who was doing what and where inside Sudan. The RTR and mapping exercises were designed to respond to this need, with 60 different organizations included in the final product. Lastly, Internews consulted with the AAP Working Group on the design and development of their products. This helped influence the implementation of a platform for compiling and sharing key materials, data and analysis from the rumor tracking and social media activities. [1]

While these coordination activities certainly influenced the design and shape of the ARISE products and services, there is only limited evidence of users taking a central role in the design of the ARISE products and services offered. DEMAC's snapshot reports and real-time reviews were designed, to an extent, in response to the expressed needs of diaspora organizations for clear mapping and summary information for advocacy purposes. But there is less evidence that the consultation undertaken by CDAC and Internews led to concrete effects on the scope or format of the products and services provided. To a degree, this speaks to the fact that both organizations have implemented similar activities in previous crises and have pre-existing stakeholder networks in Sudan. Nevertheless, it remains true that participatory, user-based, design played only a limited role in shaping the CCEA activities implemented by H2H Member organizations in this response.

1 KII with H2H Member staff.

3.2.2. Effects on the response

The New Humanitarian's articles provided international decision-makers with a clear and credible window into the consequences of the conflict on the lives of Sudanese people. In the first six months of the conflict, when the H2H Fund activation was implemented, there was a clear absence of information from inside Sudan. While limited and discrete needs analyses were undertaken, including by IMPACT Initiatives, ACAPS and OCHA, there were no other major information sources providing coverage from primary sources on the ground in Sudan. In particular, the voices of affected people living through the crisis were absent from the international coverage of the events following the evacuation of international personnel from Khartoum in April 2023. In this context, The New Humanitarian's reporting filled a clear gap in terms of primary source reporting from the perspectives of affected persons inside Sudan, especially during the initial months of the conflict when the H2H Fund activation was ongoing. As one interviewee put it: "The New Humanitarian's reporting was higher quality, more accurate and more granular than anything the international system was generating at that time". [1]

The New Humanitarian's work was credited with bringing a wider awareness of the role of mutual aid among UN agencies, international donors and the wider system. One interviewee stated that in wider discussions across the humanitarian system, the international community has come to understand the importance of local actors in this response, in a way that hasn't happened before, with the one exception of Ukraine. In their opinion, the early and consistent focus of The New Humanitarian on this point, thanks in part to its network of local reporters inside Sudan, was a key contributing factor to this shift in understanding.[2] While this can only represent the opinion of one key informant in and of itself, it is supported by references and citations made to The New Humanitarian's work by other organizations. For example, the reporting on the emergency response rooms was cited in a report by the Overseas Development Institute, looking at the role of mutual aid in the Sudan response. Likewise, while the reports produced by ACAPS during the early stages of the crisis made little reference to the role of local actors, by January 2024 this had changed. ACAPS produced a thematic report which made clear reference to the fact that "local humanitarian responders, especially grassroots organizations, have been at the frontline of delivering lifesaving and life-sustaining support at a time when international humanitarian organizations are grappling with access constraints". The report cited The New Humanitarian's reporting on this point.

The work of the ARISE consortium raised awareness of the wider humanitarian system on key aspects of communication, community engagement and accountability, namely regarding:

- **community expectations, perceptions and sentiments regarding the crisis response**
- **identifying the key diaspora actors and the role that diaspora communities were playing in the response**
- **the avenues and constraints for community engagement and information sharing**

Regarding awareness of community perceptions, Internews' snapshot reports influenced key actors within the international system and helped them to respond to the evolving needs expressed by affected people as the conflict unfolded. One UN actor stated simply that Internews' snapshot reports were "if not the only, then one of the most important, analyses that we have been able to refer and share with our humanitarian partners during the Inter Cluster coordination meetings".[3] This same actor stated

1 KII with an international journalist and expert on Sudan.

2 KII with a staff member of an INGO.

3 KII with a staff member of an international coordination actor operating in Sudan.

that they used Internews' work to ensure that emergency support was directed to the right people in the right parts of the country, particularly as the crisis evolved over time. This influenced the revision to the HRP in 2024 to reflect needs expressed by affected communities. It also used the information shared by Internews to advocate on behalf of communities expressing their needs through social media, especially as the conflict moved and created flare-ups and significant incidents in new cities towards the end of 2023. Some of the needs spotted through the Internews analyses in this regard included information about safe routes to escape the violence, information about safety and information about safe routes for return. The rigor and quality of analysis, combined with the timeliness, regularity, and relevance to the cluster coordination mechanisms, were all cited as key reasons for the usefulness of the Internews content. This was, of course, all the more important in a context where opportunities for community feedback are as limited as they are in Sudan.

Regarding awareness of diaspora organizations in Sudan, early indications suggest that DEMAC's work has contributed to enhanced data, knowledge and awareness about the Sudanese diaspora actors active in Sudan since April 2023. INGOs, including DRC and NRC, have shown increased understanding of the diaspora community since the launch of DEMAC's work, and have reported greater interest in continuing involvement with this community as the crisis continues. More broadly, DEMAC reported high levels of engagement[4] with their content published online and through their social media platforms in the three months following publication. Diaspora organizations, themselves, have reported that the Real-Time Review, in particular, has increased recognition of their work among international actors.[5]

While changes in funding flows and partnerships between the international system and diaspora organizations have not changed significantly at the time of writing, there are some emerging indications of change in the period since DEMAC's work was published. Most notably, IOM has opened a collaboration with DEMAC to direct BHA funding towards a diaspora organization in Sudan.[6] The contribution that DEMAC's Real-Time Review and snapshot reports made to this decision must be understood as indirect, as it primarily opened the space for continued conversation and collaboration, which in turn led to the decision being made. Nevertheless, it is a clear example of how H2H Members can leverage a small project into further collaborations for wider change in the way that key actors within the international system work.

It should also be noted that, in addition to helping the international community understand the landscape of diaspora actors within Sudan, DEMAC's work was also credited with improving the capacity of diaspora organizations to engage with international organizations. Some noted that, by taking part in the Real-Time Review process and engaging in the launch event, they were able to build their understanding of, and networks within, the system of international actors working inside Sudan during the crisis.[7] Here again, no concrete changes in partnerhips or agreements can be recorded at this stage, but improvements in understanding, awareness and capacity of diaspora actors to engage with the international community does represent an improvement in the potential for future engagement.

4 As measured by downloads, page views and social media engagement metrics.

5 Email correspondence with a diaspora actor.

6 KII with H2H Member staff.

7 Email correspondence with a diaspora actor.

Lastly, regarding awareness of the importance of CCEA among international actors, CDAC's work has provided the impetus for increased prioritization among international response actors at the regional level. CDAC combined a regional conference – which targeted regional decision-makers and focused on strategic prioritization of CCEA – with discrete training bursts for individual members of the AAP Working Group. This provided an impetus at both policy and operational levels for INGOs operating inside Sudan to prioritize communication and community engagement at a time when budget scarcity was putting pressure on CCEA activities for many organizations. Participants at the regional conference reported that the recommendations which emerged were realistic, and they recognized that CCEA required strategic prioritization. The training bursts were likewise well-received by participating INGO staff members.

Unfortunately, no instances of INGOs implementing the recommendations of the roundtable event have been noted as of yet. This is not surprising, given the time required for changes like this to occur. However, it does suggest that continued monitoring and engagement with the principal actors in the Sudanese response will be required in order for the impetus built during the H2H Fund activation to yield tangible results. Future H2H Fund activations might want to consider follow-up mechanisms to record changes made to CCEA practices over a longer time horizon than is presently available.

Interestingly, there is evidence to suggest that CDAC's work in Sudan benefitted from the previous H2H Fund activation in the Horn of Africa. By focusing on regional coordination in the Sudan response, CDAC was able to leverage pre-existing partnerships and informal networks of allies that were built during the H2H Fund activation for the drought response in Horn of Africa. The majority of the participants in the regional conference were identified through informal networks that pre-date the H2H Fund activation for Sudan, with a significant number having also been involved in the H2H Fund activation for the Horn of Africa. This speaks to the lengthy time horizons for the type of changes CDAC is aiming to bring about, which typically extend beyond the lifecycle of an individual project and its associated reporting period. It also demonstrates the value of continued engagement with international actors in this area. Repeated engagement of the regional AAP Working Group with the key regional actors involved, including OCHA Regional Office in East Africa, provides one avenue for building a coherent and consistent prioritization of community engagement initiatives in the region.

3.3. Logistics, security & program support

3.3.1. Services and resources produced

Insecurity Insight provided 19 reports covering:

- **situation analysis for aid agencies covering security risks, access and conflict parties**
- **social media monitoring of rumors and community perceptions of aid workers/ organizations**
- **food security and conflict-related sexual violence**
- **attacks on healthcare**

Table 5: Social media monitoring reports produced by Insecurity Insight

Title, Date	Report type
Conflict Developments and their Implications for Aid Agencies, July 2023	Situation Report Analysis
Conflict Parties in the Current Crisis 2023, September 2023	Situation Report Analysis
Aid Agencies Access and Security Risk Management, September 2023	Situation Report Analysis
Sudan's Doctors Falsely Accused of Siding with the Rapid Support Forces, July 2023.	Social Media Monitoring
Designation of MSF Attackers as "Armed Men" Criticized by SAF Supporters in Sudan, September 2023	Social Media Monitoring
The Sudan Crisis, Conflict and Food Insecurity, July 2023	Thematic Report
Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Sudan, 15 April to 30 September 2023	Thematic Report

The reports were disseminated through Insecurity Insight's website and mailing lists, as well as through engagement with key actors involved in the Sudan response. For example, Insecurity Insight presented findings at the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF) meeting in September 2023, where they presented summary data on urban security risk management in Sudan and provided evidence-based recommendations for security risk management in urban contexts in the conflict. They also took part in monthly coordination meetings with two NGO coalitions active in the Sudan response, namely the Conflict and Hunger Alliance, facilitated by ACF, and the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition. In addition, Insecurity Insight worked with two diaspora doctors' networks (Sudanese American Physicians Association and Sudan Doctor's for Human Rights) to raise awareness about the levels of violence faced by healthcare workers in Sudan. Lastly, the data on attacks on healthcare was presented to a range of international aid agencies, donors and researchers in Washington, D.C. at the Researching the Impact of Attacks on Healthcare consortium meeting.

3.3.2. Effect on the response

As with the H2H Network's support to data and information management and analysis, above, the work of Insecurity Insight provided a valuable additional data point for international actors who were otherwise unable to gather data directly from communities. The closure and downsizing of so many international organizations' operations inside Sudan in the first few months of the crisis meant that regional and global management were often unable to access data from community members themselves. This hampered efforts to understand the shape and evolution of need in the early phases of the large-scale conflict. Insecurity Insight's social media analysis was useful, in this instance, as it provided a source of community feedback on needs and risks that would not otherwise have been available. As one regional advisor put it: "When we have to do remote management or we don't have access to people because they're in an urban setting and can't leave their houses or they're trapped because of insecurity, people are going to be talking on social media instead, and that's when this is most useful".[1]

This data was then used to inform analyses of risks inside Sudan for actors working both within the response and globally. Users cited the food security data in briefings given to the European Council's working party for Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA), as well as using it to inform that work of the Sudan Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Data provided by Insecurity Insight on the damage caused to food and health infrastructures was used by Explosive Weapons Monitor, an NGO providing public data on the impact of explosive weapons globally. The report on sexual violence was used to inform strategic decision making by Legal Action Worldwide, who work to increase prosecutions of human rights violations in fragile contexts, including sexual violence.

Insecurity Insight's products provided granular and nuanced information for aid agencies operating inside Sudan and neighboring countries, particularly in the first nine months of the crisis. Security risk managers used the information on threats to aid workers and perceptions of aid work to inform their risk management procedures and improve anticipatory risk planning frameworks. In this regard, the provision of granular information combined with context-analysis was a key contributory factor to the value of Insecurity Insight's products for predictive analysis, which made it stand out from other available sources. Security risk managers spoken to by the consultant noted that, while some agencies are able to collect information of this type, few have the resources to fully analyse it in the way that Insecurity Insight does. The combination of quantitative data and contextual analysis, as well as the use of maps and clear graphics, were both cited as useful elements of the resource produced. In addition, for one agency, the speed of the data analysis and dissemination meant that it was able to open operations in the border region of Renk, South Sudan during the early phase of the crisis. The organization was then able to leverage this field presence to find funding for additional operations in Chad, where previously they had none.

At a wider-level, the presentations made to the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF), was cited by participants as contributing valuable evidence-based insight into the wider humanitarian community's understanding of urban security risk management in conflict contexts. Here, the value of Insecurity Insight's work came from its ability to provide in-depth social media analysis in a setting where the opportunities for primary data collection in-person were so limited. As a result, GISF members were able to learn from grounded insights about the risks emerging for humanitarian actors in Khartoum, as well as major cities in Darfur and Kordofan regions, which they would otherwise not have been able to access.

1 KII with a regional advisor of an international NGO operating in Sudan and Chad.

Lastly, the value of Insecurity Insight's work for several agencies went beyond security risk management. The analyses of attacks on healthcare workers and facilities, as well as the analysis of social media data on sexual violence incidents, was used by humanitarian organizations operating inside Sudan and neighboring countries, for both advocacy and operational purposes. Regarding attacks on healthcare, two organizations argued that Insecurity Insight's work was useful for internal advocacy, as it provided information about the wider context, beyond their own organization's operations, which could then be used to raise awareness among colleagues on the importance of taking risk mitigation measures. The analysis of sexual violence, on the other hand, was used by some humanitarian organizations to ensure sexual violence response teams were operational from the start of the response, which allowed them to provide referrals and responses from the outset. In addition, it was used for external advocacy, within public awareness activities, to increase international attention on the sexual violence occurring in Sudan during the early stages of the conflict.

Several actors noted that Insecurity Insight's work was particularly valuable given that organizations with operational teams inside Sudan often felt unable to engage in advocacy on this topic, for fear of losing access. Moreover, the independent nature of the analysis coming from Insecurity Insight was used by protection advocacy staff to help ground their own data in the wider context. As one international staff member put it, the datasets produced were helpful "to complement my advocacy efforts with the data coming in from Insecurity Insight… [especially for] briefing notes where we want to quote data that's not from our own teams".[2] As such, there was particular value in having an independent, non-operational actor produce and disseminate this work.

2 KII with an international NGO staff member.

4. H2H Fund

The timing of the H2H Fund activation proved to be instrumental in allowing H2H Members to fill the information gaps that emerged in the international community after the conflict reached Khartoum in April 2023. By launching the H2H Fund activation three weeks after the conflict began, and one week before the revised HRP was announced, H2H Members were able to meet the information gaps that emerged in April head-on. IMPACT Initiatives published their first cross-border assessments in June, and The New Humanitarian began publishing H2H-supported content in the same month. The social media snapshots provided by Internews and the analysis provided by Insecurity Insights all began that summer. By the time CDAC convened its regional roundtable in the autumn, H2H Members had already been able to deliver a range of products and services of relevance to the participants present. The speed with which activities began proved, in this case, to be a contributory factor to the impacts they had.

As in previous H2H Fund activations, H2H Members broadly appreciated the flexibility and ease of the funding model. Some members did alter the scope and focus of the work delivered, in response to evolving needs. IMPACT Initiatives, for example, was able to define the scope of data collection activities focused on flood risks for refugee settlements in neighboring countries, in response to emerging needs that developed during the H2H Fund activation period. Likewise, Insecurity Insight was able to produce information about sexual violence incidents using social media analysis, again, in response to the evolution of the context and the needs expressed by humanitarian organizations during the activation period. In cases such as this, the ability to develop the scope, frequency and depth of individual analytical reports in real-time, without the need for significant revision of funding agreements, provided H2H Members with the flexibility necessary to respond to gaps in the official architecture as they evolved over time.

This particular H2H Fund activation presented a strong case for follow-up funding, which ultimately fell through. H2H Members' products and services had a clear value-add in the context of the Sudan crisis. The relocation of so many international organizations outside of Sudan, combined with the restrictions on movement within it, weakened the quality and coverage of the needs assessment architecture in this crisis. In this context, the work of H2H Members to increase needs assessments where possible, and to leverage social media analysis and local reporting across the country, played a clear role in contributing to the quality of the international humanitarian response. Given the protracted nature of the conflict, this need persisted beyond the H2H Fund activation period, and still remains at the time of writing. For these reasons, the H2H Network and the Sudan INGO Forum held discussions with a view of exploring a follow-up intervention. These discussions ultimately fell through, with no further funding being arranged. This is an evident loss for the wider humanitarian community given the continued need for mapping evolving needs and amplification of the voices of affected people in the conflict.

The value of consortia approaches, such as that seen in this response, is also clear, although questions remain about whether additional modes of coordination between funded members could be valuable once the H2H Fund activation has begun. The members of the ARISE consortium all observed that membership helped them deliver the intended impacts of their projects. For Internews and DEMAC, engagement with CDAC, in particular at the regional conference in the Autumn, helped to disseminate their work with the members of the wider humanitarian system. For CDAC, it proved beneficial to work with organizations that had the capacity to collect and analyze the voices of affected people alongside information about the activities of diaspora actors in the response. By working together, these organizations were able to encourage the international community to place a higher value on information

and communication as a form of aid in itself, particularly in a crisis such as the Sudan conflict, where movement restrictions created such a barrier to information flow. There were, however, questions raised by some H2H Members about the potential value of introducing additional mechanisms for informal coordination and collaboration between members who were not, formerly, in a consortium together. In this H2H Fund activation, both Internews and Insecurity Insight were deploying country-wide social media analysis to track perspectives of affected people towards both the conflict itself and the international response to it. Likewise, both The New Humanitarian and DEMAC were working to highlight the role of Sudanese actors outside the official architecture. Neither of these pairings were in a consortium together, but both could have potentially learnt from each other's operations. The H2H Network already ensures that the member organizations who participate in an H2H Fund activation have a range of opportunities for further coordination among each other. This includes initial kick-off meetings to help identify potential synergies, sharing of contact details to encourage communication and follow-up between H2H Members, and follow-up meetings 2-3 months into each H2H Fund activation. Nevertheless, the results in this particular activation showed that some members, who were working in similar thematic areas but operating outside of a consortium arrangement, did not actively pursue all avenues for cooperation.

Conclusion

The clarity of the effects on the wider international system in the H2H Fund activation for Sudan speak to the relevance of H2H Network's products and services in contexts where movement is constrained and international organizations are absent. In such contexts, H2H Members provide a value combination of needs analysis, community engagement and communication activities, and activities that center the voices of affected people. The first six months of the crisis saw a withdrawal of international staff and closure of operations for almost half of the INGOs operating in Sudan at the start of 2023.[1] Movement inside Sudan was restricted and humanitarian access extremely limited. In this period, reliable information about humanitarian need was largely absent. The initial focus of the response was on Khartoum and the east of the country. But in the months that followed, the conflict spread west to include both urban and rural contexts in the regions of Darfur and Kordofan. In this light, the value of the H2H Fund activation lay in large part in the ability of its members to implement primary data collection activities inside Sudan, conduct rigorous and timely social media monitoring, and provide reporting that centered the voices of affected populations as they sought to mitigate the risks posed by the conflict. By coordinating and disseminating this work through the major coordination fora at country and regional levels, H2H Members were able to raise awareness among the international community of the evolving needs as the conflict became widespread and protracted.

Community feedback, perspectives and concerns were collected, analysed and shared with the key agencies involved in coordinating the international response. A critical component of the H2H Fund Activation was the emphasis on sharing community perspectives on the crisis and the international response. Social media monitoring activities implemented by Internews and Insecurity Insight proved to be a reliable and timely tool for gathering information about humanitarian needs, as well as identifying rumors and misinformation about the response. The reporting of The New Humanitarian managed to place the voices of affected people at the center, with a combination of locally based reporters, first person narratives, and a clear focus on the role of mutual aid groups.

Several H2H Members involved in this activation sought to map, amplify and engage with the activities of local actors and diaspora organizations in response to the crisis evolutions over the first six months of the conflict. In addition to the work of The New Humanitarian to highlight the work of the local emergency response rooms, DEMAC provided a clear wide-scope mapping of the activities undertaken by diaspora organizations inside Sudan. This work helped raise the awareness of local and diaspora actors among the international actors involved in the Inter-Cluster, AAP Working Groups and the sector-specific clusters, as well as the key donors involved in the response.

There are nascent signs of international actors adapting strategies on the basis of this work. While it remains difficult to document precise changes in policy, strategy and practice at this stage, there are signs that some international actors have begun to shift their response efforts as a result of the H2H Members' efforts. Increased recognition of the needs expressed by affected populations, and of the role of mutual aid groups, have both been observed in donor dialogues and needs analyses published shortly after the H2H Fund activation was completed. In one case, a partnership between IOM and DEMAC has begun to take shape, which will help to channel BHA funds towards diaspora actors in Sudan. And, at a wider level, the discussion of locally-led relief efforts has moved significantly beyond that which was seen when the conflict started in April 2023.

1 The New Humanitarian, 'How mutual aid in Sudan is getting international support', Rethinking Humanitarianism podcast, October 2023.

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