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# 1. Introduction

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## Purpose and Objectives of the Case Study

As part of its commitment to continuous monitoring, evaluation, and learning, the H2H Network seeks to assess how services and resources produced by its members contribute to improving the quality, effectiveness, and accountability of humanitarian responses in crises where the H2H Fund has been activated.

H2H has contracted Humanitarian Advisory Group to compile evidence of outcomes, draw learning, and inform future fund activations and strategic planning for the H2H Network and its partners. This case study focuses on the Sudan activation in 2024, examining the impact of H2H-supported initiatives on five key areas: access to information, coordination and collective action, accountability and community engagement, capacity strengthening, and informing advocacy and policy discussions.

## Methodology and Limitations

This case study was developed through a mixed-methods approach, combining desk review and primary data collection. Sources reviewed included narrative reports submitted by the H2H Members involved in the Sudan activation, key project outputs (e.g. assessment reports, communication products), and relevant external documents.

To validate findings and assess the effectiveness of the fund, interviews were conducted with seven key informants, including H2H Members and humanitarian actors who used the services and resources.

Limitations of the study include reliance on self-reported data from H2H Members, limited availability of stakeholders, and the short timeframe between project completion and evaluation, which limit the ability to assess long-term outcomes or sustainability of impact.

## Structure of the Report

This report is structured into 3 main sections:

- **Section 1:** Introduction (this section) introduces the report and provides an overview of the Sudan context and the H2H Fund activation in 2024.
- **Section 2:** Achievements and impacts present analysis of outcomes across the five key impact areas.
- **Section 3:** Overall impact and effectiveness of the H2H Fund in Sudan, discusses key observations across the activation and provides a brief conclusion to inform future H2H Fund activations.

## Context snapshot

The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has continued to worsen in the past two years, leading to the internal displacement of approximately 9.1 million people and forcing another 3.3 million to flee to neighbouring countries.<sup>1</sup> This dire situation is compounded by persistent food insecurity, with 4.9 million children under five years and pregnant and nursing women suffering from acute malnutrition by the end of 2024. The conflict and widespread displacements are further exacerbated by natural disasters, disease outbreaks, high maternal mortality rates, and the severe decline of medical and healthcare systems. Additionally, many women are also exposed to protection risks, including conflict-related sexual violence.<sup>2</sup>

## Sudan Fund activation 2024

Following the onset of the crisis in Sudan in 2023, the H2H Network through funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), enabled eight members to implement projects focusing on needs assessment, community engagement, and communication, resulting in robust data generation, timely social media monitoring and capturing of perspectives of affected populations that significantly informed the humanitarian response. Amidst the escalation of conflict in 2024, the H2H Network reactivated its Fund, re-engaging partners and fostering new collaborations to build on the gains and lessons learned from the first activation. A call for proposals was released, with funding amounting to 635,674 GBP disbursed to eight H2H Members for projects that started in June 2024 and ended in February 2025. This allocation enabled humanitarian organizations to improve aid delivery to affected communities. The funded initiatives focused on strengthening humanitarian response by providing data and information vital for operational and strategic planning, building local capacities, and reinforcing networks to enhance coordination and collective action.

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1 Vibu, Mishra (25 April 2025). [“Sudan faces unprecedented hunger and displacement as war enters third year.”](#) UN News.

2 UN Women (10 April 2025). [“Two years of relentless conflict in Sudan have triggered the world’s worst humanitarian crisis for 6 million displaced women and girls.”](#) UN Women Press Release.

**Table 1:** Eight H2H Members implemented seven coordinated projects

Project name	H2H Member Lead/s	Funding (GBP)	Description
Local lifelines: Strengthening information flows in the Sudan response	CDAC Network	52,912	The project enhanced participation and information flows between local Sudanese and diaspora groups and humanitarian coordination structures through stakeholder consultations and mentorship support for local actors to serve as information liaisons.
Strengthening humanitarian planning and decision making in Sudan through the provision of real-time information, key analysis and by building the analysis capacity of local actors	Data-Friendly Spaces (DFS)	58,786	The project supported humanitarian planning and decision-making in Sudan by providing real-time monitoring through the development of the innovative SituationHub platform and production of three crisis risk/situational analysis reports.
Empowering those affected by the Sudan conflict: serving the information needs of the Sudanese community and the humanitarian response	Ground Truth Solutions (GTS)	85,065	The project addressed critical information gaps and shaped humanitarian planning and decision-making through centering the perspectives of affected communities and disseminating findings to key actors.
Transforming Aid: Training for Humanitarian Impact and Response in Sudan (TATHIR)	RedR UK and Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD)	RedR UK: 56,643 HAD: 93,357 Total: 150,000	The project built the capacities of organisations and individual staff through a tailored training program and creation of communities of practice.
Strengthening Sudan's Humanitarian Efforts: Collaborative Geospatial Data with Local and Diaspora Contributions	Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOTOSM)	54,461	The project addressed spatial data needs by conducting open mapping activities to produce datasets on neighbourhood boundaries and roads in Khartoum and other affected locations.
Informing emergency prioritization in Sudan through an integrated needs monitoring system and rapid assessments	IMPACT Initiatives	99,450	The project supported decision-making and emergency prioritisation by developing the pilot of the Emergency Monitoring System (EMS) and conducting a rapid needs assessment (RNA) in hard-to-reach areas.
Community Voices Sudan	Internews	135,000	The project enhanced accountability and informed humanitarian planning and delivery through analysis and presentation of findings from in-person and social media listening with affected communities, as well as holding discussions with media and humanitarian actors.

## 2. Achievements and impact

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This section outlines the impact of H2H Services on the humanitarian response in Sudan within the key areas identified in the H2H Fund Strategic Review conducted in 2024. Key areas of impact were identified through review of past H2H Fund activations to understand where and how H2H Fund activations add the most value to humanitarian response. Examples of impact in the Sudan activation have been identified through desk review and key informant interviews with H2H Members and validated with end users.

### **The five key areas of impact areas are:**

1. Improving access to information for operational actors and humanitarian decision-makers
2. Supporting coordination and collective action
3. Increasing accountability and community engagement in humanitarian response
4. Strengthening capacities, nurturing innovation, and supporting learning
5. Informing effective advocacy and policy discussions

The H2H Fund had a significant and multi-faceted impact across the five key areas in Sudan. This case study showed that there was improved access to information through data collection and dissemination efforts and the development of analytical products and platforms that provide critical data on the needs and experiences of affected communities, including those in hard-to-reach areas. Strong impact on coordination and collective action was evident in information-sharing and learning activities that prompted collaborative discussions, creating pathways for networking and potential joint efforts among stakeholders. Accountability and community engagement were enhanced through effectively capturing and relaying community feedback and concerns to key actors. Finally, capacity strengthening was achieved through tailored training on information and project management, protection, open spatial mapping, as well as mentorship support for local actors to ensure continuous transfer and application of knowledge and skills.

### **Improving access to information for operational actors and humanitarian decision-makers**

H2H Members significantly improved operational actors and humanitarian decision-makers' access to data crucial for shaping aid response within a highly insecure and critically fragmented information landscape. H2H-funded projects provided comprehensive datasets and analytical products and developed open platforms that led to evidence-based operational planning, delivery, and advocacy. The core value of these efforts lies in enabling key actors to tap into local perspectives and better understand the experiences and needs of affected communities and individuals in hard-to-reach areas. Overall, the H2H Members' participatory approach to data production and dissemination ensured that decision-making processes lead to targeted and inclusive humanitarian assistance delivery.

## Data-Friendly Spaces (DFS)

### Development of the SituationHub platform and analytical products

DFS significantly improved access to critical information for humanitarian decision-makers through two key strategies: the development of the innovative SituationHub platform and three crisis risk/situational analysis reports. The SituationHub provides daily media monitoring, interactive data visualizations of humanitarian indicators (including casualties and food insecurity), and a structured analytical framework organizing relevant humanitarian information by sector and geography. Information from the SituationHub is complemented by the situational analysis reports which effectively documented the crisis by incorporating datasets from key actors, such as IOM, UNOCHA, and the Humanitarian Clusters. These products developed by DFS garnered positive feedback from the Assessment and Analysis Working Group working group (AAWG) and NGO Forum meetings, with the SituationHub page views and active user statistics also showcasing high utilization and relevance of the platform to humanitarian actors. Another key outcome from the project is the incorporation of the Risk Analysis into the UNOCHA's Humanitarian Needs Response Plan (HNRP) and cluster planning documents, exemplifying DFS' invaluable contribution to informing strategic planning and overall response.

The UN Risk Reduction Unit also adopted DFS' risk analysis, and a DFS member shared, "They for the first time did not use consulting time for data review and risk analysis. This is a significant success. They had less resources spent on this, and more time to deliver services because of using our work." Another UN organisation shared the value of DFS' project to the Information Management working group (IMWG), "We rely a lot on them on situation analysis and monitoring. The dashboard, situation reports, and support they provided to risk analysis for 2025 and 2024 were very useful for the response. The Intercluster groups rely a lot on them. Their project was very impactful. They have experienced analysts who not only provide better situational understanding of the context but also focus on working closely with thematic areas and clusters. We still reference the information landscape report done jointly with DFS. It contributed immensely to the GIS analysis and HRNP for the past two years."

H2H-supported initiatives also demonstrated the value of community voices and perspectives and availability of information on inaccessible areas to ensure aid is directed to where it is most critically needed. For example, GTS' focus on affected communities and IMPACT Initiatives' prioritisation of data collection in hard-to-reach areas not only addressed critical information gaps but also highlighted the need to expand and improve knowledge production for broader inclusion in humanitarian planning and effective targeting of vulnerable groups. HOTOSM also drew on local knowledge of affected communities, key actors, and diaspora groups through its participatory remote mapping activities, which led

to the production of a dataset on 236 neighbourhood boundaries and digitization of road network information crucial for informing aid delivery strategies and logistics. Provision of tailored information to different key stakeholders is also crucial to ensure that the needs of specific groups are sufficiently met. For instance, through the efforts of Internews, various humanitarian actors were able to access a deeper contextual knowledge of the specific issues faced by diverse communities and marginalized groups.

## Internews

### **Highlighting the voices and needs of communities in hard-to-reach areas to ensure tailored and effective response**

Internews shared tailored datasets drawing on findings from community listening groups to humanitarian actors such as the Cash Consortium for Sudan, Protection Cluster, WASH Cluster, Shelter & Non-Food Items (NFI) Cluster, Health Cluster, INGO Forum, INGO Forum Access Group, UNHCR, MSF, WFP, GBV Subsector, and the AAP/CEA working groups. In particular, Internews provided the INGO Forum with relevant information on community kitchens and different perceptions of aid and helped the Protection Cluster learn more about the protection risks faced by displaced people. Additionally, Internews responded to information requests from international/national agencies, including WFP, which sought to learn more about the risks linked to offering Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) services in Darfur, and the Cash Consortium for Sudan, which sought to understand people's perceptions of cash support and how they are leveraging social media to collect donations for immediate needs.

End users underscored the impact of regular presentations, datasets and insights from affected areas, articulating Internews work's relevance in identifying pressing issues and tailoring projects. A coordinator from an alliance of local organisations shared, "... By gathering insights directly from communities, Internews helps NGOs adapt their projects to better meet local needs and address critical gaps identified by the people they serve..." A cluster coordinator also said, "The Cluster recognizes and greatly values the active participation of Internews in our coordination meetings. Your presentation of the Community Listening results has been particularly impactful, as it has amplified the voices of the communities and highlighted their specific needs and concerns."

“ Internews presentations were very sobering, and the information often quite shocking... The feedback from the listening groups from the different geographical areas has been particularly insightful: groups and individuals raising real issues that should and will be taken into consideration when planning future support... I will certainly miss the weekly presentations and will be less well-informed in my decision-making.

**Country representative from an international organisation**

## Supporting coordination and collective action

H2H-funded initiatives enhanced coordination and collective action by working closely with various international and local humanitarian organisations throughout various stages of project implementation to inform planning, optimize resources, and reduce duplication of efforts. Key mechanisms included actively engaging with formal coordination structures such as the Assessment and Analysis (AA) and Information Management (IM) Working Groups, partnering with local organisations focused on improving data production and facilitating discussions and workshops with coordination agencies and other key humanitarian actors.

### HOTOSM

#### Supporting operational planning through collaborative mapping activities

HOT actively supported operational planning and coordination by conducting regular meetings with key H2H Members and stakeholders, including UNOCHA and the Information Management Working Group. These engagements focused on identifying crucial data needs and sharing updates to collaboratively improve the humanitarian response. Through its remote mapping activities, HOT also brought together representatives from diverse diaspora groups to collectively add locations of road networks and neighbourhood boundaries to the platform, ensuring key humanitarian actors were guided by accurate spatial information. HOT's efforts overall facilitated collaborative participatory mapping that enabled key actors to collectively fill critical spatial data gaps in one space and platform.

A UN organisation articulated the value of HOTOSM in supporting collaborative actions, "They have a network and they are able to mobilize their network to provide crowdsourcing. They generate results within a short period of time for a project that usually takes a long duration and huge human resources. They have the local knowledge in the areas and the technical expertise also to maintain the standards. If some issues are sensitive, their protocols are quick, and results are immediate."

Impact Example

H2H-funded initiatives also provided opportunities for networking and forging stronger connections among partners, as well as triggering discussions on potential collaborations for enhanced collective action and harmonization of efforts. Examples include networks arising from DFS' engagements with key stakeholders and coordination structures and discussions on future joint efforts emerging from IMPACT initiatives' rapid assessment.

## IMPACT Initiatives

### Harmonising data collection and opening up pathways for collective action

IMPACT Initiatives co-chaired coordination forums such as the Assessment and Analysis working group (AAWG) with UNOCHA and IOM. In this capacity, IMPACT significantly contributed to the development of crucial work plans and standardized assessment methodology guidance and tools. These efforts directly aimed to enhance data harmonization, optimize coverage, and reduce duplication of efforts among key humanitarian actors. Furthermore, IMPACT conducted direct consultations with UNOCHA and various sectoral clusters to ensure that all its survey tools accurately reflected local priorities and needs. IMPACT's engagement with different INGOs within Sudan also contributed to the opening up of discussions on potential avenues for future collaborations. In particular, findings from IMPACT's rapid assessment in Central Darfur resulted in discussions with coordination entities, including the Food, Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Health and Nutrition Clusters, on future joint efforts to ensure evidence-based targeting of affected communities in Darfur and other highly impacted areas, overall demonstrating IMPACT's invaluable contribution to potentially galvanizing collective action for effective response.

Overall, H2H-supported initiatives demonstrated that enhancing coordination and supporting collective action entails regular engagement with key humanitarian actors and external stakeholders at different levels. The initiatives embedded opportunities for collaborations at different project stages, including mainly the scoping and design phase and dissemination of findings for uptake by operational actors. The H2H-funded activities also ensured complementarity and fostered stronger connections among actors, contributing to synergy in efforts and maximization of existing resources.

## Increasing accountability and community engagement in humanitarian response

The H2H Fund activation in Sudan involved directly engaging with communities to capture their insights and inputs for informing the aid response. It also focused on disseminating information and seeking feedback and accountability from key international, national, and local actors. For example, the work of GTS and Internews fostered meaningful opportunities for communities' participation in knowledge production, including survey interviews and online and in-person listening groups that helped effectively reflect grounded realities in humanitarian discussions. Many participants also felt heard and noted that these activities provided them the chance to speak about their experiences and views about humanitarian aid for the first time.

### GTS

#### **Amplifying perspectives of conflict-affected communities to inform response**

The work of GTS in Gedaref and South Darfur revealed that there is a misalignment between the aid being provided and what people in communities identify as their most critical needs. Through quantitative face-to-face survey interviews facilitated by DataQ enumerator teams, GTS directly engaged aid recipients, offering many their first genuine opportunity to share insights about the assistance they were receiving. This direct approach yielded positive feedback, as evidenced by one respondent in Gedaref who said, "This is the first time someone has come to ask me about my needs and living situation." Another respondent in South Darfur shared, "It would be great if they [aid providers] could come to our homes, just like you, and ask us what we need so they can understand our requirements and bring us the essentials... We have many needs, but no one is willing to listen or help unless they know you personally or are from your family."

GTS' work effectively captured communities' coping mechanisms and concerns, perceptions and experiences relating to accessing humanitarian aid, as well as suggestions on improving aid and enhancing safety during delivery of assistance. Their insights were included in the reports which were taken on by coordinating actors, such as the AAP working group, the PSEA Network, the Protection Cluster focal points from Gedaref and South Darfur and from UNHCR, and the Cash Consortium of Sudan. In particular, the AAP working group is currently preparing an action plan that responds to the insights from the GTS report. GTS' research findings were also integrated into the new interagency feedback mechanism, which is taken on by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) to inform priorities and decisions. Two media outlets, PassBlue and Ayin Network, also reached out to GTS for utilizing the findings in their coverage of the Sudan context. UNICEF also cited GTS in their Situation Report in April 2025, attributing the development of some response actions to GTS findings. Overall feedback was positive, with many articulating the relevance of GTS' work given the scarcity of data from the perspective of affected communities. A coordinator at a UN organisation said, "GTS findings provide great indication on how to improve the assistance to the people."

## Internews

### **Capturing people's concerns and ensuring accountability feedback loops through community listening**

Internews, in collaboration with local partner Y-Peer Sudan, facilitated a total of 192 in-person and online community listening groups, offering an unprecedented opportunity for affected community members, hard-to-reach people and marginalized groups including children, older people, and people with disabilities, to speak about their needs and concerns and directly influence humanitarian response and accountability mechanisms. A total of 2,595 community comments and feedback were gathered during in-person listening groups, while 1,015 social media posts were collected during the online listening activities from October 2024 to February 2025. The open conversations underscored the information needs, views, and concerns of people, fostered trust, and reduced misinformation and disinformation. It is also worth highlighting that the Y-Peer Group managed to include in the listening groups the IDP Shelter Camps/Gathering Sites (including in AlGedaref, Central Darfur, Northern, and North Kordofan) which had remained unreachable by humanitarian organizations for over 11 months to a year.

Internews and Y-Peer flagged community issues and conducted referrals to ensure humanitarian actors could respond to urgent needs. For instance, Internews and Y-Peer were instrumental in influencing agencies such as UNICEF and Sudanese Red Crescent Society to meet the WASH needs of about 1,600 displaced people living in a shelter in the Northern State. Their reporting of GBV cases also prompted UNFPA to implement GBV awareness sessions with Y-Peer. A country director from an NGO also attributed its corresponding actions to the issue of land mines to an Internews presentation, "In one of Internews presentations at the INGO Forum, you flagged the issue of land mines and the risks they represent. As a result of this presentation, we contacted UN Mine Action and organized trainings for our teams in the Darfurs and Kordofans. These presentations are our one-stop shop for understanding community concerns, needs and priorities."

H2H-supported efforts demonstrated that fostering community engagement and accountability requires creating opportunities for participatory knowledge production and mechanisms for sustained discussions or consultations among community members and key actors. Ensuring local ownership, proactive engagement with stakeholders, collaborative work with local partners, and the establishment of different channels for capturing people's concerns were key success factors across the initiatives.

## Strengthening capacities, nurturing innovation, and supporting learning

H2H-supported initiatives in Sudan included providing tailored online and in-person training sessions, facilitating webinars, establishing feedback channels and information platforms, and mentoring local actors to ensure the continuous transfer of knowledge and skills beyond project support. The initiatives of CDAC, RedR, HAD, DFS, HOTOSM, and Internews built technical skills in organisational management, humanitarian response, and knowledge production, with community members and staff benefitting from training sessions/learning exchanges on key topics such as accountability, human resource and financial management, protection, data collection, analysis, presentation methodologies and tools, generating and updating of spatial data and collecting and documenting community feedback and concerns.

### CDAC

#### Building capacity on information management

Through targeted training and mentorship support, CDAC equipped actors within local and international civil society diaspora groups with knowledge and skills to serve as effective local information liaisons. Post-training assessment demonstrated an increase in knowledge on feedback mechanisms and safe information-sharing strategies among participants. Mentees also highlighted that the sessions enabled them to reimagine their approaches. As a participant articulated, “The sessions helped me develop an understanding of community engagement and safe information-sharing and helped us to re-evaluate and reflect on our shortcomings.”

A UN organisation also highlighted the value of CDAC’s work in building the capacity of local Sudanese responders in information-sharing and overall contributing to the improvement of information management and coordination, “Local organisations are fully informed about information protocols and where they fit in and how the information they shared with us is used and how the personal data and identity is protected... There are also some gaps in coordination and how inputs from the grassroots fit into the response – CDAC did a good job in raising awareness using existing platforms and coordination mechanisms, as well as on how information can be better collected and could make more impact...”

Impact Example

The Fund activation’s investments in capacity strengthening also went beyond training sessions. Members created resources, networks and platforms that ensured the enhancement and sustainability of data generation and utilisation to inform aid delivery. This was exemplified by the open mapping communities that emerged from the capacity-building activities conducted by HOTOSM, the establishment of feedback loops and platforms for engagement resulting from community listening groups led by Internews-trained Y-Peer educators, the adaptable training materials from RedR and HAD, and the webinar series and

the SituationHub developed by DFS. The H2H Members' hands-on approach to resource, skill and platform development not only addressed immediate data needs but also fostered a culture of continuous learning and innovation aimed at building self-reliance in data production and dissemination.

## RedR and HAD

### **Cultivating and sustaining local capacities through training support and communities of practice**

HAD addressed the organisational capacity gaps of national NGOs through providing in-person training sessions on organisational management, human resources and financial management. HAD trained a total of 119 staff and also offered coaching support to relevant staff from 21 NGOs in Port Sudan and Gedarif. HAD hosted 2 Learning Exchange Workshops at the end of the project for participating NGOs to share their learning and plan for their ongoing development. RedR addressed individual capacity gaps by providing 555 local, national, and international staff and volunteers across various sectors with online training on key topics including project planning, needs assessment, humanitarian coordination, AAP, protection, and staff safety. Additionally, RedR fostered continuous learning through the Training of Trainers (ToT) program, enabling 33 staff members to cascade training to their peers and professional networks at a reduced cost. To ensure the continuity of knowledge-sharing, RedR also established a community of practice hub via WhatsApp. Now managed by the participants themselves, this hub fostered stronger professional connections and significantly increased ownership of the collective learning process.

A case study from HAD featuring local humanitarian and development organisation, Blue Sky Voluntary Organization (BSVO), best illustrates the usefulness of the training for enhancing organisational capacities. HAD developed a Tailored Capacity Strengthening Plan (TCSP) and provided face-to-face training and coaching, enabling BSVO to enhance their organisational structure, personnel policy and financial sustainability plan. Another case study from RedR, featuring a staff member from the Al-Salam Organisation for Care and Development, demonstrated the practical nature of the ToT program, enabling trainees to implement a more systematic needs assessment and more impactful communication and community engagement approaches. One of the participants shared, “[The training] helped boost our confidence and improved our ability to interact with the communities we serve.” The training also fostered continuous learning as Al-Salam’s volunteers utilized the training materials shared by RedR in implementing training sessions within their own communities.

## Informing effective advocacy and policy discussions

The work of H2H Members in Sudan has contributed to influencing national and global advocacy and discourse on aid and eliciting response actions. Through generating evidence-based information and initiating discussions with key actors at different levels, H2H-supported initiatives implemented by GTS, CDAC and Internews helped shape the planning, enhancement and implementation of strategies, information flows and coordination mechanisms, as well as the mitigation of sectoral challenges, significantly contributing to improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance delivery.

### GTS

#### **Contributing to national, regional and global humanitarian discussions on the relevance of community perspectives in evidence-based prioritization**

GTS disseminated its research findings to key actors at the local, national, and regional levels, with many stakeholders, including the Accountability to Affected Populations working group (AAPWG), Cash Consortium for Sudan, Protection Cluster focal points from Gedaref and South Darfur and from UNHCR, underscoring the relevance of GTS' work in shaping discussions on the Sudan response. In particular, the AAPWG is developing an action plan to respond to feedback from GTS reports and to explore pathways for potential collaboration. GTS findings are also integrated into the new interagency feedback mechanism which influences the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG)'s prioritisation plans. GTS' partnership with local partner DataQ was also instrumental in rapidly generating data and producing a global and local advocacy resource that highlights the implications of the USAID funding cuts. The Cash Consortium for Sudan also highlighted GTS and local partner DataQ's contributions to sparking collective reflections grounded in community perspectives among humanitarian actors in Sudan. One participant from the organisation said, "Thanks to Ground Truth Solutions and DataQ for this important analysis on needs and perceptions around aid delivery in South Darfur and Gedaref- encouraging all Sudan actors to have a look at the findings and consider what more we can do collectively to improve how our response efforts are responding to concerns related to issues around understanding targeting and who is included within assistance. [And also for] ensuring assistance is grounded in community consultation and that there is alignment between priority needs and available assistance, access to information about assistance, and addressing of challenges related to barriers to accessing assistance."

Impact Example

“ One of the actors I spoke to said, ‘Your work is critical. Everything is fractured and political, and highly localized. It is important for someone coming in.’ Now that the work is finished, there are a lot of actors advocating for it to continue. This is information needed to drive the response. We were able to contribute something that people were kind of looking for.”

**Interview with GTS**

## Internews

### **Addressing sectoral issues through escalation of concerns and facilitation of humanitarian-media dialogue**

The advocacy efforts of Internews and its partner Y-Peer were crucial in influencing decisions and sparking action on various sectoral issues. This was achieved by facilitating referrals, escalating concerns raised in in-person community listening groups to humanitarian actors, disseminating findings through weekly presentations, and holding humanitarian discussions. For example, Internews and Y-Peers reported the lack of bathrooms in the AlSalim Shelter Center which houses about 1,600 displaced people, prompting UNICEF and the Sudanese Red Crescent Society to provide WASH services and emergency supplies. Internews also helped facilitate GBV interventions by flagging cases to UNFPA and prompting the organisation, along with Y-Peer, to hold GBV awareness sessions in communities. Additionally, Internews effectively facilitated humanitarian-media roundtable discussions on enhancing reporting and access to information, as well as reflecting on how to improve cooperation between humanitarian actors and journalists amidst the crisis. A total of 180 people including humanitarian actors, civil society representatives, and journalists from 21 media partners and 33 humanitarian organisations participated in the roundtable discussions and expressed desire for the media-humanitarian dialogue to continue. This demonstrates Internews’ significant contribution in sparking collective discussions essential for more effective advocacy and response.

Impact Example

In conclusion, H2H-supported efforts demonstrated that advocating for evidence-based response entails collaborations with local partners and communities and active, meaningful discussions and engagements with humanitarian actors. Joint ownership of data generation, evidence, and resources and the creation of information platforms and spaces for discussions were also crucial to ensure the sustainability of advocacy efforts and effectively target the most vulnerable groups and highly impacted areas in Sudan.

# 3. Overall impact and effectiveness of the H2H Fund in Sudan

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End-users reported that the H2H Fund activation was crucial in gaining a deeper understanding of the Sudan context and informing and enhancing the humanitarian response. The projects effectively addressed critical information gaps, flagged coordination issues, stimulated potential collective action among partners, and supported advocacy, learning and innovation in areas that are often less prioritized by operational actors due to lack of time and resources. H2H Members also provided capacity strengthening and mentorship support that ensure continuous transfer and application of knowledge and skills beyond project implementation. Furthermore, through widespread dissemination of findings and facilitation of workshops and discussions, the H2H Fund also surfaced and raised awareness on unaddressed systemic issues relating to information barriers and evidence-based prioritization, which key actors found useful for reflecting on and enhancing their response strategies. In summary, these include:

- The lack of consistent information-sharing between local and international actors (addressed by CDAC)
- The lack of consolidated real-time data and information crucial for operational planning (addressed by DFS)
- The lack of quantitative data and research on community perceptions of aid (addressed by GTS)
- The lack of information about the experiences and current conditions of populations in hard-to-reach areas and from the perspective of local communities (addressed by Internews)
- The need for timely updates on the humanitarian situation and severity of needs of localities at high-risk or “hotspot” areas (addressed by IMPACT Initiatives)
- The lack of spatial data crucial for planning logistics and delivery of services (addressed by HOTOSM)
- The need for enhanced organisational and individual capacity to provide effective, resilient, and locally-led humanitarian response (addressed by RedR and HAD)

The overall impact of the H2H Fund activation in Sudan is therefore most salient in its contributions to the first key impact area (improving access to information for key actors) and third and fourth key impact areas (increasing accountability and community engagement and strengthening capacities, innovation and learning), as H2H Members’ efforts and existing capacities are also explicitly focused on these domains. The most significant value of the H2H Fund in relation to these impact areas is providing opportunities and resources to tap into local knowledge and perspectives and comprehensively capture the lived experiences and voices of individuals in affected communities, which are often overlooked in crisis situations due to urgent

operational demands. Key actors viewed information and insights arising from community-focused data collection and consultations as particularly useful in emergency prioritization, as well as in ensuring aid is received by vulnerable groups especially in inaccessible areas. As an H2H Member articulated:

“ H2H Fund is really important in humanitarian crises, especially in ones like Sudan. It recognizes the importance of having two-way communication and listening activities, listening to affected communities. There isn't a lot of funding for these types of projects or opportunities for support. The H2H Funding gave opportunity for that reflection, to humanize the effects of the conflict on people, to give a story to these numbers. Sometimes people get really busy with operational aspects, but it's so important to have our ears close to the affected communities. It is really hard to get funding for this... People were really sad that this was coming to an end. H2H Fund is really innovative and it's really special. It helped us continue and build and advocate for affected people and be more connected.

While majority of the H2H Members did not have the second and fifth impact areas as explicit priorities, they still managed to significantly contribute to enhancing coordination and collective action and informing effective advocacy and policy discussions. For instance, as a result of diverse capacity building and information-sharing activities such as in-person and online training, roundtable discussions and webinars, the H2H-supported initiatives facilitated meaningful interactions and forged stronger connections among coordination bodies, sectoral clusters, and local and international civil society organisations. These created initial entry points for networking and potential joint efforts and collective formulation of solutions. The communities of practice and networks emerging from the H2H Fund activation also increase local ownership of tools and platforms and ensure sustainability of information uptake and coordination improvements beyond H2H implementation. Furthermore, the information and platforms H2H members produced and the dialogue and discussions they facilitated were vital in highlighting the need to advocate for expanding data collection efforts, harmonizing information streams, and improving coordination mechanisms crucial for maximizing resources and making the response in Sudan more efficient and effective.

# Conclusion

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The H2H Fund activation in Sudan proved instrumental in enhancing humanitarian assistance by facilitating the implementation of multi-faceted projects that addressed critical information gaps and barriers, stimulated discussions for collective action, supported planning, feedback and accountability mechanisms, built local capacities and steered advocacy and policy discussions. Inclusive and participatory approaches to data generation, dissemination, capacity building and information-sharing were core enablers of its impact on the Sudan response. Ensuring sustainability and ownership of information products and platforms, further enriching local capacities, and strengthening networks will be crucial in further elevating the impact of future H2H Activations, especially in contexts like Sudan marked by security risks and a fragmented information landscape.

# Acknowledgement

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The views in this publication are the author's alone, and not necessarily the views of the H2H Network or the team.

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## About the partners

The H2H Network brings together high-quality, independent humanitarian service providers with cross-cutting technical expertise in service of the broader humanitarian community.

The network emerged following the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 and now includes over 60 member organisations. H2H members provide support services in four core areas: data, information and analysis; community engagement and accountability; security, logistics and program support; and quality and professionalisation. Services and resources produced by H2H organisations are free and accessible to all humanitarian actors, thus serving as common goods for the aid sector.

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) is a social enterprise and certified B corporation that provide research, evaluation, technical support, thinking, and training that elevates the profile and effectiveness of humanitarian action. We work with a wide range of partners globally and have a proven track record of delivering high-quality research and advisory services to NGOs, governments, UN agencies, civil society groups and humanitarian networks. HAG is also a H2H member.

