Annex I: "In their own words"

Part of the report "Support for mutual aid in three central states in Sudan: **Game changing and saving lives**". Local2Global Protection, October 2025

Please find the full report and other annexes at **www.local2global.info**

Introduction:

This document presents extracts from interviews that were conducted between April and July 2025, with members of Mutual Aid Groups (MAGs), Emergency Response Rooms (ERRs) and other community initiative members, two national organizations (NNGOs), one international organization and one donor staff.

The annex complements the main research report, "Support for mutual aid in three central states in Sudan: Game changing and saving lives". It adds context and in-depth insight into the activities and the project's internal dynamics as it was implemented between May 2024 and July 2025.

Volunteer working with distribution of food baskets:
"The impact is still present today. The project [food baskets] was launched 4-5 months ago, and even now they [community] say its impact is still there, because it solved many problems."

"The best thing that can be done is to engage with the community and form associations for response and sustainable projects. This is the most important thing you can learn to prevent corruption."

Volunteer working with distribution of food:
"The impact was positive, but later a kind of dependency - on the volunteers - developed, meaning the community didn't contribute and wanted to remain inactive. We were innovating with the idea of the community being a key partner in voluntary and humanitarian work so they could feel valued."

"The work is exceptional, and there was no other initiative operating in the community before."

"The most beneficial and positive thing about the project is that people are capable of serving under all circumstances. They have the motivation. They are also capable of giving, even if there are security threats, difficulties, or other challenges. Despite its length, there was determination and persistence to ensure the project's success and implementation in an exemplary manner. [.....] However, we received financial and material contributions from diaspora community members and others."

"This is a lesson learned: if people in the community want to improve their situation, they will. We focused on gaining the trust of the community and it began with funding from local community members: merchants, diaspora, etc."

"Security complications: We speak transparently and without political/ideological leanings. Working in a war zone is a suicide mission for volunteers. Just because we are transporting supplies of beans or lentils, it could be stolen, and before we arrive, we could be robbed.

Going to the market to buy, pay, and then sneak into the corridors. The challenge we faced has nothing to do with the curriculum [means sclr] at all."

"For example, they [donors] ask for invoices, which includes taxes. But that's impossible. How can we do this? [as the taxation system is not functioning]. To improve efforts, there must be realistic requests."

"We are in 2025, and people drink water from canals. People still can't eat. An entire generation can't learn, and schools are collapsing. If someone has malaria, they won't find medication."

"The water problem is a troubling issue. Through community and grassroots contributions, and at a cost of more than 200 mio. SDGs, we implemented the project. Currently, it is the only well in this state which is solar-powered. The national NGO contributed 5,944,000 SDGs for one of the stations, and a second contribution from another organization."

Volunteer providing assistance for kidney patients:
"The faster the response, the greater the trust between the community and the initiative."

Volunteer working with distribution of food:
"Organizations require beneficiaries to be photographed and appear, etc. This is a psychological aspect; people don't want to be photographed. Some people give cash and other items, and they have to be photographed. There's also the distribution aspect, where people stand in line, and some people don't come. We don't photograph beneficiaries; we photograph the meal preparation, the bills, etc., but we don't show anyone in need. This has a negative impact on families. Some families say they don't want this [the services/aid if they have to be photographed]."

"We have not faced any security complications. We have full coordination with the government, and they know our work. Ministry of Social Welfare representatives visit us. We also communicate with the community through the media. This transparency has ensured smooth operations with security and relevant authorities. The HAC and Ministry of Social Welfare and we have common groups on social media platforms. Sometimes the security agencies themselves support the kitchen, providing gasoline for the vehicles, meals, and so on."

"They [the organization] asked us by phone for the supervisors of the kitchens. Then they had a representative who came and asked people if the meal was filling - or not. This was a bit disrespectful. They took the numbers and left immediately. They didn't tell us that they were leaving and that might leave a bad impression."

Volunteer providing assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS:
"From our experience in AIDS work, we are very sensitive and don't tolerate any tension, since it is a sensitive topic in our community. If there's any tension, we leave immediately [from the IDP centre] and try a new approach."

"The people involved in the initiative were new. It was their first time interacting with this community and the experience was incredible. It is not possible to describe how it feels to work with the community of people living with HIV/AIDS among the displaced."

"To improve the experience, I suggest conducting a study of the community first. After some reflection, I would say that the work in the [IDPs] camp did not go well because it was dominated by men. They didn't want women to know anything about this particular issue. They wanted to talk only among themselves as men. If I had an idea about this community, which is a tribal, patriarchal society and wanted to plan well, I would have adopted a different approach and developed a plan B. We need to plan well and thoroughly study the location where you want to work. Where did the targeted people come from and what were the most common requests."

"I really liked the idea of experiential learning. If this is generalized and there are forums, Inshallah. I'm sure there will be a huge development."

Volunteer working with food distribution:
"We used to get permission from the local authorities, all for a specific period. If we didn't work during that period, we would have to change the period. We might work for three days," and they'd say, "Two days are enough!"

"A representative from the local authority might accompany us. The budget allocated to the beneficiaries doesn't include any incentives or salaries. We provide them with transportation and meals, even though our budget isn't sufficient."

A volunteer working with food distribution:
"Volunteers were absent, because communication was difficult [black out]. If we could go back in time, we would try to talk to them and look for people they trusted and who could communicate with them and pass on the information."

Volunteer with MAG that provides medical assistance for IDPs:
"The initiative was established at the beginning of the war. When the displaced people left school and settled with us, we sensed that they were in need of services. Some individuals provided services, but we decided it was better to provide services as a group, through self-help. This has been going on even after two years and through [support from] relatives living abroad. This was the first time to receive funding - we had never worked with an organization before."

"This initiative began operating after the war [erupted]. Before the war, the centre used to meet all the needs of the area. The community had dug the health centre's foundation themselves. Currently, it is a fully integrated centre with a small operating room, a general practitioner, and excellent services."

"No permits or approvals were required, and access to the centre was through the supervisor in charge of the centre. We contacted [him] and showed him what we wanted to do. This supervisor was a resident of the neighbourhood, not a displaced person. He was originally the school principal and had housing inside the school. He was the supervisor and monitor of both [IDPs] centre, and everything that happened was known to him."

"The situation of the displaced people who were in the schools was miserable, so they cooperated with the people of the area and made small shelters outside the school fence. Some families go out in the morning and leave the classroom for the students and at the end of the day, they come back. They put their personal belongings and supplies in a secure corner far away and they sit in the shelters to protect them from the heat, and after the classes are over, some of them return and some of them stay in the shelters that were built. And now autumn is coming. The rains are heavy and the area needs a lot of assistance."

Volunteer working with distribution of food baskets:
"Some people had children and they had to feed them dry bread and water. No one from the organizations was able to reach them because the organizations only operate in schools (IDPs shelters) and visible areas. However, we were able to reach families in their homes."

"The impact of our organization was greater, because the IDPs centre might be visited by more than 4 national organizations. They would come, bring items and leave - but our survey took research and time. There were households where no one was able to reach them, and this is what distinguished us from the rest of the organizations. No [other] organization was able to reach these people and the first benefit they received came through us. The project had a positive impact, and they [displaced people] wanted to connect their youth to charitable work."

"This [experience] changed their concepts and showed them that there are people in the organizations who seriously search for the needy people without photographing them. Their dignity was preserved and protected. Sudanese people have pride and greatness. They can die of hunger, but they do not go and be photographed. Most of the organizations were forcing people to take pictures. We took pictures but they were samples and we took permission from the people who we photographed. There were people who said it would be better for them to die than to be mentioned in such matters."

A volunteer working with livelihood assistance:
"I hope all organizations offer youth and sustainable development projects that provide communities with a source of income [to] provide a stable service and not rely on any other entity or [having] to ask for help. Development projects are important for people to move forward; their country needs them to develop and provide services to those in need."

Volunteer working with food distribution and women-focused assistance:
"We transferred knowledge to the volunteers. But the people who benefited most were the Ministry of Social Welfare workers who had no prior knowledge. We showed them how to register, audit, and work with excel application".

Volunteer working with food distribution:
"They are in dire need, but they don't bring their dishes to the Takya [come to the community kitchen]. So, the volunteers used to go to their homes and deliver food to them. We originally received monthly support, and we would go out to collect the food. The people who paid [the donors] needed photos and videos to ensure the food was distributed - unlike when food baskets are distributed".

Volunteer working with food distribution:
"The idea began when a small group of 3-4 young people from our neighbourhood stayed behind during the war. We were trying to keep track of the well-being of our neighbours and families. One day, a father of a family of 4 - 5 children and their mother came to us. They hadn't had a proper meal for two days. As young people, we had some personal savings in Bankak [Bank of Khartoum online app] that had not been looted, so we came up with the idea of creating a small community kitchen. We bought a sack of beans, cooked it, and distributed it discreetly to those in need. The goal was to support struggling families while preserving their dignity, because dignity comes first. That was how the idea started."

"We documented the work through short videos and shared them on social media to show people that we were active on the ground. As a result, some youth expressed interest in contributing, and we began receiving additional donations from various individuals. This support helped the initiative continue beyond its originally planned timeframe. The NNGO's funding was intended to cover one month, but thanks to the external and internal contributions, the project lasted for around 50 to 60 days."

"We were asked to provide signed delivery forms from each person who received meals from the community kitchen. However, given the sensitive context, having someone walk around with a pen and paper to collect names posed serious security risks. At the time, such actions could easily be perceived as intelligence-gathering, and individuals risked being arrested. We kindly urge NGOs and donors to reconsider such requirements. It is neither safe nor dignified to photograph people or ask them to sign documents to receive a meal."

Volunteer who works in food distribution:
"The experience of the kitchen who operate in cities is easier for the volunteers. But we are in a village, and we faced difficulty in setting up the kitchen - we felt tired. We had discussions with the people. I think that if you have guests like the displaced people you are supposed to honour them. So, we only continued the kitchen for a short period, there are not many positive sides to it."

"We were asked to conduct a survey and print files by the NGO but the circumstances on the ground were extremely difficult. Such formalities created the impression among community members that we, as volunteers, were more focused on paperwork than on addressing urgent needs. We reached a point where we didn't even have a pen to work with. We lacked the most basic tools and conditions to operate. There was no electricity, no water, no network, no internet, literally nothing was available. The situation was extremely challenging, and we were doing our best under harsh and resource-limited conditions."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"The biggest lesson learned was that young people, who were not familiar with volunteer work, saw it with their own eyes and realized that there were people in need of food, water, and shelter. Because of this idea, volunteer groups were established. The concept of volunteer work expanded significantly. After these activities there were 15-17 volunteer groups working, compared to only three in the past."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"Our next-door neighbour came to us around 1:30 AM because her mother was very ill. We took her to the hospital using a donkey cart (karo), but there were no doctors available, only a few nurses. They did their best to stabilize her condition. She was displaced, and the exhaustion she had endured had caused her blood sugar to spike dangerously. After receiving some initial care and improving slightly, we brought her back home - again using the same cart, which we pulled by hand, as there was no donkey. The doctor had given her five drips but unfortunately, in the end, she passed away. I couldn't help but wish we had access to proper medical supplies. We truly hoped these basic medications could have been available."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"As youth trying to provide services, we faced several challenges. Most of the young volunteers had jobs, and

many of them had to pause their work - which meant sacrificing their income and their ability to support their own families to serve the community. From the beginning, we couldn't promise them any payment or financial incentives, and despite that, they had no objection. Their motivation came from a genuine desire to serve, to do humanitarian work for our own people. We were a team of 11 volunteers, and for us, even if a food basket could have come our way, we would rather it be given to a family in greater need. That was the spirit we worked with."

Volunteer working with critical health services:
The volunteer is a pharmacist who worked in import and export before the war. "When the war broke out, I began collecting medications available in pharmacies that could be looted. I contacted another Sudanese initiative, and pharmacy owners donated their pharmaceuticals to citizens. I collected medications at home, and we also opened a small health centre. The initiative is called "The Health Centre."

Volunteer working with critical health services:
"There were many incidents where staff at the centre were arrested. One of our colleagues, a pharmacist, went to collect medicine from a storage facility. While she was there, armed groups arrived from different sides and got into an argument that escalated into an exchange of gunfire. Four people were killed, but fortunately, she was unharmed. These situations highlight the high-risk environment we were operating in, where even basic tasks like retrieving medical supplies could quickly become life-threatening."

Volunteer working with critical health services:
"I was playing the role of a doctor, and I'm a pharmacist. I needed a lot of skills. [Outside of this project] I once had to help perform a birth delivery with help from YouTube - observing, trying to follow up, and implement. Either I did it - or the patients would have lost their lives. We need to fully prepare our medical staff. "

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"Their experience was simple, even though it was clear. We received the money, agreed to buy the materials, submitted the invoices, and took photos of the materials and distribution. Still, all the time, they say they [NGO] want something more. We bring evaluation forms and fill them out. It was the first time an experience like this was complicated in this way"

Volunteer working with gender, income-generation and food distribution:
"There was a noticeable shift within the centre's internal dynamics. Women began exchanging goods among each other - each selling to the other - which transformed social relationships within the centre. There was no sense of competition. Instead, the internal market helped them support one another and protect their children. As a result, the need for going to outside shops significantly decreased, since most daily necessities were now available inside the centre."

"In their previous kitchen setup, food was distributed, and once it ran out, people had to wait until something new arrived. Our project was different - we enabled people to take part in managing their own situation, by contributing a small amount of money. Instead of receiving pre-cooked meals, they were given the means to choose and prepare food themselves. This preserved their dignity."

"Though the financial contribution was small, it marked a significant shift. In the past, they would use [health] insurance to go to public [government] health centres, wait in long lines, and often be treated poorly. This new approach transformed how they managed their daily lives"

"That was the real difference between our project and other ones. It offered people a greater sense of agency, dignity, and humanity. They worked hard to develop and sustain the initiative. That's why it was different, and that's why it was strong, because they had the power to choose for themselves."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"The national NGO should clarify all requirements from the beginning of the project, so we will not have steps back while we progress in the project."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"The impact of our work was more meaningful. People's perception of the project which was funded [from this grant] was very different from other organizations. We provided assistance with respect and care. We served people with love. In contrast, some aid was distributed by others with a sense of obligation or frustration, - and this was often felt by the recipients."

"Many community members would avoid eating the typical aid food distributed by NGOs such as lentils, because it lacked appeal or dignity. We were intentional about offering something different."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"In the beginning we did not coordinate, because HAC was not active, we were doing our work inside the neighbourhood. When the NNGO came they had established the coordination with HAC, then we worked all together. We do regular meetings; we come to the HAC office and meet with the facilitation of the NNGO."

"The coordination will not affect if it did not happen, but the coordination is important because HAC should know and monitor our work. They should know everything. If we did work without coordination with them, they will think that we have other goals or are affiliated with other people. When they came, they invited us and we responded."

"Even during the communication blackout, we were able to reach the responsible people in the NNGO [using Starlink and/ or in-person meetings]."

Volunteer working with food & critical health services:
"A noticeable case involved a woman whose husband had returned to Khartoum and then lost contact with her. She was scheduled for a C-section at the only available obstetrician hospital. She was brought to me; I took her medical documents and spoke with the doctor. After explaining her situation, the doctor kindly agreed to reduce fees by 50%. I then used part of the grant to cover the remaining costs. We pooled resources to buy the necessary medications, and she was able to give birth without paying a single pound. Later, she gave birth to a baby girl. She told me, [If the baby had been a boy, I would have named him after you]."

"Our group's work was ongoing daily, especially during August and September [2024]. There were no functioning services aside from the community kitchens/Takaya. There was no electricity, and none of the grain mills were operational. So, we took the initiative to secure diesel fuel for the mills so they could resume working. This allowed people who had sorghum at home to come and grind it into flour, helping to ease the pressure on the initiative. Electricity was a widespread issue. Out of 50,000 displaced people, only around 5,000 were able to relocate [escape to safety]. People had resorted to soaking sorghum and grinding it manually using hand mills to make porridge directly, because no mills were running."

"Some households, especially farming families, had 3-4 sacks of sorghum stored at home. Since they usually eat Kisra (a traditional flatbread), they had a decent supply. So, we considered how to support those who already had grain by providing access to milling."

"We brought in a machine and mounted it on a tractor, which consumes less diesel that way. Importantly. 80-90% of the funding for this came from the Sudanese diaspora."

"The NNGO didn't stop at training. They also provided crucial technical support. Some of the [F-System] forms couldn't be filled out using a mobile phone and required a laptop. Because we had no access to electricity, we would share the information with them [NGO staff], and they would handle the data entry for us. Sometimes the only electricity source was so far away it was nearly impossible to work locally. The NNGO support in this regard greatly relieved the pressure on us when it came to entering data."

Volunteer working with food distributions:
"Regarding distribution [of aid] by local authorities, I don't blame them, it's their area of responsibility, but the distribution has not been fair. When we report the actual number of people in need, the response is often: "There aren't enough supplies." But what can I do? The organization that distributed most aid was also the most effective. They provided food items that were sufficient for about 25 days up to one month."

"On the other hand, another organisation distributed kitchenware, and most people ended up selling the items. As for plastic sheeting and tents, we later saw them being sold in the market. I personally believe that if the items had been fairly and properly distributed, they shouldn't have ended up in shops. But somehow, we found them in local stores. How did this happen? We don't know. Perhaps some recipients sold the items to buy food or other essentials, we can't say for sure what happened."

"Our belief as Sudanese people is that Allah has given

us contentment - and contentment is a treasure that never runs out. We don't like to see someone receive aid while their neighbour doesn't. Even if someone gets less, it's better than returning empty-handed. We prefer to stretch limited resources, if the aid is meant for 50 people, we try to make it cover 100 persons - just to make sure more people are satisfied."

"For us, the months of July, August, and September are the hardest in the life of Sudanese people. By October, about 50% of the harvest usually comes in, but these three months are extremely harsh, especially for people living in Sudan's rural, rain-dependent areas. Last year, many people were displaced and couldn't farm. We hope, Allah willing, this year they'll be able to plant again."

Volunteer working with critical health services:
"Dialysis, which was supposed to last four hours, was reduced to three or two and a half hours. The people who came from outside were already feeling uneasy about this. But after we established the association, created social relationships between people in the two states, and distributed the medications, people began to support each other and carry each other."

"The project [grant] lasted a month, but it created a sense of community and social solidarity among [kidney/dialysis] patients, something that could last a lifetime."

"There are no non-profit organizations other than those who supported us. Currently, the association is the only one working to respond and support patients with medication and other services."

"The faster the response, the greater the trust between the community and the initiative. The more the needs reach the beneficiary directly, the better and the greater the progress."

National NGO community facilitator:
"The approach had an additional benefit: we work in a way that sustains humanitarian assistance. We make sure that after the project ends; there are structures in place that are active and able to respond to different situations. As an organization, I might not have funding right now, but there are initiatives that were established which can receive support thanks to their history and the previous [implemented] projects."

"But in rural and semi-rural areas, this issue is somehow different, because one of the dynamics in rural communities is that women's participation has become weak. This situation worsened after the war came, and women's active role decreased significantly, since the environment became dangerous. No family allows their daughter to go out and take part in any activity because that would expose her to risk, so participation became very limited. We try to strengthen this, but we cannot intervene in ways that affect community cohesion or create conflict. Instead, we try to respond to community needs in the same manner, and we have a conflict-sensitivity committee that helps us promote understanding in the area."

"The significant change is that the people themselves adopt these initiatives. One of the projects we had was a livelihood project. After it finished, the women organized a fund (each one paid 200-500 Sudanese pounds), and they set up a Juma'a (Friday) market, where they sell their handmade stuff, and other things."

"Sclr is quick and real, because the community identifies what they need. In sclr, we ask the people what they want, and this is what makes sclr different from other responses."

"I remember at one of the IDPs centres, some women said they learned that the boys had started an initiative. They asked, 'As women, what should we do?' I showed them that they could start a women's initiative or a women's association. They needed things specific to girls and were feeling shy about it, so I told them they could bring those needs into a girls' initiative. During the conversations, they could feel that these women gained power, and I saw the satisfaction on their faces that they had become content with addressing their own needs."

National NGO - Head of Area Office:
"Experimental learning has been important to help groups and us continue to learn and improve. You can really see that when you do a second and third round of grants. The next grant(s) is much faster because now we all understand and trust each other - and we all know the process and forms needed."

"Some people came to us from the village. The community is contributing, and they want us [NNGO] to manage the

money. They need labour, they want a fence, things like that. But the community is very engaged: they brought bricks and cement and want to build a health centre, and they also want a fence for the water reservoir. They're asking us to contribute something small. Our contribution might be nothing compared to theirs, but they don't trust anyone else, only us. In this rural village, this trust itself is the essence of the sclr approach."

National NGO - Area Programme Manager:
"This is a key tool in the sclr methodology, we talk to the whole community publicly, and they choose their own representatives, and then we transfer the money for them to be able to make their intervention."

"Methodology was bottom-up, that's why it was effective. In other methodologies we talk about their needs, but they do not talk - in sclr they talk by themselves."

"The public meeting is in a big yard where communities meet. We do discussions and then they represent their people "nomination" in a democratic way. We, as the NGO, just register names and we give notices to consider gender balance ("better to choose females"). This is for each group. The representatives then develop the F1 "proposal" and budgeting with the community, and we follow up with the representative."

"When we have a bigger ceiling [funding], then we can cover more needs. In the community kitchen we just looked for the meal and did not consider the nutrition - we just made the meal, beans, lentils etc. But when we have higher ceiling, we can choose better nutritious items, so if the NGOs and donors made the ceiling higher it will give better options."

"In one locality, some families received funding from the diaspora. They took the money and gave it to the community group leader to spend the money within community needs. They also received medicines for the elderly. They gave that to the centre where they manage the people's needs."

"In another locality, the community grant covers two meals in the communal kitchen, and the community provides the third meal. They are totally responsible for the third meal."

"This work enhanced my self-motivation, because I worked with a "rushash" approach [sclr]. My visit to the communities gave me motivation because some people still want to learn and know and do more, this is their personal motivation."

"The mindset is not only to achieve - or not achieve. Now we ask how to deliver, not just to deliver."

Staff with international actors:
"Working with mutual aid has been game changing and at the same time also lifesaving. The situation forced us as international actors to step back and look for another way of working."

"I think about how the conflict developed from the beginning and the incapacity of the international community to be present in most of the country. In a good way, this forced the international community to think a little bit out-of-the-box and really try to understand. To have an overview of what was happening on the ground across the communities made us understand that the only way to continue assisting the population was assisting what was already happening on the ground through the financial support that was coming from the diaspora - or simply by supporting the type of activity that these groups were doing."

"Mutual aid is the right answer to a very difficult question - which is how we can support the population with no means to support them directly!"

"It gave us the opportunity to step back and observe what was already happening. By doing that, we understood what we could do. We didn't need to invent or bend the wheel. The wheel was already there - people were already doing some things, so we only needed to find a way to financially support these groups to allow them to continue to do what they were already doing."

"I think what really has been game changing is that since we started observing mutual aid, we basically didn't design anything anymore. The entire programming of the mutual aid groups, as they exist today, is fully and entirely designed by them."

"I would love to say that the international community plays a role. And we still play an important role. But that's still relatively limited compared to the impact the communities have had on their own - simply because they have more access than us and they've been able to deliver in areas where nobody else could deliver."

"I don't want to force the design of any activity that might bring these groups outside of their comfort zone, so the first thing is understanding that we are not in a position to dictate anything in this context. So, we need to understand what they are doing and how they're doing it."

"If we really want to continue to push localization, investing in national NGOs is important, but is not enough. You need to go beyond that and really focus on the communities and really focus on all these informal networks. These two things need to go together. It doesn't matter if tomorrow is going to be about funding [specific] mutual aid groups. This is about programming based on community inputs - on what is coming from the people that are affected."

"We have done localization as a tick-box-exercise in which you pick some national NGOs, you give some funds for training, and you make them do some activities. But you don't really listen to the knowledge and the experience that is coming from the ground to design and develop. I think this has been one of the main challenges and main mistakes that the international community has carried forward for quite a long time."

"But if we are looking at the medium and long-term perspective, the only hope for this type of approach [community led responses] is if we as international actors change our mentality and approach and we continue to consider the community at the centre of our project design and project implementation. "

Staff with international actors:
"Trusting our partners and their capacity and their understanding of the local contexts, entrusting them with that flexibility in their programming to design their interventions, as they see fit. I think that's the important mindset to have. They know what's coming up. They have the conversations with the mutual aid groups on the ground, and we need to trust them and make space and room for them to implement according to how they see fit on the ground."

"Historically, national NGOs have enforced [financial accountability] on local organisations because that is what we ask of them when we are asking for reconciliation of their budgets and we need receipts, we have auditors - all these things. But the cash grants for mutual aid groups are not audited. The only thing that is audited is the actual transfer and disbursements and the acknowledgement of the receipt and that's a shift in mindset from traditional programming."

"It comes from the bottom and up - right! So, it's really based on the needs of the community and not the other way around."

"There is also a need to shift the mindset from pure humanitarian emergency assistance to allow groups to foster more transitional and recovery focused programming. When working with local partners we need to advocate for them to work with this mindset. They [national NGOs] need to allow the groups to transition from purely emergency response to more recovery focused interventions."

Staff with international actor:
"The mutual aid groups have proven that they could work when all other systems did not work. Sclr is effective at saving lives - more so than any traditional aid."
"This model [mutual aid and sclr] has proven that it can work fast and effectively in very difficult situations. The old systems, which we relied so much on, didn't work."

"They [mutual aid groups]] have WhatsApp groups so each group is basically sharing accountability with the other members. That is how they do things without even us telling them anything - they don't know about us and our requirements. That is how they do it themselves."

"The old systems were bureaucratic and had corruption at all levels - it could cribble even those who were trying to do good."

"If we look at the funding that they have received - [there are] almost no cases related to that issue [corruption/ accountability]."

"The integration of community values with external help or aid - I would say it has proven to save lives way more effectively than the typical humanitarian responses."

"It is very important that the mutual aid groups uphold their values and their impartiality. They really need to do that. And we need to support them to develop strategies, so their efforts become more sustainable - including longer term [multiyear] resource mobilization."