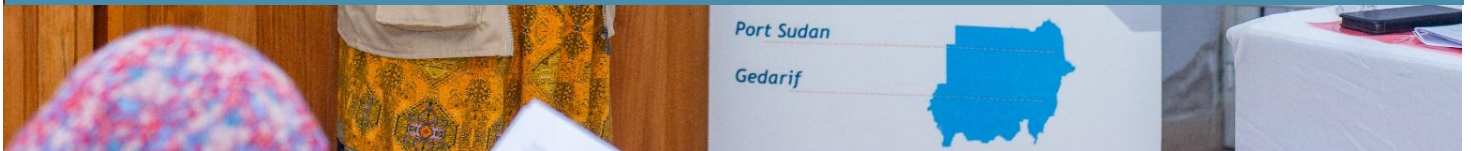


SUDAN



LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT & ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY REPORT



February 2025

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h—h
H2H Network
Humanitarian
Action Support

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ERRs - Emergency Response Rooms

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

H2H - Humanitarian-to-Humanitarian Network

IDPs - Internally Displaced Persons

INGO - International Non-Governmental Organisation

KIIs - Key Informant Interviews

LNA - Learning Needs Assessment

MEL - Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

NNGO - National Non-Governmental Organisation

OCA - Organisational Capacity Assessment

OCHA - Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

RSF - Rapid Support Forces

SAF - Sudanese Armed Forces

WASH - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background: Sudan is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian crises in recent history due to prolonged conflicts, political instability, economic collapse, and natural disasters. The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which escalated in April 2023, has led to widespread violence and displacement, overwhelming national response capabilities.

The Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) and Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) were conducted by RedR UK and the Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD) to identify the knowledge gaps, skill deficiencies, and capacity-strengthening requirements of humanitarian workers and national organisations in Sudan. The aim of this joint effort was to inform the design of targeted training and coaching programmes to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian operations. While the assessments were conducted with a specific cohort of 22 NNGOs and 76 individual respondents, the trends identified in learning priorities, organisational challenges, and capacity-strengthening needs are highly relevant to other NNGOs and humanitarian actors operating in Sudan.

Methodology: The assessments used a systematic approach, combining primary quantitative (online surveys) and primary qualitative (Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions) data collection methods, in addition to analysis of secondary data (organisational policies). The data was analysed using statistical software and thematic analysis, with cross-checking to ensure validity.

Key Findings summarised

Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) Findings:

Respondent Profiles:

- The majority of respondents were affiliated with National NGOs (52.6%), followed by Community-based Organisations (17.1%), and International NGOs (13.2%).
- 46.1% of respondents had over 5 years of experience in the humanitarian sector.

Capacity Strengthening Priorities:

- Effective Programme Management: Managing time, resources, funding, partnerships, and donor requirements was the top priority.
- Technical Knowledge: Increasing technical knowledge on emergency management and response was the second priority.

Priority Topics:

- Operating Effectively: Coordination with the international relief system and humanitarian partners was the highest priority.

- Technical Response: Shelter was the top priority, followed by Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and Food Security.
- Operating Accountably: Humanitarian protection and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) were key areas.
- Operating Safely: Personal safety and security, and mental health were critical concerns.

Training Method Preferences:

- Pre-recorded online presentations (31.1%) were the most preferred, followed by face-to-face training (14.9%) and online live sessions (12.2%).

Identified Obstacles:

- Network coverage for online courses was a significant barrier.

Language Preferences:

- Arabic (44.7%) was the most preferred language, followed by English (36.8%).

Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Findings

Capacity Levels:

The OCA results showed a mix of capacity levels among the shortlisted 22 NNGOs: 1 NNGO was 'Nascent', 8 were 'Emerging', 8 were 'Expanding', and 5 were 'Mature'.

Capacity Areas:

- Governance and Leadership: Highest average score (81.7%), indicating robust practices but with some organisations needing improvement, particularly on governance structures.
- Operations and Management: Average score of 76.2%, with challenges in strategic planning and decision-making.
- Human Resources Development: Lowest average score (74.7%), indicating a need for improvement in organisational culture and staff development.
- Financial Administration: Average score of 80.7%, with some organisations needing support in budgeting and financial planning.
- Projects and Programmes: Average score of 81.1%, with a need for improved monitoring and evaluation processes.
- External Relations: Average score of 81.2%, reflecting well-developed partnerships and advocacy efforts.
- Sustainability: Average score of 77%, with varied performance in resource mobilisation and long-term planning.

Recommendations

Enhance Training Accessibility:

- Offer online learning opportunities in Arabic, considering low-bandwidth and internet shortages.
- Decentralise training locations to minimise travel burdens.

Focus on Critical Learning Areas:

- Prioritise training in effective programme management, technical response, safety, and security.
- Develop specialised training programmes in post-crisis management, climate change adaptation, and child protection.

Support Continuous Learning:

- Implement follow-up systems, including refresher courses and mentorship.
- Introduce digital badges and career development modules.

Strengthen Coordination and Collaboration:

- Foster partnerships with local NGOs, government agencies, and international organisations.
- Align training programmes with broader humanitarian goals and global standards.

Cultural and Linguistic Adaptation:

- Ensure training materials are available in both Arabic and English.
- Design culturally sensitive training programmes with local experts.

Organisational Capacity Strengthening:

- Governance and Leadership: Strengthen governance structures within the legal framework of Sudanese civil society organisations.
- Operations and Management: Focus on improvements in strategic and organisational management.
- Human Resources Development: Improve organisational culture and staff development practices.
- Financial Administration: Support budgeting and financial planning skills.
- Projects and Programmes: Enhance monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Sustainability: Improve resource mobilisation and long-term planning, with a focus on financial sustainability

2. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Sudan, situated in northeastern Africa, is currently facing one of the most severe humanitarian crises in recent history, driven by decades of conflict, political instability, economic hardship, and natural hazards. Since 2003, extensive conflicts – particularly in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile states – have led to widespread displacement, loss of life, and immense human suffering. The secession of South Sudan in 2011 further strained Sudan’s economic and political systems, while the outbreak of conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023 has exacerbated these challenges. This ongoing violence has resulted in the recorded loss of over 15,500 lives and the displacement of nearly 9.5 million people, including a significant number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). As the crisis intensifies, an estimated 25 million people are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance¹.

Sudan’s economic crisis, rooted in years of mismanagement, corruption, and international sanctions, worsened significantly after the loss of oil revenue following South Sudan’s independence. This has led to high inflation, widespread unemployment, and increasing poverty and food insecurity, further deepening the country’s humanitarian needs. Additionally, Sudan remains highly vulnerable to natural hazards, such as droughts and floods, which are being exacerbated by climate change. These environmental challenges severely disrupt agriculture – critical for food security and livelihoods – leading to chronic food shortages and widespread malnutrition.

National and international actors play a pivotal role in addressing Sudan’s critical needs, particularly in food security, healthcare, education, shelter, and protection. However, humanitarian efforts are hindered by funding shortages, bureaucratic barriers, security concerns, and limited access to affected areas. Local and national NGOs have been at the forefront of the response, but as the crisis persists, there is an increasing need for sustained support to ensure the continuity of life-saving efforts.

Against this backdrop, the **Learning Needs Assessment (LNA)** and **Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA)** serve as vital tools in identifying and addressing the capacity-strengthening needs of humanitarian actors in Sudan. The **LNA** focuses on understanding the knowledge gaps, skill deficiencies, and training priorities of individual responders, while the **OCA** evaluates the strengths and areas for improvement of national NGOs (NNGOs) at an institutional level. Together, these assessments inform the development of targeted training programmes aimed at enhancing the efficiency and impact of humanitarian operations.

¹ United Nations. <https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/news/2024/06/94527/nowhere-safe-civilians-sudan-war-descends-further-chaos>

In response to these urgent needs, the **Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD)** and **RedR UK** have partnered, with funding from the **H2H Network**, to implement the **Transforming Aid through Training for Humanitarian Impact and Response in Sudan (TATHIR) Project**. This initiative aims to strengthen the capacity of local responders through two key objectives:

1. **Strengthening the institutional capacity of NNGOs** to improve governance, financial management, and operational effectiveness in responding to the crisis.
2. **Empowering individual responders** to provide safe, effective, and appropriate humanitarian assistance.

As part of Objective 1, **22 shortlisted NNGOs** participated in the **OCA**, which involved a quantitative self-assessment survey, submission of supporting documentation, and participation in a virtual focus group discussion (FGD) to validate key areas for capacity strengthening. The findings from the OCA informed the development of **Tailored Capacity Strengthening Plans** for each NNGO, guiding the design and delivery of six in-person training workshops and follow-up online coaching sessions attended by **20 selected NNGOs** from October 2024 to January 2025.

Simultaneously, the **LNA** conducted under Objective 2 provided crucial insights into the specific learning needs of individual responders, shaping the content and approach of training sessions to ensure they address real-world challenges faced by humanitarian workers in Sudan.

By aligning training and coaching services with both organisational and individual needs, the TATHIR Project seeks to enhance the overall effectiveness of humanitarian response efforts.

On a broader scale, the findings from the **OCA and LNA** can serve as a foundation for further capacity-strengthening initiatives, benefiting not only participating NNGOs and responders, but also other local actors within Sudanese civil society.

3. INTEGRATED METHODOLOGY FOR LEARNING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

This integrated methodology combines the approaches of the Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) conducted in Sudan and the Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) undertaken during the TATHIR Project. It is designed to assess both the learning needs of field staff and humanitarian workers, as well as the organisational capacities of National NGOs (NNGOs) to effectively deliver humanitarian services in Sudan. The comprehensive methodology incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to ensure that the findings inform capacity-strengthening and intervention strategies.

1. Overview of Methodology

The two assessments use a structured and systematic process for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data on learning needs, organisational capacities, and strategic requirements.

1.1 Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) – Focuses on identifying knowledge gaps, training needs, and existing capacities of humanitarian workers in Sudan.

1.2 Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) – Focuses on evaluating the operational strength and capacity of selected NNGOs to deliver humanitarian services effectively.

2. Data Collection Process

2.1 Data Collection Methods

1. Quantitative Survey Tools (LNA and OCA)

Surveys collected quantitative data to assess the knowledge and skills of staff (LNA) and the operational effectiveness of NNGOs (OCA).

- **LNA Surveys:** A multilingual (Arabic and English) survey with a combination of closed-ended questions aimed at measuring existing knowledge gaps, learning preferences, and capacity-strengthening requirements.
- **OCA Surveys:** A self-assessment tool distributed to NNGOs (in English and Arabic) to evaluate their operational strengths and weaknesses across seven organisational capacity areas.
- **Online Platforms:** Both surveys were administered using online tools such as KoboToolbox and Microsoft Forms to facilitate wider outreach and response collection.

2. Qualitative Tools

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) provided qualitative data by gathering in-depth insights from senior management and subject matter experts in both humanitarian operations and organisational management.

- **LNA KIIs:** Focused on senior leaders' strategic perspectives, and subject matter experts regarding training priorities and capacity gaps.
- **OCA FGD:** Conducted with a representative sample of organisational leaders to verify and explore deeper into operational challenges, sustainability strategies, and improvement needs.

2.2 Sampling and Distribution

1. LNA Sample

- **Survey Participants:** The LNA targeted a diverse range of respondents, including field staff, mid-level managers, and senior leaders, with a final total of 76 survey responses and 5 KIIs.
- **Survey Distribution:** Distributed through key humanitarian networks such as OCHA, H2H, cluster coordinators, and INGO forums. Additionally, over 300 organisations and social media platforms were used to maximise outreach. The survey responses were collected between 15th and 31st July 2024.

2. OCA Sample

- **Initial Mapping:** The OCA began with an initial mapping process, identifying a pool of 500 national NGOs operating in Sudan. This pool was narrowed further to 103 organisations based on geographical and sectoral criteria.
- **Shortlisting Process:** A total of 37 organisations were shortlisted through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, and further narrowed down to 22 NGOs after verifying eligibility, capacity, and financial sustainability.

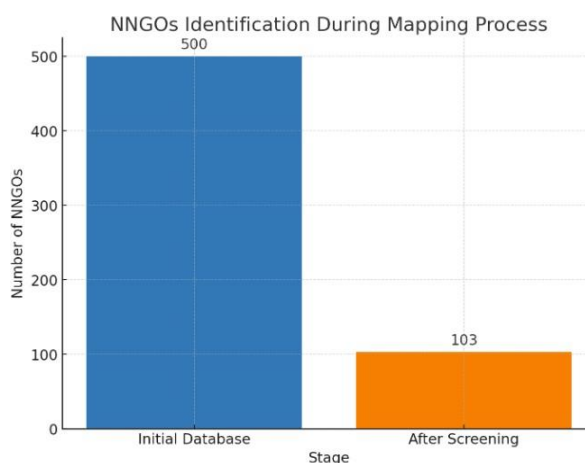


Figure 1 - OCA NNGOs Identification During Mapping Process

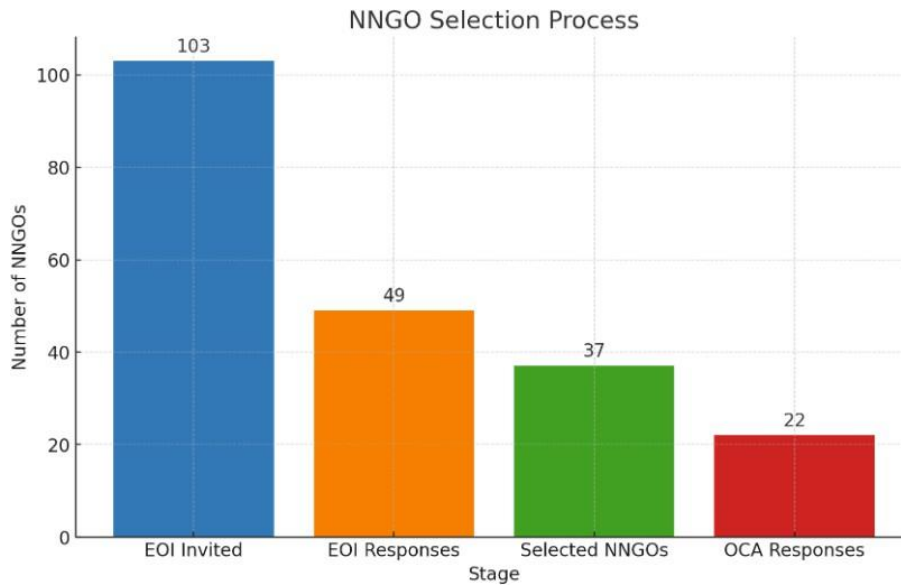


Figure 2 OCA NNGO Selection Process

2.3 Engagement and Consent

- **LNA - Respondent Briefing:** Participants were briefed on the LNA's purpose and provided informed consent before participation, ensuring ethical standards were maintained.
- **OCA - Stakeholder Engagement:** Following the mapping and shortlisting, NNGOs were invited to participate through email, with the Expression of Interest (EOI) forms made available in both English and Arabic. The EOI form included a section covering the purpose of the OCA and a declaration to provide informed consent. A dedicated WhatsApp group was also created to facilitate communication with organisations.

3. Data Management and Processing

3.1 Data Entry and Cleaning

- **LNA:** Survey responses were securely entered into a central database. Data cleaning was carried out to remove duplicates, incomplete responses, and inconsistencies to ensure accuracy.
- **OCA:** The OCA responses from participating organisations were collected and validated. Data cleaning was carried out to ensure responses were complete and consistent, especially when verifying eligibility criteria such as registration and financial sustainability.

3.2 Data Analysis

1. LNA Analysis:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to identify trends, gaps, and key learning needs. SPSS and MS Excel were used to process and analyse data.

- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic analysis was applied to the open-ended survey responses and the KIIs, which provided deeper insights into learning needs and challenges.

2. OCA Analysis:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Mean scores for each organisational capacity area were calculated across all participating NNGOs. The three lowest scoring areas for each NNGO were also identified to focus the capacity-strengthening efforts.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Comments and supporting documentation from the self-assessments were reviewed for further insights into specific organisational challenges.

The combined data provided an integrated view of both individual and organisational learning and development needs.

4. Data Verification and Validation

4.1 Cross-Method Triangulation

Both LNA and OCA methodologies employed a triangulation process, combining data from different sources (surveys, KIIs, FGDs) to increase the reliability and validity of the findings. This ensured that the insights drawn from both assessments were aligned and reflected the actual capacity gaps and training needs.

5. Reporting and Recommendations

5.1 Findings Presentation

- **LNA:** The LNA findings were synthesised into a report that highlighted key learning needs, sector-specific gaps, and suggested capacity-strengthening interventions. A tailored capacity development plan was provided, detailing priorities for future training.
- **OCA:** Detailed reports were produced for each participating NNGO, showing their organisational capacity scores across the seven key areas. The reports also included a spider diagram visualising strengths and weaknesses, with actionable recommendations for capacity strengthening.

5.2 Training and Capacity Strengthening

- **LNA:** The learning priorities identified through the LNA formed the basis for developing targeted training workshops, online coaching, and other capacity-strengthening activities to address the knowledge gaps of humanitarian workers in Sudan.
- **OCA:** Based on the OCA findings, a tailored capacity strengthening plan has been developed for each NNGO, highlighting their weakest capacity areas to improve overall effectiveness and resilience. Training topics that aligned with these areas were developed to address organisational needs, through in-person workshops and online coaching.

6. Limitations and Challenges

6.1 Representation Gaps

- **LNA:** Some organisations and sectors were underrepresented in the LNA, particularly those in highly specialised sectors or resource-poor regions, potentially affecting the generalisability of findings
- **OCA:** A significant limitation was the verification of NNGOs' registration status with local authorities in Sudan. This led to the removal of 5 organisations following completion of the OCA.

6.2 Accessibility Barriers

- **LNA:** the online survey format posed challenges for individuals with limited internet access, skewing the findings towards those with better connectivity.
- **OCA:** Although the OCA process was designed to be inclusive and capture organisations working across Sudan, ultimately there were some geographical limitations, especially in conflict-affected regions, meaning that some areas were insufficiently represented.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. LNA Findings

Respondent Profiles:

The majority of survey respondents were affiliated with National NGOs (52.6%), followed by Community-based Organisations (17.1%). International NGOs accounted for 13.2%, while Academic Institutions represented a smaller segment (3.9%).

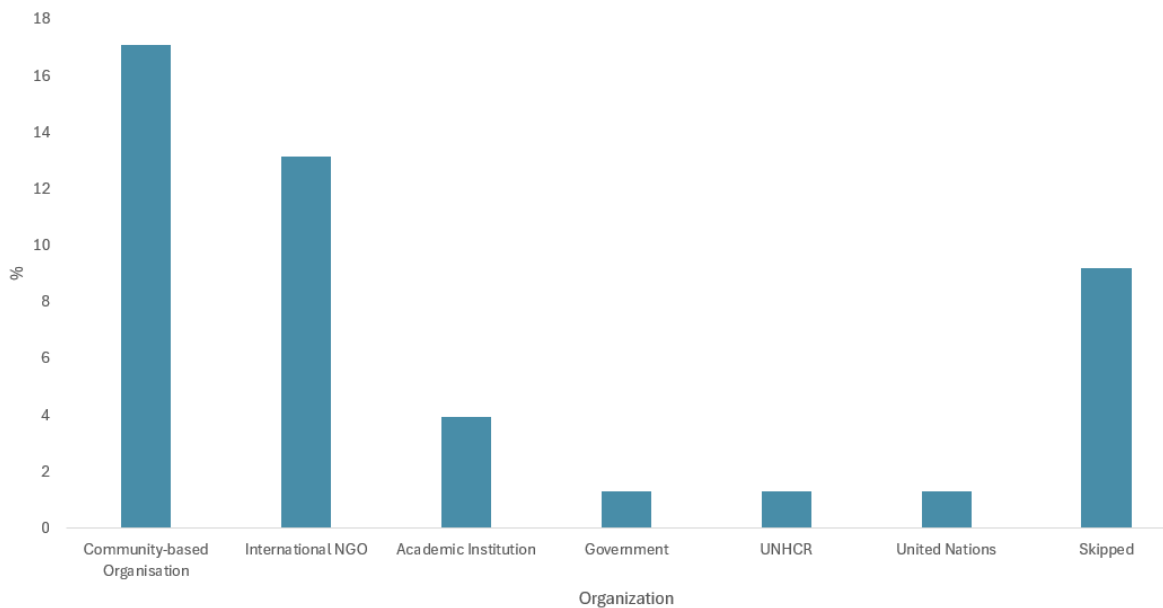


Figure 3 LNA Type of respondent organisation

The distribution of respondents by organisation type highlights the diverse representation within the humanitarian sector. A significant majority, 52.6% (40 respondents), are affiliated with National NGOs, reflecting the central role these organisations play in delivering localised and culturally relevant humanitarian assistance. Community-based Organisations follow with 17.1% (13 respondents), indicating their crucial involvement in grassroots-level support and community engagement.

International NGOs make up 13.2% (10 respondents) of the sample, illustrating their role in providing cross-border assistance and coordination in crisis situations. The representation from Academic Institutions is relatively small at 3.9% (3 respondents), suggesting a more limited but still important contribution to research and training in the sector. Government, UNHCR, and the United Nations each account for 1.3% (1 respondent each), indicating less representation in this sample.

Additionally, 9.2% (7 respondents) did not specify their organisation type, which may point to a diversity of roles or a lack of clarity in the question. Overall, the data reflects a strong predominance of National NGOs and Community-based Organisations, which are essential for direct, on-the-ground humanitarian work, complemented by the presence of other key actors in the sector.

A significant portion (46.1%) of respondents have over 5 years of experience in the humanitarian sector, indicating a well-experienced respondent pool.

Table 1 Duration of respondents' experience in the humanitarian sector breakdown

Duration of respondent's experience in the humanitarian sector	Frequency	Percent
Between 1 - 3 years	15	19.7
Between 1m - 1 year	6	7.9
Between 3 - 5 years	13	17.1
More than 5 years	35	46.1
Skipped	7	9.2
Total	76	100

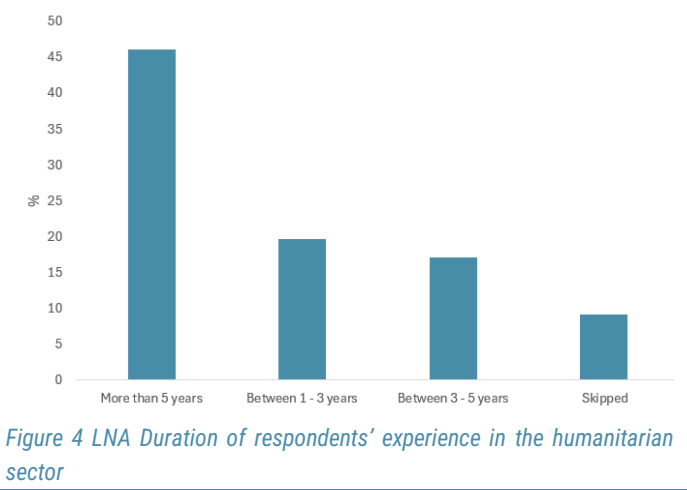


Figure 4 LNA Duration of respondents' experience in the humanitarian sector

The survey respondents' experience in the humanitarian sector varies widely, with 46.1% having over 5 years of experience, indicating a strong presence of seasoned professionals. Meanwhile, 17.1% have 3 to 5 years of experience, and 19.7% have 1 to 3 years, representing those in mid-career stages and emerging professionals, respectively. A smaller group (7.9%) consists of new entrants with less than a year of experience. Additionally, 9.2% of respondents skipped the question, possibly due to uncertainty about their experience level or preference for privacy. This range of experience levels ensures that the survey captures diverse perspectives across different stages of humanitarian careers.

Location:

The majority of respondents were based in Darfur (18.2%). Other significant locations include Gedaref and Port Sudan (9.2% each), Sudan (7.9%), Kassala, Khartoum, Kordofan, and River Nile (3.9% each).

The chart below shows the distribution of respondents based on their location. The majority of respondents are based in Darfur (18.2%). Other significant locations include Gedaref and Port Sudan, each with 9.2%, and Sudan with 7.9%. Several other locations, including Kassala, Khartoum, Kordofan, and River Nile, each represent 3.9% of respondents. The remaining locations, such as Cairo, Chad, Dubai, and others, each have a smaller representation of 1.3%. Additionally, 18.4% of respondents skipped the question on location.

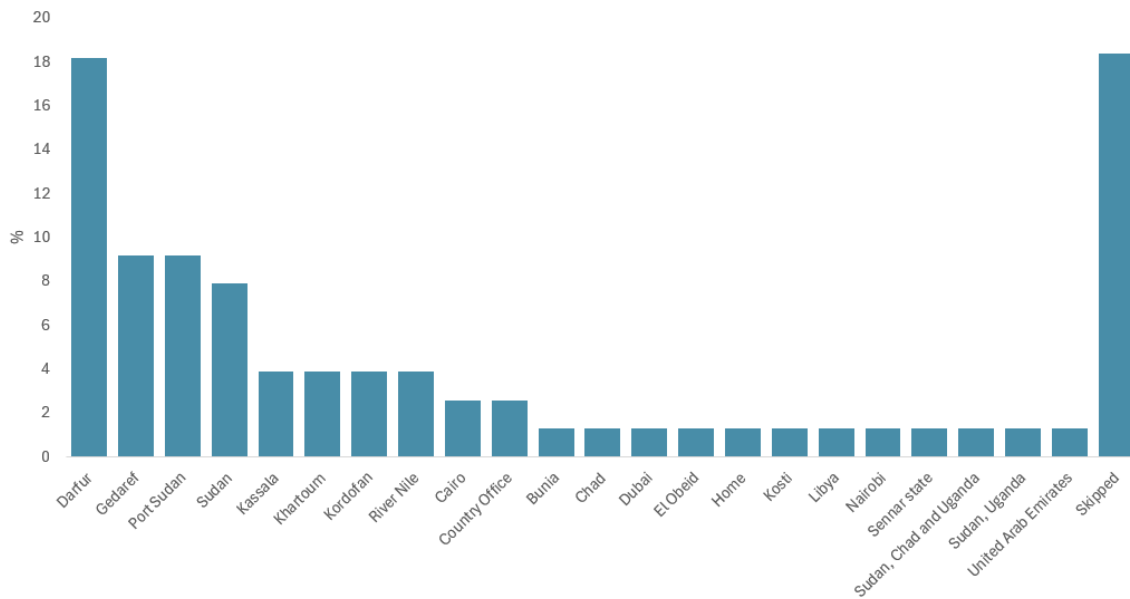


Figure 5 LNA Respondents' geographical locations

Previous capacity strengthening experiences:

- 30.3% of respondents have previously attended training on managing effective humanitarian programmes, including time, resources, funding, partnerships, and donor requirements.
- Technical Knowledge: Another 30.3% have training in technical skills for managing and planning emergency responses.
- 18.9% of respondents have previously attended training on making programming inclusive, accountable, and compliant with humanitarian standards.
- 20.5% have previously attended training on safely operating in affected regions, including managing fraud and sustainability.

Capacity Strengthening Priorities:

Respondents were asked to rank (from 1-4) their biggest capacity priorities for themselves and their teams in their response to the humanitarian crisis. The responses in order of priority were:

- Operating effective programmes: Managing time, resources, funding, partnerships, and donor requirements to meet identified needs (40% ranked this as their 1st priority, 26% as their 2nd priority).
- Increased technical knowledge: How to manage, plan, and respond to emergencies (22% ranked this as their 1st priority, 17% as their 2nd priority).
- Ensuring programming is inclusive and accountable: Reaching where the needs are highest and following humanitarian principles and standards (12% ranked this as their 1st priority, 20% as their 2nd priority).
- Operating safely and sustainably: Including effectively dealing with fraud amongst partners and beneficiaries (11% ranked this as their 1st priority, 22% as their 2nd priority).

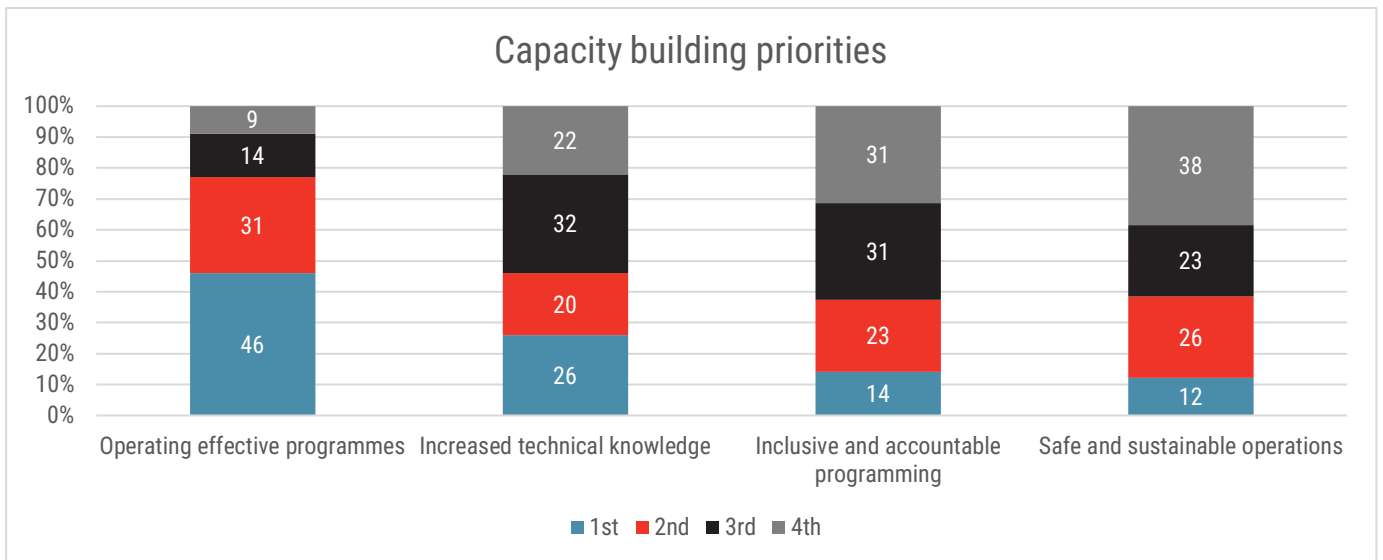


Figure 6 LNA Capacity strengthening priorities

The predominant concern, identified by 46% (30 individuals), was the need to operate effective programmes. This was followed by increased technical knowledge, which was ranked highest by 26% (17 individuals) and received considerable attention across various ranks. Ensuring inclusive and accountable programming emerged as a significant priority, with 14% (9 individuals) ranking it highest and a substantial portion (31%, or 20 individuals) placing it in both the third and fourth positions.

Operating safely and securely was also a key concern, with 12% (8 individuals) ranking it as their top priority, though it saw a wider distribution across all ranks, especially as the fourth priority (38%, or 25 individuals). Overall, the responses reflect a nuanced view of the critical needs, with a total of 76 respondents contributing to the rankings, although some did not provide rankings for every category.

Priority Topics for operating effectively in the humanitarian response:

- Coordination with the international relief system and humanitarian partners was ranked the highest priority by 43.2% of respondents.
- Logistics and supply chain management was the next most important, frequently ranked second by 20.3%.

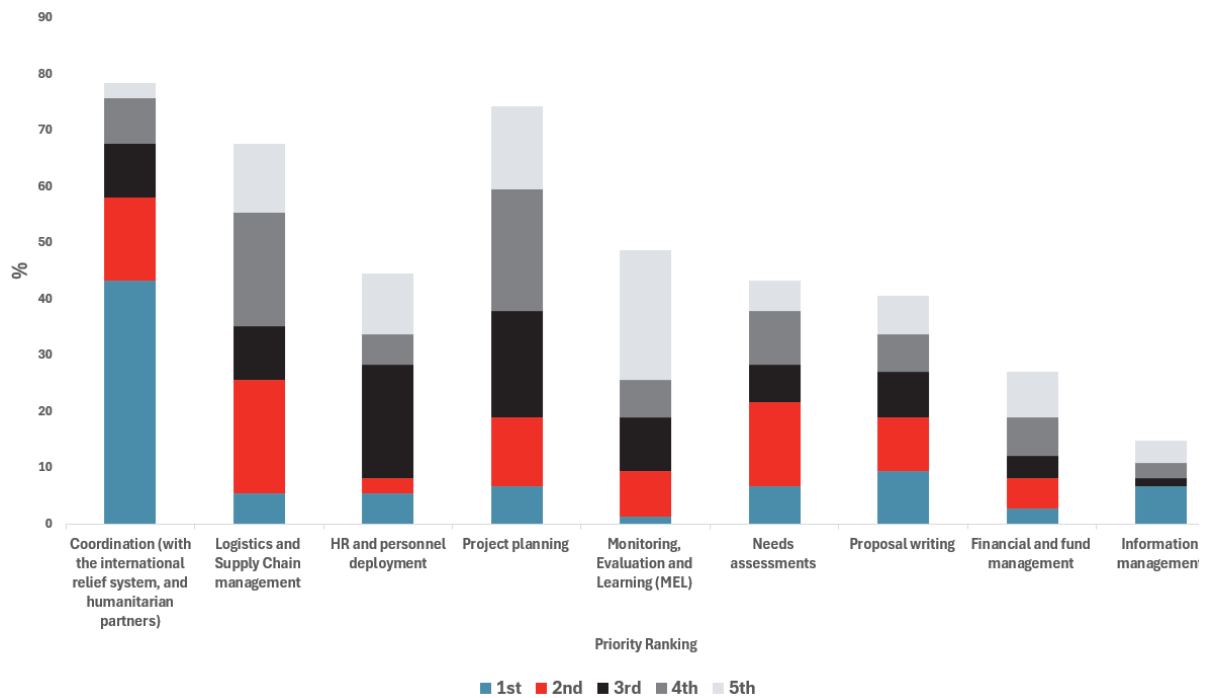


Figure 7 LNA Priority Topics for operating effectively in the humanitarian response

The prioritisation of learning topics reveals several critical areas of focus. Coordination with the international relief system and humanitarian partners stands out as the highest priority, with 43.2% of respondents ranking it first. This preference underscores the importance of seamless integration and collaboration within the international aid framework, essential for effective crisis response.

Logistics and supply chain management follow closely, reflecting its critical role in ensuring the timely and efficient delivery of aid, as evidenced by its frequent ranking in both second (20.3%) and fourth (20.3%) positions.

Human Resources (HR) and personnel deployment are notably prioritized in the third rank (20.3%), indicating a recognized need for effective human resource management in crisis settings.

Project planning is valued across various ranks, especially in the fourth position (21.6%), suggesting its significance in organising and executing relief efforts but perhaps with less immediate urgency compared to other areas.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) was not ranked very highly, with 23.0% placing it fifth, indicating this is not as urgent as other priorities.

Needs assessments, proposal writing, and information management are viewed as less critical, with rankings spread across lower positions (1.4% to 14.9%).

Financial and fund management also appears in the rankings but is not prioritised at the top level, suggesting it is not the primary focus for immediate capacity-strengthening efforts

Priority ranking for Humanitarian Topics:

- Emergency Response: Shelter ranked highest (39.2%), with Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) and Food Security both receiving notable attention.

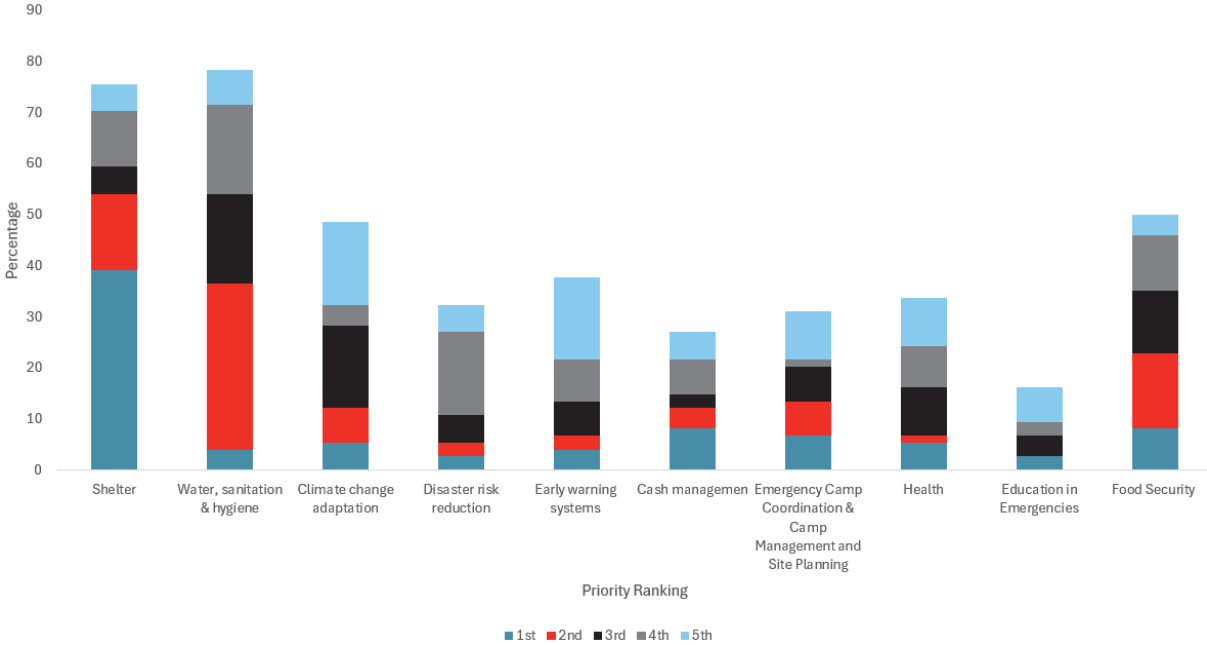


Figure 8 LNA Priority Ranking of Humanitarian Topics

Survey priority ranking data illustrates a clear emphasis on several areas essential for effective crisis response.

Shelter emerges as the most prioritised area, with 39.2% of respondents identifying it as their top priority. This strong focus reflects the urgent need for safe and adequate shelter solutions in the crisis context.

Water, sanitation & hygiene and Food Security are also prominent concerns, each receiving first-place rankings from 8.1% of respondents, this is reflected in the number of respondents who work in these sectors.

Topics for operating accountably and adhering to humanitarian standards:

- Humanitarian protection rated the highest by 46% of the survey respondents selecting it as their 1st training need.
- The topic selected 2nd most of the time by respondents was Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).

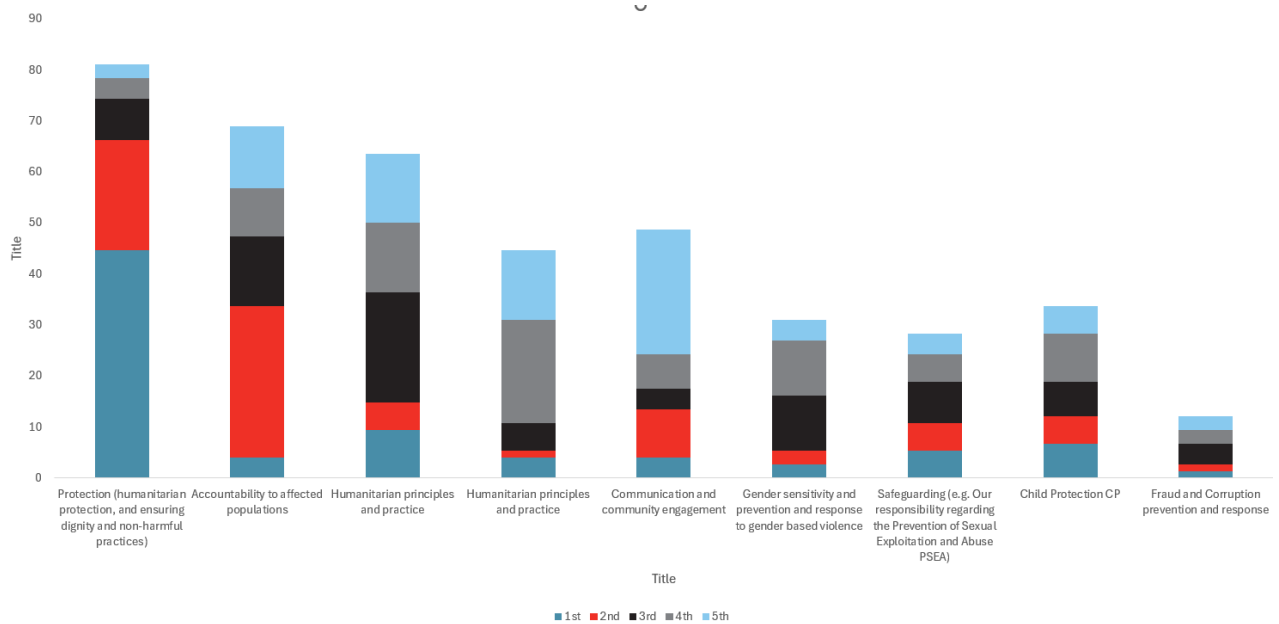


Figure 9 LNA Topics for operating accountably and adhering to humanitarian standards

Topics for Technical Response and Safety:

- Personal Safety and Security rated highest (40.5%), reflecting a primary concern for protecting personnel.
- Mental Health was a top priority issue for 33.8% of respondents.
- Safe Access and Negotiation varied in perceived importance, often seen as a lower priority compared to direct safety concerns.

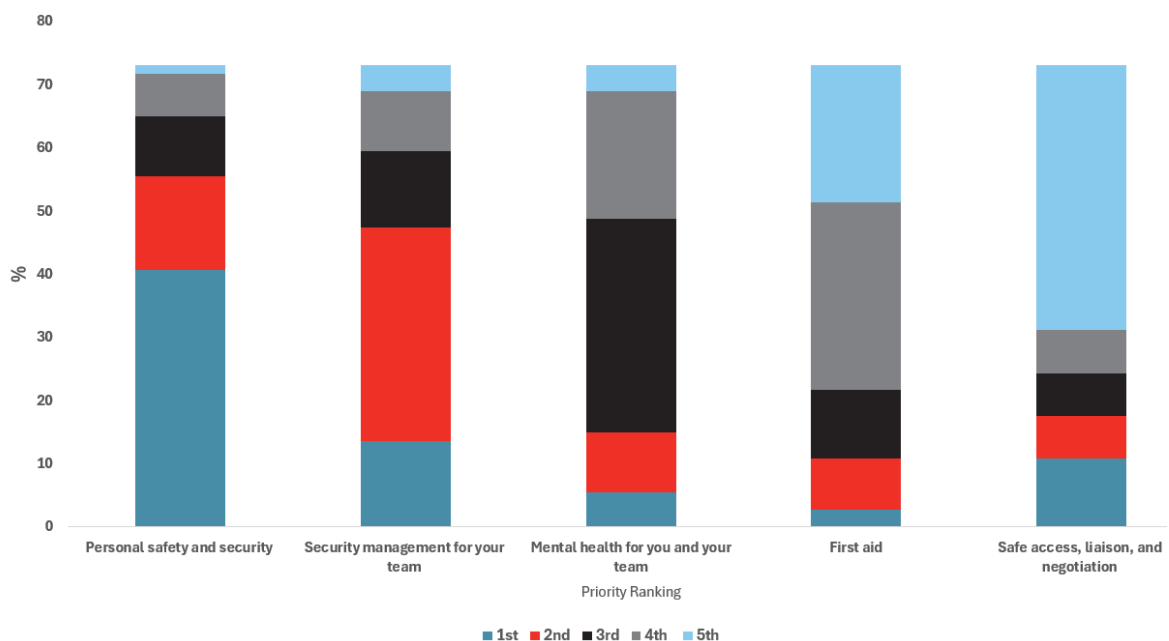


Figure 10 LNA Topics for Technical Response and Safety

Personal safety and security emerge as the highest learning priority, with 40.5% of respondents ranking it first. This reflects the critical need for ensuring the personal well-being of individuals involved in the response efforts. Similarly, learning about Security management for your team is

also deemed crucial, with 13.5% of respondents ranking it first and 33.8% ranking it second, underscoring the importance of managing team security effectively to mitigate risks.

Mental health for you and your team is recognised as a significant training need, with 33.8% of respondents ranking it third. This may be reflective of the high stress and demands of the current crisis situations. First aid is valued as well, with 29.7% placing it fourth, indicating its essential role in emergency preparedness and immediate response.

Safe access, liaison, and negotiation is ranked first by 10.8% of respondents but shows a broader distribution with 41.9% placing it fifth. This varied ranking suggests that while safe access and effective negotiation are important, they may not be as immediate a training concern as personal safety and mental health. Overall, the prioritisation data demonstrates a strong focus on personal and team safety, mental health, and first aid, with a varied emphasis on safe access and negotiation, reflecting the multifaceted nature of safety and security in humanitarian operations.

Additional Training Needs:

- Some individual respondents suggested providing training in Post-Crisis Management, Climate Change, Fundraising, Shelters and Child-Friendly Spaces, Behaviour Modification, and Building Relationships and Partnerships.

Learning Preferences:

Delivery Modes:

- Pre-Recorded Online Presentations and Videos: Most suitable for self-paced learning (13.5%).
- Short Online Modules: Preferred for their flexibility (11.1%).
- Face-to-Face and Working Groups: Less preferred due to logistical constraints.

Time Arrangement:

- The data indicates a clear preference among respondents for shorter, more manageable daily learning sessions. A notable 36.8% of participants reported being able to dedicate 1 to 2 hours per day to learning, with another 31.6% allocating between 30 and 60 minutes. This suggests that nearly 70% of respondents can only commit a limited amount of time daily. The willingness to engage in longer sessions diminishes significantly, with only 9.2% able to dedicate between 2 and 3 hours, and a mere 3.9% willing to allocate more than 3 hours.
- Regarding the timing of learning sessions, the evening is the most preferred time slot, chosen by 36.8% of respondents. The morning is the second most favored time, selected by 21.1% of respondents. The afternoon, while less popular, remains a significant option, reflecting the diverse scheduling needs. These preferences highlight the necessity for flexible and adaptive learning schedules that align with the dynamic environment in which these individuals operate.

Weekly Learning Hours Allocation:

- Over Five Hours indicated by 26.3% of respondents.
- Up to Five Hours by 19.7%, while 2.6% only up to one hour.

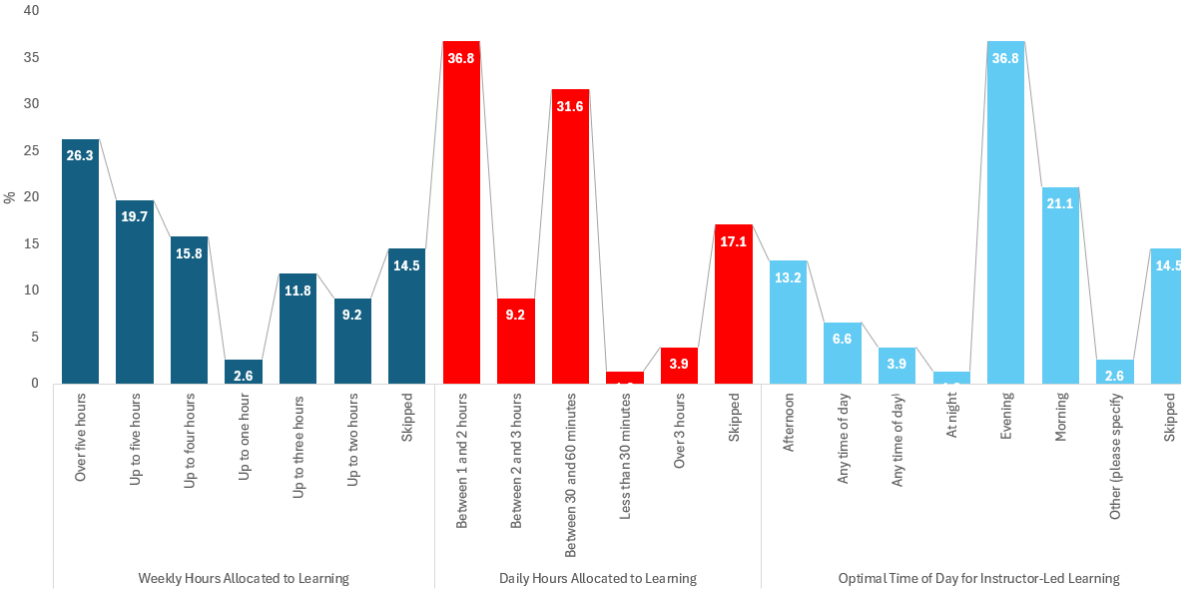


Figure 11 LNA Hours allocated to learning

The survey data reveals that the majority of respondents could allocate significant time to learning each week. Specifically, 26.3% of respondents could allocate over five hours weekly, while 19.7% up to five hours. A smaller proportion of respondents mentioned fewer hours, 15.8% up to four hours, 11.8% up to three hours, 9.2% up to two hours, and only 2.6% up to one hour. Notably, 14.5% of respondents did not specify their possible weekly learning hours.

Regarding daily learning, a significant portion of respondents (36.8%) could allocate between 1 and 2 hours each day, while 31.6% between 30 and 60 minutes. Smaller percentages mentioned more extensive daily learning, with 9.2% between 2 and 3 hours and only 3.9% over 3 hours. A minimal 1.3% of respondents mentioned less than 30 minutes daily on learning, and 17.1% skipped this question.

The data on the optimal time of day for learning shows that the evening is preferred by the largest group (36.8%), followed by the morning (21.1%) and afternoon (13.2%). A smaller percentage (6.6%) is flexible with timing, and 14.5% of respondents did not answer. Other preferences include any time of day (3.9%), specified by a different term, and 2.6% who selected other options, with only 1.3% preferring nighttime learning.

Language:

- Arabic: Preferred by 44.7% of respondents.
- English: Chosen by 36.8%, indicating a bilingual preference in training materials.

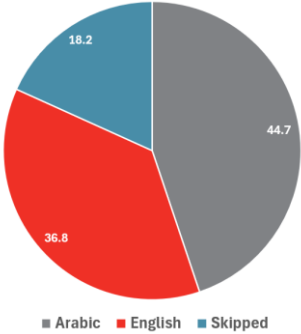


Figure 12 LNA Language Preferences

This assessment reveals that while there is a strong focus on practical and technical training in humanitarian response, there is also a need for flexibility in training delivery and timing, with a significant emphasis on safety, security, and relevant technical skills.

4.2. OCA Findings

OCA Tool Design

The OCA Tool was designed to evaluate organisational capacity across seven fundamental areas:

Table 2 OCA Organisational capacity areas

#	Capacity area	Functional topics
1	Governance and Leadership	Examines the structure, policies, and leadership practices within the organisation.
2	Operations and Management	Reviews organisational procedures, decision-making processes, and strategic planning.
3	Human Resources Development	Assesses staff recruitment, retention, training, and overall workforce management.
4	Financial Administration	Evaluates financial management practices, including budgeting, accounting, and funding sustainability.
5	Projects and Programmes	Focuses on the effectiveness and quality of the organisation's programs and services.
6	External Relations	Looks at the organisation's partnerships, advocacy efforts, and stakeholder engagement.
7	Sustainability	Analyses long-term planning, resource mobilisation, and risk management strategies.

Each component was assessed using a scoring system, which provides a detailed view of the organisation's current capacity and highlights specific areas where improvement is needed. The results guided the development of tailored capacity-strengthening support to enhance the organisations' effectiveness and resilience.

Table 3 OCA Scoring system

Score	Interpretation
1	This issue needs urgent attention and improvement.
2	This issue needs attention and could be improved.
3	The organisation has a plan on how to respond and improve this issue.
4	The organisation took certain steps towards improving this issue.
5	This issue is well-handled and no need for immediate improvement.

Collecting and Displaying Scores

After completing the questionnaire, participants were instructed to calculate their total scores for each sub-section and divide them by the number of questions in that sub-section. This process resulted in a **sub-section score ranging from 1 to 5**, rounded to one decimal place.

The OCA consultancy team then collected these scores from all participants and calculated an **average score** for each sub-section. These averages were shared with participants to provide a collective view of their organisation's performance in various areas.

The OCA consultancy team also introduced participants to the concept of **organisational capacity stages**, which reflect different levels of competence and development. These stages are:

- **Nascent (0-50%)** – Organisations in the early stages of development, with minimal formal structure or processes.
- **Emerging (51-70%)** – Organisations beginning to establish systems and processes but still facing challenges in consistency and growth.
- **Expanding (71-90%)** – Organisations with well-developed structures, actively scaling operations and improving effectiveness.
- **Mature (91-100%)** – Organisations with strong, sustainable systems and practices in place, demonstrating high levels of competence and resilience.

OCA Scores

The OCA results of all 22 NNGOs showed a mix of capacity levels, with 1 NNGO scoring as 'Nascent', 8 'Emerging', 8 'Expanding', and 5 'Mature'. This distribution, with the majority of NNGOs at 'Emerging' or 'Expanding', demonstrates that the selection criteria were well developed to select NNGOs that were already operating at least at a foundational level of capacity, while exhibiting clear potential to develop further.

These organisations had already established or were in the process of establishing systems, processes, and structures that would be the focus of the capacity strengthening delivered in this

project. By focusing on organisations operating at this level, with programmes across Sudan, the training and coaching services provided will therefore have the greatest potential impact on the wider humanitarian response in Sudan.

The OCA results were initially aggregated using a mean to determine the average score of NGOs in each capacity area. The aggregated results are shown in the table and spider diagram below.

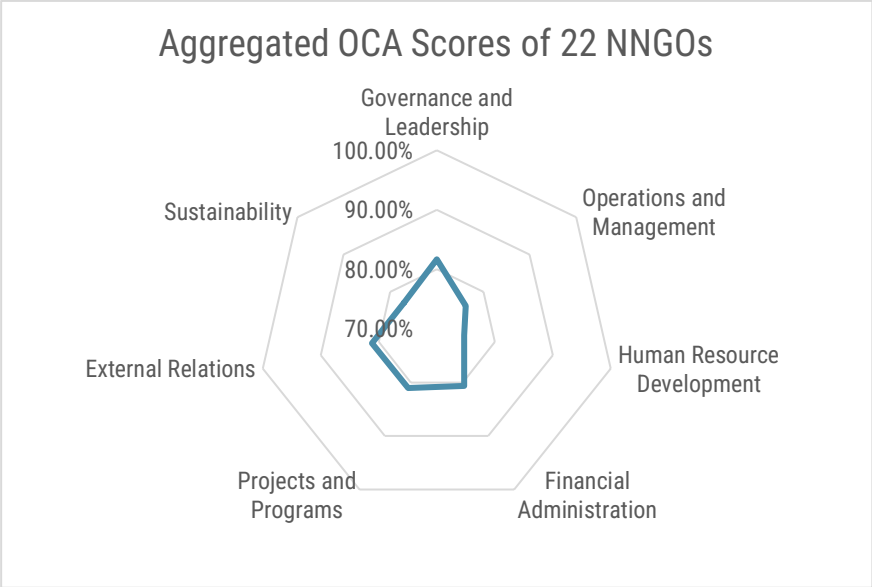


Figure 13 OCA Aggregated scores for 22 NGOs

Table 4 OCA Results

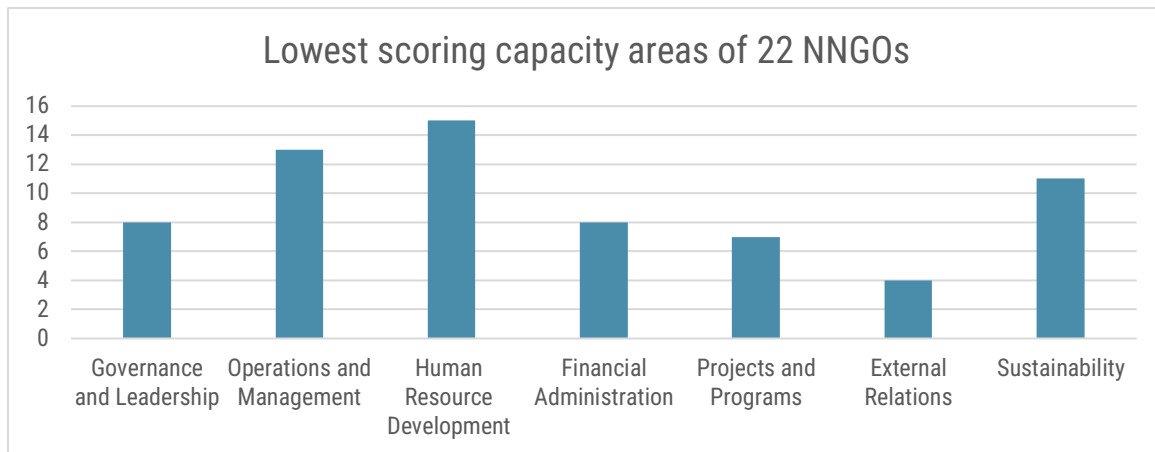
Assessment Area	Average Score	Average %
Governance and Leadership	24.50 / 30	81.67%
Operations and Management	26.68 / 35	76.23%
Human Resource Development	52.31 / 70	74.73%
Financial Administration	32.29 / 40	80.73%
Projects and Programs	24.32 / 30	81.06%
External Relations	56.82 / 70	81.17%
Sustainability	38.50 / 50	77.00%

The aggregated OCA results provided an initial indication that the lowest scoring capacity areas were in Human Resource Development (74.73%), Operations and Management (76.23%), and Sustainability (77%). However, it was difficult to establish the remaining needed capacity areas as they were all separated by less than 1 percentage point. The mean average calculation had diluted the lowest scoring NNGOs with higher scores, making it difficult to determine the true level of need for each capacity area. To support the analysis, the three lowest scoring capacity areas for each NNGO were highlighted and recorded in the table below to provide the mode average.

Table 5 OCA Highlighted three lowest scoring capacity areas

NNGO #	Governance and Leadership	Operations and Management	Human Resource Development	Financial Administration	Projects and Programs	External Relations	Sustainability
1	76.70%	74.30%	74%	58%	76.70%	82.90%	50%
2	83.30%	74.30%	76%	98%	93.30%	77.10%	76%
3	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%
4	93.30%	85.70%	90%	98%	83.30%	78.60%	82%
5	86.70%	74.30%	69%	90%	96.70%	85.70%	82%
6	100%	100%	91%	100%	100%	92.90%	98%
7	63.30%	68.60%	67%	70%	66.70%	82.90%	66%
8	96.70%	77.10%	73%	90%	80%	88.60%	88%
9	60%	62.90%	73%	93%	70%	72.90%	56%
10	100%	97.10%	94%	93%	90%	97.10%	100%
11	80%	74.30%	61%	60%	80%	55.70%	66%
12	90%	85.70%	86%	85%	86.70%	88.60%	90%
13	80%	60%	50%	50%	70%	71.40%	62%
14	70%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
15	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
16	40%	34.30%	50%	40%	60%	74.30%	28%
17	86.70%	80%	87%	95%	86.70%	88.60%	88%
18	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
19	66.70%	57.10%	53%	63%	53.30%	60%	76%
20	90%	94.30%	79%	100%	93.30%	97.10%	100%
21	90%	77.10%	74%	88%	83.30%	77.10%	78%
22	83.30%	80%	81%	85%	93.30%	94.30%	88%
Mean Average	81.67%	76.23%	74.73%	80.73%	81.06%	81.17%	77.00%
Mode Average	8	13	15	8	7	4	11

Where some NNGOs scored the same percentage score across multiple capacity areas in the self-assessment survey, the qualitative analysis of comments and supporting documentation was utilised by the consultancy team to make a judgement on which capacity areas were most needed. In some cases, NNGOs may have scored highly in a certain capacity area, but neglected to provide supporting documentation as evidence of this. Likewise, they may have scored lowly but provided sufficient context in the way of comments and additional information around their situation and future plans for development. By combining the quantitative and qualitative analysis, the three lowest scoring capacity areas for each NNGO were therefore highlighted to form the basis of their Tailored Capacity Strengthening Plan. Taken together, the mode average therefore indicates the capacity areas that were most often scored lowest by NNGOs, as the chart below demonstrates.



By considering both the mean average scores of NNGOs and the mode average of the lowest scoring capacity areas, the following capacity areas were determined to be the most in need of further development (in order of priority):

1. Human Resource Development
2. Operations and Management
3. Sustainability
4. Financial Administration
5. Governance and Leadership
6. Projects and Programmes

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and recommendations outlined in this report, drawn from both the Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) and Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA), provide a strong foundation for strengthening the capacity of national non-governmental organisations (NNGOs) and individual humanitarian responders in Sudan. While the assessments were conducted with a specific cohort of 22 NNGOs and 76 individual respondents, the trends identified in learning priorities, organisational challenges, and capacity-strengthening needs are highly relevant to other 'Emerging' and 'Expanding' NNGOs and humanitarian actors operating in Sudan.

The OCA results offer valuable insights into institutional development priorities that can benefit a wider range of organisations seeking to enhance their operational effectiveness, either through their own endeavours or as part of further capacity-strengthening initiatives delivered in collaboration with institutional donors, UN agencies, and other international NGOs supporting civil society in Sudan. Similarly, the LNA findings underscore the importance of targeted learning interventions, focusing on humanitarian coordination, technical response, safety and security, and program management – areas that are essential for improving the quality and impact of humanitarian response efforts across Sudan.

5.1. LNA Recommendations

Most Pressing Topics for Learning Programs:

- **Focus on humanitarian coordinations as a Top Learning Priority:** Given that 46% of respondents identified shelter as the highest learning priority.
- **Strengthen WASH and Food Security Programs:** Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), along with Food Security, were identified as significant areas of concern, ranked by 8.1% of respondents as the 1st priority.
- **Effective Program Management:** 35% of responders highlighted the importance of operating effective programs as the second priority.

Enhance Training Accessibility and Delivery:

- **Training Design and Leverage Technology:** Tailor training to align with learners' preferred learning styles. Utilize technology to offer flexible learning opportunities, such as online training modules, offline or low bandwidth learning solutions, and mobile learning apps.
- **Decentralize Training Locations:** Conduct face-to-face training in easily accessible local venues, particularly in rural areas or outside major urban centers, to minimize travel burden and enhance attendance rates.
- **Schedule Instructor-Led Training Sessions:** Primarily in the evening, with the morning as a secondary option.

Tailor Training Content to Address Critical Needs:

- **Focus on Safety and Security:** Prioritise training modules on personal safety, security, and mental health, incorporating real-life scenarios faced by humanitarian workers in Sudan.
- **Develop Specialized Training Programs:** Create advanced, targeted training programs in areas such as post-crisis management, climate change adaptation, fundraising, and child protection, aligned with the emerging needs and challenges of the Sudanese humanitarian context.

Strengthen Support Mechanisms for Continuous Learning:

- **Implement Comprehensive Follow-Up Systems:** Establish robust post-training follow-up mechanisms, including regular check-ins, refresher courses, and mentorship programs. Use pre- and post-training assessments to measure knowledge retention and application of skills in the field.
- **Create a Trainee Database:** Develop and maintain a database of participants to track their progress, facilitate networking, and provide ongoing support. This database can also be used to tailor future training programs based on participant feedback and evolving needs.

Promote Recognition and Career Development:

- **Introduce a Digital Badging System:** Enhance the recognition and value of training programs by providing learners with a portable, verifiable record of their skills and competencies recognized across various organisations.
- **Integrate Career Development Modules:** Include career development sessions in training

programs, focusing on skills such as leadership, project management, and organisational development.

Enhance Coordination and Collaboration Among Stakeholders:

- **Foster Partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration with local NGOs, government agencies, and international organisations to co-design and deliver training programs. Shared resources and expertise can lead to more comprehensive and effective training interventions.
- **Align Training with Strategic Humanitarian Objectives:** Ensure that training programs are aligned with broader humanitarian goals in Sudan and global standards of practice, such as improving food security, enhancing protection mechanisms, and promoting peacebuilding efforts.

Adapt Training to Linguistic and Cultural Contexts:

- **Offer Bilingual Training Materials:** Ensure that training materials are available in both Arabic and English, reflecting the bilingual preference of participants.
- **Incorporate Cultural Sensitivity:** Design training programs that are culturally sensitive and relevant to the local context. Engage local experts and trainers who understand the cultural dynamics and can deliver content in a way that resonates with participants.

5.2. OCA Recommendations

The findings of the OCA were used to generate a detailed analysis of the capacity strengthening needs of NNGOs, which was further broken down through the development of individual Tailored Capacity Strengthening Plans for each of the 22 participating NNGOs. Each NNGO was assessed in seven capacity areas: Governance and Leadership, Operations and Management, Human Resource Development, Financial Administration, Projects and Programmes, External Relations, and Sustainability. The results of this assessment revealed shared trends and recommendations for further capacity strengthening support in each area:

Governance and Leadership: Received the highest average score among all NNGOs of 81.7%, reflecting robust practices in organisational structure and leadership, though this was not always evidenced by supporting documentation. The high mean score concealed a relatively large number of organisations that scored low in this area, so it is still recommended as a topic for capacity strengthening, particularly around governance structures within the legal framework of Sudanese civil society organisations.

Operations and Management: Organisations scored an average of 76.2% in this capacity area, indicating that most have established or are in the process of establishing good management practices, but may still face challenges, particularly in areas such as strategic planning and decision-making. The focus of any training intervention in this area should therefore be at a strategic and organisational level rather than operational, where many NNGOs were already strong.

Human Resources Development: Scored the lowest mean average score of 74.7% and the most frequent low scoring topic with 15 out of 22 NNGOs scoring low in this capacity area. This indicates a need for improvement across the majority of NNGOs, especially in organisational culture and staff recruitment, retention, and development practices.

Financial Administration: With an average score of 80.7%, this area showed relatively strong financial management capabilities across NNGOs, though again this mean score conceals several NNGOs that scored low in this area. These organisations require support in certain aspects, such as budgeting and financial planning to strengthen these skills.

Projects and Programmes: The assessment indicated an average score of 81.1%, suggesting that most organisations have effective program delivery. However, there was a strong indication among many NNGOs that monitoring and evaluation processes were in need of improvement, particularly in outcome harvesting and impact assessment to enhance program effectiveness.

External Relations: NNGOs scored 81.2% on average, reflecting well-developed partnerships and advocacy efforts. This was also the least common low scoring topic with only 4 out of 22 NNGOs scoring low in this capacity area, so it is not recommended as an area of capacity strengthening support to be included in this project. To further enhance these capabilities, advocacy and policy influencing training would help organisations better engage with stakeholders and policymakers.

Sustainability: With an average score of 77%, sustainability practices were one of the lowest scoring capacity areas, though this varied significantly between NNGOs. While some NNGOs excelled in resource mobilization and long-term planning, others needed support in these areas, particularly in financial sustainability.