

One Day **One Action** *One Goal*

by Zurab Elzarov

Background

A wise man said that all great things start from small beginnings. Global partnership for effective cooperation can only be achieved when all actors at the grass-roots level share common goals and take united action on a daily basis.

Zam Zam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Darfur provides shelter to more than 100,000 people. While the number of IDPs continued to grow rapidly due to violent clashes in various parts of Darfur, the camp had only four medical clinics run by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and supported by the World Health Organization and the North Darfur State Ministry of Health.

A fire incident destroyed one of the clinics that had been operating since 2007, providing infant care, improving maternal health, and offering pregnancy follow-up. The destruction of the clinic created a large gap in the provision of medical care to IDPs. Therefore, the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was requested to provide temporary accommodation for medical personnel in order to enable IDPs to receive uninterrupted health services until the construction of a new clinic. The situation demanded an urgent intervention to bridge the humanitarian gap affecting health conditions of vulnerable displaced persons.

The project represented a successful model of collaboration among UNAMID, United Nations (UN) agencies, the government, and the local NGOs in bridging a critical humanitarian gap in a rapid, collaborative, and cost-effective manner through construction of a new emergency health clinic at Zam Zam IDP camp in Darfur.

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Interagency Cooperation in Project Implementation

UNAMID, the Government of Sudan, the UN, and national humanitarian partners adopted a participatory approach to the project implementation. A UNAMID project team provided leadership in coordinating the project implementation among different stakeholders, including the Mission Support Division, UN agencies, civil society organizations, and the line ministries of the Government of Sudan.

Upon receiving a request, a UNAMID Humanitarian and Recovery Assistance Unit in North Darfur state, under the overall guidance of the Head of Office, started consultations with relevant Mission components (Sector North Senior Administrative Officer and the Mission Support Centre), humanitarian partners (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, World Health Organization [WHO], United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], Humanitarian Aid and Development Organization [HAD], and Sudanese line ministries (State Ministry of Health).

UNAMID verified the fire incident and assessed the present conditions and needs on the ground. Based on this assessment, it was agreed that the provision of two tents by UNAMID to temporarily accommodate the clinic would be the most effective solution to the situation until humanitarian partners could secure funding for building a new clinic. The initial idea to develop a quick impact project was abandoned due to the urgency of the request and time.

A second technical site assessment visit to the camp was organized with participation from the UNAMID Engineering Section. Engineers assessed the ground and selected the most appropriate place to install the tents. A UNAMID project team invited all relevant partners to discuss the results of the assessments. Project partners were asked to agree on project implementation modalities, timeframes,

contributions of each partner, coordination mechanisms, and the division of roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

Following the official approval of the project, UNAMID allocated, transported to the site, and erected two tents. In its turn, the State Ministry of Health deployed medical personnel. WHO supplied medicines and equipment, and HAD provided furniture and took over the overall management of the new clinic.

The success factors of this medium-scale project (but with significant and rapid humanitarian impact) are cost-effectiveness and teamwork. In fact, the Mission did not spend any funds from the budget, but rather utilized the available resources to provide timely and effective humanitarian response to the people of concern.

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The provision of two tents from available assets not being used served as an effective way to bridge an emergency humanitarian gap that affected the health conditions of the displaced population.

In addition, by working together, UNAMID, UN agencies, the government, and NGOs have had larger impact in the most cost-effective way by complementing each other's activities, working as a team with a clear vision, and dividing labor, roles, and responsibilities to achieve a high-quality result and impact.

The integrated approach taken by UNAMID, the Government of Sudan, and humanitarian partners to implement the project was remarkable. It established a division of labor, held every stakeholder accountable for its part

of the project, and maximized the collective input. The participation of local partners from the outset was essential to ensure the national ownership and sustainability of the project.

The project constituted a swift and efficient response to urgent humanitarian needs of IDPs. The impact of the fire incident was alleviated, and the provision of health services to the IDP camp residents went on uninterrupted. The new clinic currently serves up to 3,000 patients per month. One tent is now being used as a clinic for daily consultations and patient treatment, while arrangements are being made to use the second tent to provide pregnancy consultations, labor and delivery, and other essential health services.

Many IDPs, as well as local doctors and nurses working in the clinic, expressed their satisfaction with the project. According to Alawiya H., a camp resident and a young mother displaced from Tarni, she has been relying on the clinic, which is a 20-minute walk from her shelter in Zam Zam. She added that she was happy that her baby would now receive adequate medical care.

This small-scale, cost-effective, and cast-to-the-need project increased trust and fostered UNAMID relationship with the local and international stakeholders (State Ministry of Health, WHO, and the local NGO). In addition, it had a significant impact on the local community (displaced population) and contributed to a better UNAMID perception by the authorities and the IDPs. The innovative approach bypassed the lengthy procedures required for approving and implementing a quick impact project and provided a timely response to an emergency situation.

Conclusion

Several important recommendations could be made based on the success and the lessons learned from the project. At the UNAMID level, containers, tents, or other similar assets that are available but not used could be effectively utilized for emergency humanitarian purposes in a swift and cost-effective manner. An interagency approach involving regional government agencies, international aid organizations, and NGOs should be adopted systematically to maximize the collective impact on the humanitarian situation in Darfur. Taking into account the significant humanitarian gaps and needs in Darfur vis-à-vis the limited funding, a recommendation was made to continue devising innovative solutions to improve the humanitarian situation in the region.

At the global level, the successful experience of UNAMID in implementing joint interagency humanitarian projects could be replicated by other UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) field missions operating in similar context. In addition, DPKO field missions should be encouraged to participate, as much as possible, in similar joint and collaborative projects with relevant actors. Doing so provides an immediate response to a humanitarian emergency situation, strengthens international and national cooperation at the grass-roots level, and serves to foster trust building with the local communities. **IAJ**