

CO-OPerate Concept Note

1 Introduction

1.1 Economic & Development outlook of Sudan

Sudan has been suffering from an acute deterioration in the economy due to multiple and complex variables, such as substantial internal conflicts, secession of South Sudan which led to multiple economic shocks, including the loss of the oil revenue that accounted for more than half of Sudan's government revenue and 95% of its exports (1). Inflation escalated to an estimated 124.9% in 2020, compared with 82.4% in 2019, mainly due to a 118% currency depreciation and monetization of the fiscal deficit (1). Recent reforms that were implemented in 2021 as part of the Sudan Reengagement and Reform Development Policy Financing project resulted in weakening social security programs, liberalization of the economy and phasing out of subsidization of vital commodities such as fuel and wheat. Poverty level is now estimated to be at 56% in 2020. (2).

1.2 Role of cooperatives in economic development

It was stated by the ILO (2) that the values and principles governing cooperative enterprises respond to the pressing issues of economic development, environmental protection and social equity in a globalized world. Cooperatives support more inclusive and equal trade relations and value chains through their engagement in alternative forms of trade, such as fair-trade cooperatives can play a key role in poverty reduction. While savings and credit cooperatives facilitate their members' access to financial capital, agricultural cooperatives help farmers access the inputs required to grow crops and keep livestock and help them process, transport and market their products. (e.g., In Ethiopia, 800,000 people in

the agricultural sector are estimated to generate most of their income through cooperatives).

cooperatives are major job providers. They employ at least 100 million people worldwide. It has been estimated that the livelihoods of nearly half the world's population are secured by cooperative enterprises. The world's 300 largest cooperative enterprises have collective revenues of US\$ 1.6 trillion, which is comparable to the GDP of Spain.

Cooperatives also help in introducing democratic values and practices in grassroots levels, which help the acceleration of the transformation of a society from underdeveloped to a developed modern society (Myrdal 1970: 57).

1.3 Cooperative movement in Sudan

cooperative initiatives in Sudan have been around since the 1920s. however, these efforts faced great difficulties due to lack of management and technical skills. In the 1940s the colonial administration officially introduced the cooperative system to help reduce the impact of post-war shortages (3), the colonial administration and the independent Sudanese government have always had an intrusive approach dealing with the cooperative movement, hampering the autonomy and organic natural growth of the grassroots cooperative movement, This led to A weak nearly non-existent cooperative sector in Sudan.

2 About Us

2.1 Who we are

CO-OPerate is a dynamic and innovative national cooperative Development non-profit NGO created to help in the rejuvenation of the cooperative movement of Sudan through different means and tools, help in building frameworks and models for cooperative growth and thriving in the Sudanese business world with a resilient democracy at the grassroots level for a better Sudan. Promotion of self-help and mutual aid in local communities, socio-economic development through cooperative enterprise.

CO-OPERate was founded by different young activists in the cooperatives sectors whom were closely involved in local and national co-operative development projects and initiatives.

We are researchers, economists, agricultural engineers, software engineers, talented and innovative students and much more talents and expertise.

2.2 OUR MISSION

To help in developing the cooperative sector such as it serves its members equitably, efficiently and empowers them economically.

2.3 Our Objectives:

- Institutionalization The Cooperative Concept.
- Revitalizing the cooperative movement in Sudan.
- To have an encouraging eco-system and legislative framework for the cooperative societies and especially financial cooperatives.
- To link local cooperatives to the international apex organizations, such as other cooperative federations in different countries, the ICA ... etc.
- Minimize unemployment and underemployment rate in Sudan.
- Enabling and economically empowering small producers especially women and youth through local resources mobilization.
- Contribute in the rural development, and encouraging Active Participation of Marginalized Groups especially in the rainfed agricultural sector through the active role of agricultural cooperatives.

3 Our Activities & Services:

3.1 Activities

- Cooperative Training: Provide state of the art training and capacity building services on the cooperative concepts and best practices by the standards Approved by the international cooperative alliance (ICA).
- Sector Specific Training: Provide sector specific cooperative training (Agricultural, Finance, Vocational and technological literacy) to different target groups

- Provide consultancy services (feasibility studies, business consultancy, market research...etc.) to different cooperatives and promotion of successful cooperatives to mobilize and encourage local communities to pool their resources and organize in the form the cooperative business model.
- Providing marketing services, locally and internationally, to help facilitate ethical and fair trade deals , through different channels such as electronic platforms to ease access to their services and products. (e.g: <https://www.coopmaroc.com/>)
- Networking among different interested stakeholders (such as other cooperatives, developmental agencies, governmental entities, research centers, buyers, legal advisors ... etc.).
- Providing models and promotion of different innovative financial models and instruments such as Saving and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), micro lending and revolving loans services, the use of digital banking, branchless banking and mobile money.
- Conduct research activities either through partners or by **Co-operate** employees and members.
- Policy Advocacy.

3.2 Services:

- **Marketing Platform:**
To help facilitate the exchange of cooperatives goods and services among the cooperatives and to provide cooperatives to new markets
- **Crowd Funding & Peer Lending Platform:**
It is an innovative financial instrument to help individual invest in local projects and provide cooperatives and small scale producers to new financial services.
- **Participatory Democracy Platform.**
Platform for participatory democracy adapted to the needs of the digital governance of cooperatives and

local social institutions. The system helps citizens, organizations and public institutions self-organize democratically at every scale, the system facilitates different participatory processes and activities (e.g strategic Planning, participatory budgeting, initiatives and citizen consultations, participative processes assemblies, networked communication...etc.).

- **Online cooperative newspaper.**

The news paper is a powerful tool to help track issues in the cooperative sector, provide transparency, help in forming public opinion and raise cooperative consciousness at the grassroots levels.

4 References:

(1) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/sudan/overview#1>

(2) https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_303222/lang-en/index.htm

(3) <http://khartoumspace.uofk.edu/bitstream/handle/123456789/24875/The%20Cooperative%20Movement%20in%20Sudan.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

(4) <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity#:~:text=Cooperative%20values,responsibility%20and%20caring%20for%20others.>