

OUR CAPABILITIES IN EMERGENCIES AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES



Driving Digital Innovation in Emergency Response

In any crisis, two of the greatest barriers to effective response are time and cost. Rapid global growth in mobile & web access is creating new opportunities for faster, more affordable aid delivery—but few implementers have in-house digital expertise, and few software companies have hands-on knowledge of the humanitarian sector.

SoukTel bridges this gap: We're former front-line aid workers, humanitarian response experts, and software development specialists. Since our 2007 launch of the Middle East's first digital crisis response platform in Gaza, we've leveraged this unique skill profile to build award-winning, custom digital solutions for 30+ aid providers, from UN-OCHA to the ICRC and WFP.

Our bespoke mobile & web platforms help streamline medical aid delivery to Syrian refugees, through real time smartphone-based shipment tracking. They also make life-saving information accessible to 200,000+ mobile users from Nigeria to Yemen, via SMS, mobile audio, and messenger applications like WhatsApp.

The game-changing potential of digital technology in the aid sector is significant: 2013 ISCRAM research found that integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into disaster response efforts resulted in

better decision-making and increased program effectiveness.

In Haiti, 94% of community members surveyed by the GSMA in 2012 felt that mobile device-based information services, like aid delivery alerts, were 'very useful'. 74% modified their behavior, and were able to access aid more quickly, based on the information they received.

ICTs also offer key opportunities to enhance service delivery for IDPs and refugees: After introducing digital registration processes, aid provider World Vision has reduced food distribution time-frames from 50 hours and a cost of \$6 per refugee household to only 30 minutes and a cost of \$0.50 for each family.

Choosing the right blend of ICT solutions to deliver this rapid, scalable impact can be a challenge. SoukTel makes the process effortless—leveraging 10 years of expertise to design, develop, and deliver custom digital solutions that boost the reach and quality of humanitarian response, at low cost.

SoukTel provides "life-saving information to people...so they know where relief can be found."

Hillary Clinton
Former US Secretary of State, on SoukTel's East Africa emergency response platform.

WHAT MAKES SOUKTEL DIFFERENT

With our mix of emergency response experts, best-in-class software developers, and former mobile network staff, SoukTel is uniquely positioned to deliver high-impact digital solutions for aid implementers.

Our core strengths include:

- **Customized, agile solution design** including in-person scoping, iterative software development, and full support for service launch, sustainable delivery, and handover to local partners.
- **Multi-channel service delivery**, integrating web, mobile audio, mobile messenger (eg. WhatsApp), SMS and apps to reach smartphone users and basic mobile users.
- **Strategic mobile operator partnerships**, partnering directly with networks like Orange, Etisalat, MTN, and Airtel to build dedicated gateway connectivity, and secure optimal pricing agreements.
- **Broad geographic reach**, serving 250,000+ mobile users in 30+ markets across Africa, Asia, and the Americas.
- **10+ years of market leadership in the tech & development sector**, advising donors like DFID, USAID, and MasterCard on digital strategy, publishing strategic insights for MIT Innovations Journal and ODI—and building alliances between funders, implementers & mobile networks to launch complex digital services.

Our core solutions

Souktel's emergency response platforms "give [aid] agencies up-to-the-minute information so that they can take quick and informed decisions about what to do".

Valerie Amos

UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs (2010 – 2015)

OUR APPROACH

We know the challenge of delivering value to communities and funders—on time, and within budget: Over 75% of our staff have worked directly for donors and implementers, at home offices and in the field.

Our design approach reflects this experience. From storyboarding to software development, we apply a user-driven model which plans for scale and sustainability from Day One.

Instead of asking our clients "What product do you want?" we ask "What problem do you want to solve?" It's a small but crucial difference: By focusing on collaboration and big picture impact, every solution we build meets the direct needs of local users.

DESIGN

Souktel's design process starts with an on-site discovery phase. We lead user-centered needs assessments, focus groups, and user story modeling to ensure that the solutions we build respond directly to local needs.

Our design work also includes technical scoping, launch preparations, and sustainability planning. Before we write a single line of code, we work directly with your project team to co-create roll-out timelines and handover scenarios, so that your custom solution is sustainable from the start.

DEVELOPMENT

Our agile software development process is rooted in rapid prototyping: We share progress and seek your feedback on an ongoing basis—so that the finished product meets your exact requirements. We also work directly with mobile networks to complete connectivity, secure optimal pricing, and coordinate on launch.

Once your prototype solution is ready, we work with you to run small-group pilots with users. Building on pilot results, we make final updates and run quality assurance tests.

DELIVERY

When your solution is ready for launch, we advise your team on go-to-market strategies that maximize impact and reach. We also develop training resources and prepare user tutorials—for delivery online, via mobile, or in person.

Post-launch, we offer cloud hosting and support for all software components, and provide rich data analytics that let you track the real-time impact of your technology at work.

OUR SOLUTIONS

Digital strategy? Tech-enabled delivery? Or both? Souktel's custom solutions help you drive innovation across your aid project's life cycle:

- **Digital Content Delivery:** Design and hosting of text, audio, and web content platforms for large scale humanitarian campaigns. Includes content creation, strategic launch planning, software development, and network connectivity. End-to-end campaign management also available.
- **Interactive Communities:** Custom platforms that connect aid recipients or field staff with groups of peers in specific topic areas, through messaging via app (eg. WhatsApp), SMS, and/or web—with rich analytics and management interfaces. Users send questions/comments to hotlines, and all group members receive the message on their mobile. Members reply to the whole group or an individual peer, promoting knowledge sharing and mentoring. An analytics platform lets implementer staff create groups, track and tag messaging trends, and initiate discussions in real time.
- **Personalized Matching:** One-on-one mobile supply/demand matching platforms that link IDPs with field clinics, or refugees with legal aid providers. Users create mini-profiles with their basic information (location, services sought/offered) via mobile. A custom algorithm pairs service seekers and providers who have similar profiles, enabling real-time information exchange.
- **Integrated M&E and Analytics:** Custom solutions for mobile web-, text- and audio-based monitoring/evaluation. Options range from full M&E database system build-out to bespoke analytics: Custom interfaces allow for one-touch analysis of field data—in addition to public "report-back" features for sharing results with communities. Optional add-ons include auto-generation of reports on data sub-sets, and multiple permission levels for varying user types (field staff, grantees).
- **Digital Strategy:** Strategic advising and process mapping that help you integrate technology seamlessly into your humanitarian response planning. Includes software/hardware/connectivity scoping, user experience design, and creation of process flow storyboards and mockups. Recent projects include tech solution and outreach strategy design for a leading provider of aid to Syrian refugees.

Our track record



Streamlining Medical Aid Delivery and Reducing Key Inventory Losses

Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, Souktel has helped improve USAID-OFDA contractors' distribution of emergency medical supplies (vaccines, syringes, medicine, and more) to clinics serving Syrian refugees across Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey, through its first-ever regional mobile supply chain management platform. With more than 100,000 transactions to date, the platform has played a central role in the US government's response to the growing humanitarian crisis.

Souktel's sector-leading platform streamlines inventory tracking through QR code scanning applications built specifically for rugged environments and frontier markets. In the warehouse, mobile inventory management tools keep track of incoming and outgoing shipments, and a reporting module catalogs the value and quantity of all goods that arrive and depart. In the field, the system uses a robust, custom app to track packages via satellite and report back on their status (and GPS coordinates) in real time. The end result is a faster, more efficient supply chain where inventory reaches its distribution point more quickly—with fewer bottlenecks, and fewer shipments going missing.

Remote Monitoring of Emergency Aid Delivery & Impact

Since the establishment of UN-OCHA's Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for Somalia in 2010, the operating environment in the Horn of Africa has become increasingly challenging, hampering the CHF's ability to monitor aid delivery—and creating a need for innovative outreach approaches, especially for rural communities.

In 2014, Souktel was contracted by UN-OCHA to build a mobile platform for remote data collection via audio, and to design the strategy, content, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation delivery in support of OCHA activities. Through the platform, Souktel enabled OCHA staff to launch longitudinal data collection surveys among 10,000+ aid recipients in remote regions of South Central Somalia, with results of the interviews captured in a custom-built, web-based platform hosted by Souktel. As a key part of this project, Souktel developed a cloud-based user interface for OCHA staff that captured and disaggregated the mobile survey results by sub-project of the Common Humanitarian Fund. For OCHA, this custom platform solved a key problem—tracking aid effectiveness in hard-to-reach communities—and enabled staff to leverage data safely for real-time, urgent decision making.

“Souktel’s solutions have helped us ensure that families across Gaza could get information ...quickly and directly, without putting themselves at risk”.

Siobhan Parnell
Past Gaza Program Director –
World Vision



About Souktel



Founded in 2006 by Harvard and MIT fellows, Souktel develops and delivers digital solutions that help international development implementers boost outreach and impact—quickly, affordably, and at scale. From hubs in North America and the Middle East, Souktel changes lives in developing countries across the globe, providing its services to the projects of 30+ leading funders and implementers—including USAID, the US State Department, DFID and UNDP.

Souktel's pioneering work has been featured by the New York Times, Fast Company and PBS, among others—and has been cited as a best practice by the World Economic Forum, the World Bank and Accenture. In 2015, the Wall Street Journal named Souktel's core product suite "One of Five Apps Bringing the Next Billion Online".

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