

Guide for TAPPA Tool for Assessing and Promoting Participation and Accountability

(HEVAPARC Herramienta de Valoración y promoción de Participación y Rendición de Cuentas)

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1. Introduction.

In December 2020, with the support of eLankidetzta- Basque Agency for Development Cooperation, a comprehensive [study on participation and accountability to populations subject to Humanitarian Action](#) was carried out. From this study and based on the findings and conclusions obtained, a specific tool was developed to assess and promote participation and accountability to populations subject to humanitarian action (the tool was called HV-PRC). This tool was piloted among 21 organizations¹, during the months of May, June and July 2021, in order to know its usefulness and scope, as well as obtaining practical information that would allow to improve the tool.

The tool presented here, (called TAPPA in its acronym in English, or HEVAPARC in its acronym in Spanish), is the corrected and improved version of the original HV-PRC tool.

2. Purpose, utility and design.

The objective of TAPPA is to improve the Participation and Accountability (P&A) practices to the people subject to Humanitarian Action programs, and to monitor their quality, based on a detailed analysis of 11 key elements in P&A and the development of an organizational action plan, which allows improving the practices of Participation and Accountability.

¹ 8 organizations present in the Basque Country and 13 local partners of these organizations, from Palestine, Lebanon, D.R. of Congo, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Peru.

Utility: This tool is designed for individualized or shared use by both Local-National and International Humanitarian Organizations.

Design: The tool has been designed looking for the maximum of:

- ✓ Simplicity
- ✓ Clarity
- ✓ Applicability
- ✓ Adaptability: flexible in application and use
- ✓ Traceability (ability to monitor progress in P&A)
- ✓ Orientation to reflection and organizational learning

3. Preparation of the tool implementation process.

The TAPPA tool must be part of a broader process of reflection and organizational improvement; therefore, it is recommended that the following points are taken into account in its implementation:

1. The application of the tool should be included in broader institutional processes and make synergies with them; such as the review of institutional policies or the elaboration of strategic plans.
2. It is important to define the application of the tool at organizational level and not at project level. Although referring to a specific project can help to make specific aspects visible, particularly in parameter 2 of Environment.
3. User must have an overview of the tool before proceeding with its use, in order to fully understand the different elements that compose the tool. In this sense, reading the [report prepared in December 2020 on P&A](#) is of great help to contextualize the use of the tool.
4. In addition to identifying weaknesses, it is important to assess the most positive elements of the diagnosis in order to preserve and develop existing institutional capacities and competencies.
5. The support of an independent external person can be of great help to improve the understanding of the tool, its contents and its scope. The tool has several parts that, depending on the degree of accompaniment received, can be applied in whole or in part, if the accompaniment is limited; for example, the qualitative check, as well as the action plan, require more direct accompaniment.
6. In the cases in which several organizations participate together, it is important that each organization has made its own independent reflection prior to the collective session where the analysis is shared.

4. Parts of the Tool.

The tool consists of three different parts:

1. Analytical Diagnosis of P&A
2. Qualitative check (or qualitative diagnosis)
3. Action Plan for improvement

4.1. Analytical Assessment of P&A

In this part, the different elements of the P&A are broken down, and they are analysed one by one individually, to later obtain aggregated values.

Parameters, Components and Elements:

The tool is structured in three main parameters that define P&A:

1. Concept
2. Environment (or Context)
3. Management

which in turn, are broken down into the following seven components:

1. Concept
 - 1.1 Integrated concept of Participation and Accountability
2. Environment
 - 2.1 Cultural context of the population
 - 2.2 Socio-political and humanitarian environment
 - 2.3 Cultural context of Humanitarian Organizations
3. Management
 - 3.1 Policies and Strategies
 - 3.2 Practical tools
 - 3.3 Institutional implications

Finally, these components are subdivided into 11 elements, (see table) which are the ones that will be assessed analytically.

| # | Elements |
|----|--|
| 1 | There is a clear and integrated institutional concept and definition of Participation and Accountability (P&A), which promotes the empowerment and rights of populations on Humanitarian programs. |
| 2 | P&A is applied consistently in all phases or areas of the humanitarian program (e.g.: needs assessment, budget allocation, implementation, evaluation,...). |
| 3 | P&A considers and involve all groups fairly: gender, age, religion, ethnic minorities, stigmatized groups, etc. (Note: even if the programme targets only specific groups, e.g.:women, P&A takes into account all groups of women) |
| 4 | The cultural factors of the populations that affect the effective P&A are taken into account, when doing P&A. (eg: Patriarchal, gender, ethnic, hierarchical, conflict dynamics, oral versus written culture, etc.). |
| 5 | The contextual factors that affect P&A are taken into account (conflict, political, historical, environmental, etc.), in the way P&A is designed and implemented |
| 6 | The factors of the Humanitarian context that affect P&A are taken into account. Humanitarian context of the populations, e.g.: high mobility of populations (migrations); and the context of the Humanitarian mechanisms in place, e.g.: High turnover of Humanitarian Organisations, dominant role of certain organisations, etc. |
| 7 | The implications of COVID-19 into P&A are taken into account |
| 8 | The Humanitarian Organisation is aware and work proactively on its own values and attitudes of its staff, that may affect the P&A, positively or negatively |
| 9 | P&A is clearly included in the policies and strategies of the humanitarian organisation and they are implemented effectively. |
| 10 | There are specific P&A tools and they are implemented consistently, (participation mechanisms, complaints and suggestions management tools, etc.) |
| 11 | The humanitarian organisation is transformed or adapted based on the results of the P&A processes. (There are organisational mechanisms to incorporate, into the organisation, the lessons learnt from P&A practice) |

Analysis and Scoring:

The 11 elements will be scored according to the table in the first sheet of the TAPPA Excel file.

In each element, the organization or organizations, must respond on a scale of 0 to 5 (where 0 is equal to Nothing; 1 Very little; 2 Something; 3 Fair; 4 A lot; and 5 Fully).

The organization must respond to the statements with a broad organizational perspective and not exclusively from a specific project perspective.

The answers must always be given in regards to the P&A of the subject population and not regarding other stakeholders or interests of the organization.

The scoring system should promote an argumentative discussion on each item, encouraging the dialogue and debate of contents among the members of the organization.

It is important to document, in the column of "Notes", why certain values are assigned to each element, in order to be able to review and understand later, the reason backing that scoring.

Initial ideas of aspects that should be worked out to improve each specific element, should be noted in the column "To work"; this will serve as the basis for the subsequent preparation of the Action Plan.

It must be taken into account that the discussion on Element 1 about "Clear Definition of P&A", is essential to be able to advance in the rest of the elements.

Once the numerical assessment has been completed and the corresponding explanatory notes made, the results obtained will be displayed in the graphs; this will allow a panoramic overview of the elements, components and parameters that will require more attention.

4.2. Qualitative check

This qualitative check allows to obtain a more panoramic view of the P&A situation in the organizations. It could be found on the second sheet of the Tool's Excel file.

The qualitative check-up is an additional step in the assessment, but instead of being carried out in an analytical way, its objective is to carry it out in a more comprehensive and global way, discussing and assessing the seven qualities that should conform a quality P&A; these are: transformative, integrated, inclusive, localized, triangular, co-responsible and consistent.

Each quality will be assessed from 0 to 5. The qualitative check-up table must be correlated in its global results with those obtained in the analytical assessment.

The qualities of the P&A are interrelated with the 11 elements as specified at the bottom of the Excel sheet.

The qualitative check will allow a reflection on which elements to improve, and this should be taken into account in the elaboration of the Action Plan.

4.3. Action Plan for improvement

The Action Plan for improvement is aimed at consolidating existing good practices and capacities, as well as developing actions to overcome the organizational deficits in P&A, that were detected in parts 1 and 2 of the assessment.

The Action Plan is on the third sheet of the Tool's Excel file.

The Action Plan can be drawn up directly on each of the 11 elements, based on the points to work out, emerging from the analytical assessment and the qualitative check; but it is also possible to start from the elaboration of general objectives according to the three main Parameters: (Concept, Environment and Management); (left column). In this case, these General Objectives by Parameters must be defined in advance before entering into the definition of activities per Element.

It is convenient to divide the Action Plan into short-term actions and medium-long-term actions, establishing the time horizon for these terms.

To carry out the Action Plan, it can help to answer the following questions:

- Why to do it? -> determines the priority
- What to do? -> determines the specific activities to be carried out
- How to do it? -> defines the way to execute the actions
- When to do it? -> determines the time to implement the actions

It is convenient to establish few actions, well prioritized, and avoid defining actions for all the elements, without a clear prioritization.

When defining the actions, it must be taken into account that the Action Plan needs to be endowed with resources for its implementation, otherwise, its realization will not be feasible.

There must be a follow-up of the activities established in the Action Plan, to ensure its effectiveness.

Fernando Almansa
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