



TAHUSO

Tool to Assess and promote HUMANITARIAN SOVEREIGNTY: BASED ON THE PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION, AUTHORITY¹ AND LOCALIZATION OF THE SUBJECT POPULATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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¹ The term Authority is used to highlight the centrality of the population in Humanitarian Action, beyond Ownership, Appropriation or Accountability.



Introduction

The TAHUSO tool is an advanced and deeper development of the HEVAPARC tool developed by Fernando Almansa with the support of the AVCD - eLankidetza and several NGOs involved in the processes of improving Participation and Accountability (P&A) between 2020 and 2023. This proposal is based on the experiences developed in this matter and the learning acquired². The TAHUSO tool connects the Participation and Inclusion processes with those of Authority and Localization (PIAL), of Populations in Humanitarian Action.

Conceptual Framework and Content of TAHUSO

TAHUSO is based on the [HEVAPARC tool](#), incorporating specific aspects of Localization and emphasizing the aspects of Authority of the populations subject to Humanitarian Action, and making more precise the aspects of Inclusion and Accountability.

The structure of TAHUSO is based on the following four concepts:

1. Participation
 2. Inclusion
 3. Authority
 4. Localization
-
1. **Participation:** referring to the possibility and effective capacity of the subject population to participate in a transformative way in the entire management cycle of Humanitarian Action programs.
 2. **Inclusion:** implies ensuring that all groups of the population that are subject to Humanitarian Action, have a voice and can exercise their right to transformative participation, without any type of limitation or barrier.
 3. **Authority** of the subject populations to fully decide on the key aspects of the Humanitarian Action that concerns them. The concept of Authority goes beyond that of “appropriation” or “ownership”, since it is not about “appropriating something belonging to others” (actor), but rather exercising authority over what is intrinsically one's own (author). It also goes beyond the concept of Accountability, although it is closely related to it, since Authority implies the ability

² See the report: [Process of improving participation, accountability and Localization and inclusion in Humanitarian Action](#).



to have Accountability. But it is not a question of having fully delegated the direction of Humanitarian Action and then receiving accounts according to schemes defined by the supposedly delegating entity; but rather, it is about exercising full authority in decision-making on everything that concerns Humanitarian Action, of which they are subject (authors); and of course, having accountability mechanisms in line with the priorities and needs of said populations. In this sense, the Authority of the populations also implies the concept of their “Agency”, understood as the ability to act freely to achieve a purpose, assuming the responsibilities that it entails.

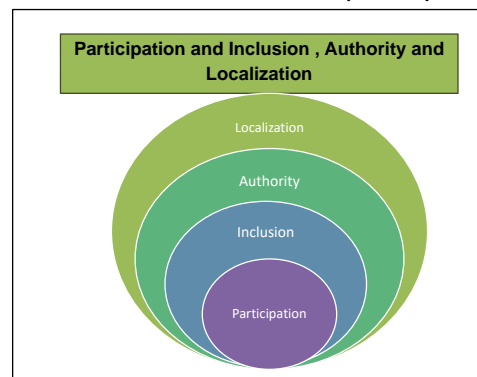
The Population subject to the Humanitarian Action must have the Authority as “authors” of the action itself and not mere actors (doers) of the Humanitarian Action.

- 4. Localization:** Understood as the capacity of populations and local humanitarian entities to direct and manage Humanitarian Action, with decision-making capacity over the priorities, strategies, programs and resources of the Humanitarian Action carried out with the subject population.³The concept of Localization is directly related to that of Partnership, since it establishes the form of relationship and distribution of power between Local-National and International entities.

Relationship between Participation and Inclusion, Authority and Localization

The relationship between the four key concepts could be defined as follows: participation requires full inclusion, transformative participation leads to decision-making, therefore to authority; and the exercise of authority by local populations in the key elements of Humanitarian Action, and by local humanitarian organizations in the management of Humanitarian Action; this being the essence of real Localization.

The concepts of Localization and Authority are intimately connected. Localization will focus more on the decision-making capacity of the Local Humanitarian Organizations (LHO) and the Authority in the Populations. The intersection and balance between the two, is part of the exercise of applying the TAHUSO tool.



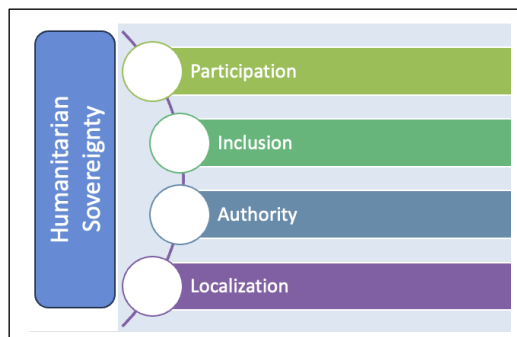
³ There are several definitions of [Localization](#), from the most utilitarian ones to the most ambitious ones; It is in the latter that the concept of this tool is framed. A definition close to the one proposed here is the one [developed by a group of local actors](#) in the Pacific: “*Localization is 'a process of recognizing, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to improve address the needs of the affected population.'*”



Humanitarian Sovereignty.

The four concepts defined above could be grouped under the definition of Humanitarian Sovereignty.

Humanitarian Sovereignty is the right and effective capacity of the of the subject populations of Humanitarian Action and their local organizations, to decide and define the criteria, ⁴strategies and actions in a participatory, inclusive, autonomous and responsible manner, and to exercise full accountability ⁵of all the humanitarian actors who intervene with said population.



Parts of the TAHUSO Tool.

The TAHUSO tool, like HEVAPARC, consists of three different parts:

1. Analytical Diagnosis of the four basic elements: Participation, Inclusion, Authority and Localization, (PIAL)
2. Qualitative check, (or qualitative diagnosis)
3. Development of an Action Plan

1. Analytical Diagnosis

This part breaks down the different basic elements of Humanitarian Sovereignty: Participation, Inclusion, Authority and Localization, (PIAL); and they are analysed one by one individually, to then obtain aggregate values.

Parameters, Components and Elements:

The analytical diagnosis is structured in four main parameters:

1. Concept of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA)
2. Environment (or Context)
3. Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA) Management
4. Concept and Management of Partnership and Localization

which in turn are broken down into the following ten components:

1. Concept of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA)

⁴ Humanitarian Policy

⁵ Authority



1.1 Integrated concept of Participation, Inclusion and Authority

2. Environment

- 2.1 Cultural context of the population
- 2.2 Socio-political and humanitarian environment
- 2.3 Cultural context of the Humanitarian Organization

3. Management of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA)

- 3.1 Policies and Strategies
- 3.2 Practical tools
- 3.3 Institutional implications

4. Concept and Management of Partnership and Localization

- 4.1 Concept of Partnership and Localization (Policy and Strategy)
- 4.2 Concept of Localization (Policy and Strategy)
- 4.3 Management of Authority - Decision Making

Finally, these components are subdivided into 14 elements (see table) which are the ones that will be evaluated analytically.

Analysis and Assessment:

The 14 elements will be valued according to the table in the first sheet of the TAHUSO Excel file.

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

| Parameter | Components | # | Elements |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Integrated concept of PIA - Participation, Inclusion and Authority of Populations | 1. Integrated concept of PIA | 1 | There is a clear and integrated institutional concept and definition of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA), which promotes the empowerment and rights of populations on Humanitarian programs to participate and decide on key elements of the Humanitarian response affecting them, and ensures effective and appropriate accountability to them of all humanitarian actors involved. The concept of Authority of Populations is clearly defined and implemented in a proactive way, beyond Accountability or reactive appropriation |
| | | 2 | PIA takes place consistently in all phases or areas of the humanitarian program (e.g.: needs assessment, budget allocation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation,...) |
| | | 3 | Real Inclusion takes place and it involves all groups fairly: gender, age, religion, ethnic minorities, stigmatized groups, etc. (Note: even if the programme targets only specific groups, e.g.: women, PIA takes into account all groups of women) |
| 2. Cultural-Socio-political and humanitarian environment affecting PIAL, Participation, Inclusion, Authority and Localisation. | 2.1 Cultural context of the population | 4 | The cultural factors of the populations that affect the effective PIAL are taken into account, when implementing and promoting PIAL. (eg: Patriarchal, gender, ethnic, hierarchical, Power distance, conflict dynamics, oral versus written culture, etc.) |
| | | 5 | The contextual factors that affect PIAL are well known and taken into account (conflict, political, historical, environmental, etc.). In the way PIAL is designed and implemented. E.g.: existing conflicts among certain groups, etc. |
| | | 6 | The factors of the Humanitarian context that affect PIAL are well known and 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 staff or Humanitarian Organisations, dominant role of certain organisations, etc. |
| | 7 | The implications on PIAL, of extraordinary events affecting the whole population, such as COVID-19, open war, etc. are taken into account | |
| 2.3 Cultural context of the Humanitarian Organisation | 8 | The Humanitarian Organisation is aware and work proactively on its own values and attitudes of its staff, that may affect the PIAL, positively or negatively | |
| 3. Management of PIA (Participation, Inclusion and Authority of Population) | 3.1 Implementation of PIA Policies and Strategies | 9 | PIA is clearly included in the policies and strategies of the humanitarian organisation and they are implemented effectively |
| | 3.2 Practical tools | 10 | There are specific PIA tools and they are implemented consistently, (participation mechanisms, claims, complaints and suggestions management tools, feedback, accountability mechanisms, etc.) |
| | 3.3 Institutional Implications | 11 | The humanitarian organisation is transformed or adapted based on the results of the PIA processes. (There are organisational mechanisms to incorporate, into the organisation, the lessons learnt from PIA practices) |
| 4. Concept and Management of Partnership and Localisation | 4.1 Concept of Partnership (Policy and Strategy) | 12 | The humanitarian organisation (International, National or Local) has a clear defined written concept of Partnership, and there are specific Partnership Policies and Strategies, that governs this relationship |
| | 4.2 Concept of Localization (Policy and Strategy) | 13 | The humanitarian organisation (International, National or Local) has a clear defined written concept of Localisation, which is aligned and makes synergies with its Partnership Policy and Strategy; and it is part of it, or has a separate Policy and Strategy for Localisation. |
| | 4.3 Management of Authority - Decision Making | 14 | All the parties involved (Donor, International Organisation, National or Local Organisation and Population) are clear on the authority levels, Decision making competencies and responsibilities. There are decision-making mechanism well-established and there are mechanisms to document and communicate decisions made to all parties involved. |

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

It must always be answered thinking about the PIAL in the face of the subject populations of Humanitarian Action, and not about other groups or interests of the organization.

The scoring system should promote an argumentative discussion on each element; favouring dialogue and debate of content among members of the organization.



It is important to document, in the “Notes” column, why certain values are assigned to each element, in order to later review and understand the reason for said evaluation.

In the “To work out” column, initial ideas of aspects that should be worked on to improve the specific element should be noted; this will serve as a basis for the subsequent development of the Action Plan.

It must be taken into account that components 1.1 Integrated concept of Participation, Inclusion and Authority and components 4.1 Concept of Partnership and Localization (Policy and Strategy) and 4.2 Concept of Localization (Policy and Strategy), are key to being able to advance in the rest of elements.

The average of the results obtained in the 4 parameters will be the **Humanitarian Sovereignty Index (HSI)**.

Once the numerical assessments have been completed and the corresponding explanatory notes have been made, the results obtained will be displayed in the graphs, allowing a panoramic view of the elements, components and parameters that require greater attention.

2. Qualitative check

This qualitative check, which is found on the second sheet of the Tool's Excel file, allows the organisation to obtain a more panoramic view of the situation of Humanitarian Sovereignty (PIAL) within the organizations.

The qualitative check is one more step in the diagnosis, but instead of being carried out in an analytical way, its objective is to carry it out in a more general and global way, discussing and valuing the seven qualities that must make up quality Humanitarian Sovereignty; these are: transformative, integrated, inclusive, localized, triangular, co-responsible and consistent.

Each quality will be valued from 0 to 5. The qualitative check table must correlate its global results with those obtained in the analytical diagnosis.

The qualities of Humanitarian Sovereignty are interrelated with the 14 analytical elements, as specified at the bottom of the Excel sheet.

The qualitative check will allow a reflection on what elements to improve, which will serve to prepare the Action Plan.

3. Development of an Action Plan

The improvement Action Plan is aimed at consolidating existing good practices and capacities, as well as developing actions that allow overcoming organizational gaps in the field of Humanitarian Sovereignty (PIAL), detected in parts 1 and 2 of the diagnosis. The Action Plan is located on the third sheet of the Tool's Excel file.



The Action Plan can be developed directly on each of the 14 elements, based on the points to work on, derived from the analytical diagnosis and qualitative check; but it could be started from the development of general objectives according to the four main parameters:

1. Concept of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA)
2. Environment (or Context)
3. Management of Participation, Inclusion and Authority (PIA)
4. Concept and Management of Partnership and Localization

In this case, these general objectives by parameters, must be defined in advance before entering into the definition of activities by elements.

It is convenient to divide the Action Plan into short-term actions and medium-long term actions, and the time horizon for these periods must be established.

To carry out the Action Plan, it may 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 times

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

When defining the actions, it must be taken into account that the Action Plan requires resources for its implementation, otherwise its implementation will not be viable.

There must be monitoring of activities established in the Action Plan, to ensure its effectiveness.

Fernando Jesús Almansa López
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