

Piloting use of SHAPE
Humanitarian Strategic Assessment and Participatory Empowerment Framework (SHAPE)
Assessment report

Introduction about ActionAid

ActionAid is an international anti-poverty agency working in over 45 countries, taking sides with poor people to end poverty together. ActionAid has been present in Palestine since 2007 and became a Country Programme in the 45-member ActionAid global federation in 2012. It works primarily with women and youth in vulnerable communities across Area C in the West Bank, and in Middle Area and Rafah Governorates in Gaza. Its work covers a range of areas including economic development and livelihoods initiatives; community-based protection; humanitarian response; civil society strengthening; civic and political engagement; campaigns and advocacy. ActionAid also have a youth training center – the Global Platform Palestine –, which supports youth activism across Palestine. Its approach encompasses empowerment, solidarity, campaigning and the generation of alternatives to promote opportunities for Palestinians to enjoy a life of dignity and freedom from all forms of oppression.

Background

ActionAid has launched the Rights and Resilience Program in Gaza in April 2018 with funding from DANIDA through ActionAid Denmark. The Program is implemented in partnership with MA'AN Development Centre, PNGO and Wafaq Society for women and childcare. The overall objective of the program is: "Women and young people affected by protracted crisis and disasters in Gaza have strengthened resilience and protection in line with IHRL and IHL".

Humanitarian Strategic Assessment and Participatory Empowerment Framework - SHAPE



SHAPE framework is a questionnaire designed as a tool to measure the ability of any humanitarian organization to identify and impact the ability to deliver humanitarian response and preparedness.

This framework was successfully designed and implemented in collaboration with 55 local and government institutions in Ethiopia, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Pakistan as part of the Coalition of Power-supported Action ActionAid Project, (ActionAid and CAFOD

(lead), Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund and Concern Worldwide with the aim of empowering effective humanitarian institutions and strengthening their skills, roles and voices to achieve their goals.

It also aims to support local actors and the communities they serve so that they are better recognized by themselves and others at the core of the humanitarian system.¹

Purpose

The capacity self-assessment tool aims to help organizations to:

- Understand the range of competencies required to deliver a high quality and accountable humanitarian response and assess their strengths and weaknesses
- Foster ownership and commitment to improving humanitarian capacity in line with their goals and values
- Understand and promote their role and contribution in responding to humanitarian need in relation to other actors (communities, governments, INGOs, donors), to increase their visibility, improve collaboration and hold others to account
- Advocate to partners and donors to further support self-identified capacity building needs
- Support an ongoing process of self-reflection, benchmarking and review which can also be used for advocacy and fundraising

Themes and components of the SHAPE framework:

The SHAPE consists of three main themes: thirteen sub-competencies which are shown in the following table:

The hub	Efficiency field	# of indicators	Reference of Humanitarian Standards CHS
1. Governance and Leadership	1.1 Vision and Strategy	2	CHS 4: Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback.
	1.2 Staff engagement and collaborative management	2	
	1.3 Personnel, HR support and staff treatment	2	CHS 8: Staff are supported to do their job <i>effectively</i> and are treated fairly and equitably.

¹ <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2017-08/SHAPE-brochure-humanitarian-capacity-Shifting-Power-guide-June2017.pdf>

	1.4 Resources managed and used appropriately	3	CHS 9: Resources are managed and used responsibly for their intended purpose.
	1.5 Learning and Change	3	CHS 7: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.
2. Influence	2.1 Working with others	2	CHS 6: Humanitarian response is coordinated and complementary.
	2.2 Advocacy	2	
	2.3 Resource Mobilization	3	
3. Preparedness and Response	3.1 Preparedness	2	
	3.2 Appropriate and relevant response	2	CHS 1: Humanitarian response is appropriate and relevant.
	3.3 Effective and timely response	3	CHS 2: Humanitarian response is effective and timely.
	3.4 Response avoids negative effect	3	CHS 3: Humanitarian response strengthens local capacities and avoids negative effects.
	3.5 Communication, participation and feedback	3	CHS 5: Complaints are welcomed and addressed.

SHAPE Principals:

- **Ownership:** Organizations should be inspired and motivated to use the framework to help achieve their self-defined goals and commit to a process of organizational change, which they own, and drive.
- **Self-reflection:** The self-assessment process is not an audit or external evaluation; it is not a policing tool. The idea is for organizations to feel comfortable to have honest, robust internal reflection about their current competence and aspirations. 'It is like holding a mirror up to yourself; it is a seed for change.
- **Participation:** To be a meaningful exercise, organizations must involve representatives from different parts of the organization and different perspectives. Each participant's view needs to be valued and considered through respectful discussion.

- **Empowerment:** *The SHAPE framework is intended for local and national organizations as a tool to strengthen their capacities in ways that empower them to have greater confidence and impact, but also to shift the power to these actors, as leaders and decision-makers in humanitarian action.*
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** *Although SHAPE is designed to assess individual organizations; it recognizes that constructive collaboration and strategic and equal partnerships are fundamental for capable organizations.*

SHAPE Process:

The SHAPE is a journey, and a unique opportunity for organizations to discuss their strengths and weaknesses, identify priorities and take purposeful action toward achieving their goals. As shown in the table above; the SHAPE framework is covering a full range of humanitarian competencies and linked to the CHS commitments. Recognizing that humanitarian actors have different structures and remits, the framework attempts to be relevant to a range of actors, though not every indicator and guiding question will be equally relevant to all. Organisations are encouraged to use and adapt the framework to best suit their needs and support their aspirations.

SHAPE is a subjective assessment of the human capacity of all institutions that play a role in responding to humanitarian need, and institutions outside the humanitarian framework must take into account that some indicators and guiding questions will be more or less relevant.

Gender is important for SHAPE assessment, because women are the most affected and affected by crises and disasters, their rights to security, protection, dignity, their access to information and services is vulnerable to abuse and humiliation. In addition to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, which constitute various forms of injustice.

Capacity analysis using three indicators for each area of competence:

1. **Organizational Foundations:** *Core features that support a successful humanitarian response.*
2. **Humanitarian Capacities:** *Range of abilities needed to respond to humanitarian need.*
3. **Power:** *Capacity to control and influence.*

Scoring system:

Description	Score
Not in place	0
In place, but not working well, or not used	1
In place and working, or used quite widely, but not yet consistently or across the board	2
Fully in place	3

Functioning very well	4
Exceptional, top class	5

Planned assessment process:

- *An introductory meeting was held with the ActionAid Palestine team*
- *A technical meeting was held for discussion on the mechanism of applying the SHAPE tool with ActionAid.*
- *A meeting with the partners to clarify about the tool, its use, the expected results from it, the implementation mechanism, and the category involved in the evaluation process, and it was agreed that 10-12 people will participate in the evaluation process as follows:*
 - *Wefaq: participation of 10 persons from various departments, the CEO and one of the members of the Board of Directors (if possible).*
 - *MAAN: 10 persons from different related departments and the programs manager.*
 - *PNGO: 4 persons from the executive staff, 6 persons who are representing the 6 main sectors and a member of the Board of Directors*
- *The consultant attends the meetings held by the AA partner organizations, reviewed the evaluation system and the mechanism for verifying the results, and reviews them, identifying gaps, weaknesses and proposed interventions to improve the quality of humanitarian work performance in the partner institutions.*

Process of undertaking the exercise

1. Wefaq:

- *An induction meeting was held for the Wefaq in the presence of all relevant staff from the different departments. The consultant trained them on the method of evaluation and verification of the results. The evaluation process lasted four days, with direct contact with the consultant to inquire and clarify any problem.*
- *The consultant reviewed the entire evaluation process and the coordinator discussed all the comments on the evaluation.*
- *Identified the gaps in each indicator.*
- *Proposed a number of interventions to improve the quality of humanitarian work.*
- *Submitted the file to the team for review*
- *Meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Directors to discuss the entire file, record the notes and amend them directly*
- *Submitting the file for final approval*

2. MAAN:

- *An induction meeting was held for the CEO, a management board member and MAAN focal point.*

- Explained the importance of implementing the tool and the benefits that will be achieved. In addition to the scoring system.
- MAAN focal point held a meeting with the relevant staff and conducted the evaluation using the tool.
- The consultant reviewed the evaluation, identified gaps according to criteria, and suggested required interventions.
- The file was reviewed, another meeting was held with the focal point, taking final notes and approving the result.

3. PNGO

- An introductory meeting was held with the director of PNGO and the advocacy project coordinator (focal point).
- The evaluation was carried out by the focal person in consultation and coordination with the manager of PNGO to answer questions related to policies and strategies.
- The consultant has reviewed, validated and checked the evaluation with the focal person and then identified the proposed gaps, interventions, and timeframe.
- The results were sent to PNGO for their review and comments.
- A meeting was held to review the results, make final comments and approve the amendments.

Note: The proposed interventions to respond to weaknesses or gaps, and part of them constitutes a significant weight in the human indicator so that it led to a low evaluation of the indicator, and some proposals relate to weakness in the exercise of some aspects, but its weight is not significant in the indicator.

The assessment results

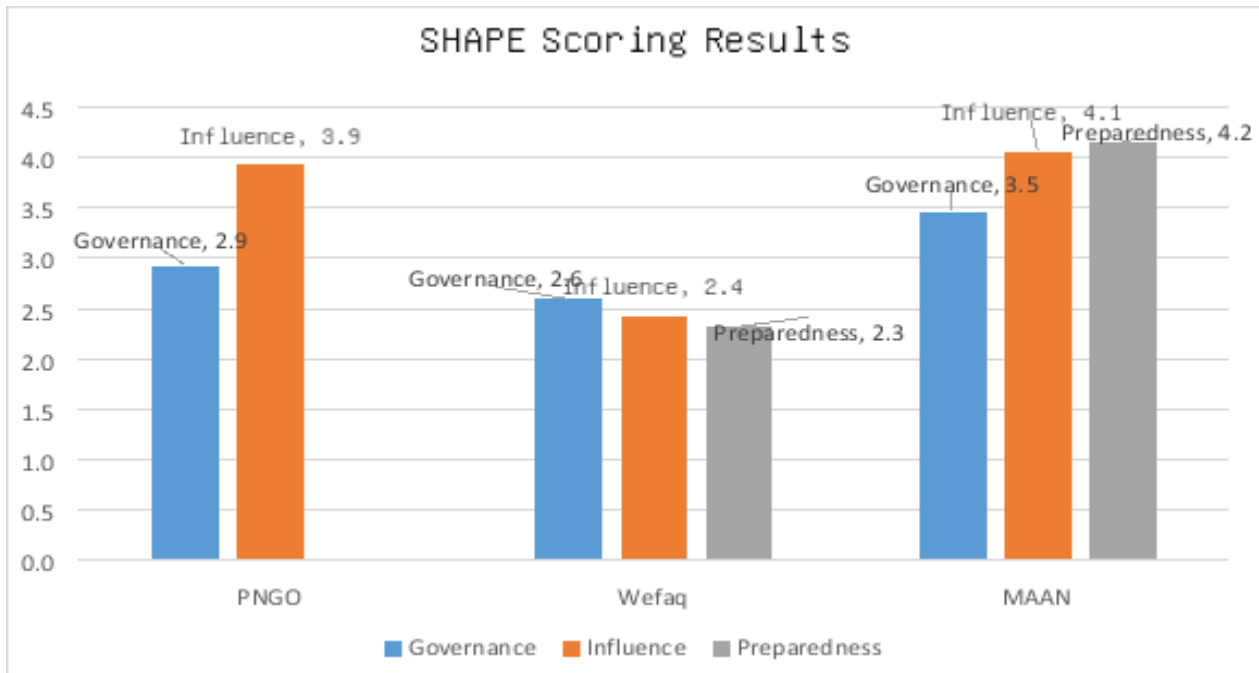
The domain	PNGO	MAAN	Wefaq
1. Governance and Leadership	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Influence	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Preparedness and Response	No	Yes	Yes

The current situation of the three partners

The domain	Efficiency field	PNGO	Wefaq	MAAN
1. Governance and Leadership	1.1 Vision and Strategy	3.4	2.3	3.0
	1.2 Staff engagement and collaborative management	3.1	3.3	3.4
	1.3 Personnel, HR support and staff treatment	1.9	2.7	3.6
	1.4 Resources managed and used appropriately	3.4	2.3	3.4

	1.5 Learning and Change	2.8	2.4	3.9
Average		2.9	2.6	3.5
2. Influence	2.1 Working with others	3.4	2.3	4.2
	2.2 Advocacy	4.6	3.1	4.0
	2.3 Resource Mobilization	3.8	1.9	4.0
Average		3.9	2.4	4.1
3. Preparedness and Response	3.1 Preparedness	NA	2.0	4.5
	3.2 Appropriate and relevant response	NA	3	4.3
	3.3 Effective and timely response	NA	2.0	4.6
	3.4 Response avoids negative effect	NA	2.5	4.1
	3.5 Communication, participation and feedback	NA	2.1	3.3
Average		NA	2.3	4.2

NA: Not Applicable



The limitations of using SHAPE

- *Some evaluators believe in their experience and knowledge and believe they have all the information they need to conduct effective SHAPE analysis.*
- *Some managers believe that the strategic assessment can be achieved within one day or one meeting.*
- *Failing to link strategic assessment with strategic planning.*
- *Some evaluators are dodging SHAPE review meetings.*
- *The process itself does not prioritize issues/gaps for follow up.*
- *It generated too many ideas but not helped in choosing which one is best.*
- *It produced a lot of information, but not all of it is useful.*

Assessing partners' capacity

The assessment process helped the organizations to identify weaknesses and suggest the proper improvement actions to alleviate the gaps. SHAPE offered a flexible framework that makes it applicable in a wide variety of project and organizational settings.

Considering the Scope of Work

Piloting and using SHAPE tool had considered the scope of work of each organization, this was clear during the assessment and the justification of each score by each organization as follow:

The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) considered its role as a coordinating organization including 145 local NGOs. It scored the indicators based on its role in the development and humanitarian aid to human rights and building of a Palestinian democratic, civil society based on social justice, the sovereignty of law, and the respect of human rights.

MAAN Development Center has a direct contact with the NGOs, community-based organizations, committees, and grassroots groups in the poorest and most marginalized areas. In the assessment, MAAN assessed its role, impact and achievements in developing the communities and achieving self-reliance, steadfastness and sustainable development in specific sectors such as: food security, capacity development of the Palestinian NGOs, CBOs and grassroots organizations, decreasing the poverty in rural and the most disadvantaged areas and finally its role in protecting and developing the Palestinian environment.

Al-Wefaq Society for Women and Child Care (Wefaq) went deeply in the assessment by giving a lot of examples about the Capacity Building Program, Widows Care Program, Promoting the Rights of Women Victims of Gender Based Violence and the Child Development Program. Wefaq had presented its distinguished role in the community, based on the care of women and the development of children from families headed by women in the Gaza Strip, through the capacity building programs of the society and stakeholders, and the care of marginalized women victims of violence and child development.

The Gap Analysis

A gap analysis seeks to benchmark the performance of an organization against target humanitarian standards. The process occurs by gathering the data and subjecting it to thorough gap analysis. The consultant has appropriately utilized the results by reviewing the performance within all facets of each organization.

Conclusion

Through in-depth assessment, a number of strengths and weaknesses emerged, and some gaps were derived from it. The strategic humanitarian assessment process has shown a disparity between the three institutions (MAAN, Wefaq & PNGO). Additionally, it unveiled a disparity in the three humanitarian capacities and capabilities, which are summarized as follows:

- **Governance and Leadership:** PNGO & Wefaq are fully in place and MAAN is functioning very well.
- **Influence:** PNGO & MAAN are functioning very well and Wefaq is used quite widely, but not yet consistently or across the board.
- **Preparedness and Response:** MAAN is Functioning very well; Wefaq is used quite widely, but not yet consistently or across the board, while PNGO is not applicable.

The strongest domain is the Influence and Partnerships (3.5); which means the evaluated humanitarian organisations do not work in isolation. They strive to establish and grow positive and constructive relationships to support their work. This includes effective networking (3.3), working with local government structures (3.9), building donor relations (3.2), taking collective action, working in collaboration, and holding others to account. This calls for staff with relevant skills to negotiate and communicate effectively.

The weakest domain is the Governance and Leadership (2.9), though; all the three participant organizations have a shared sense of values, a strong consensus about what they are striving for and a clear understanding of their role in responding to humanitarian needs. This flows from effective and representative leadership, a coherent strategy, appropriate systems, competent staff, the humility to learn from experience, and the courage to reflect on their own behaviour and challenge abuse of power, with the aim of continually improving. The governance and leadership can be seen as in place and working, but not yet consistently or across the board.

The Emergency Preparedness comes in the middle (3.3) and it is applicable only on MAAN and Wefaq, as PNGO is a coordination organization, and its role is the development and humanitarian aid to human rights and building of a Palestinian democratic and civil society. PNGO (as presented in the evaluation meetings and discussions) do not have any role in emergency preparedness and response and this domain is not applicable to it.

This domain expresses the preparedness and response to humanitarian needs in a relevant, effective, efficient and impactful manner. It ensures all interventions seek to strengthen local capacity and build resilience. The actions are based on context and needs analysis, communication, participation and feedback from affected communities, and includes women and youth in leadership and decision-making.