

GUIDE: Accountability to Affected People 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan

Introduction

This AAP Guide is designed to help Clusters meaningfully integrate community voices and insights into the 2025 HNRP in Afghanistan. It aims to course-correct the response based on community inputs and preferences, thereby strengthening inclusive, quality and accountable cluster interventions. The guide's development was informed by two series of workshops on Community Voices (August 2024) and Community Consultation/Validation (September 2024), facilitated by the AAP Working Group and OCHA, with participation by Cluster and Thematic Group Leads.

Practical steps to amplify community voices in cluster interventions

The 2025 HNRP process has systematically put affected people at the center of humanitarian response. Within 2025 HNRP process, the ICCT has used community feedback data to learn about community needs, priorities and capacities to improve the plan. This was complemented by community consultation/validation involving 915 community members (305 females and 609 males) across six regions of Afghanistan¹. The practical steps of this guide were developed based on evidence of community voices², community perception monitoring³ and regional community consultation/validation⁴.

Below are the key priorities suggested by affected people that require corrective actions and measures that **ALL CLUSTERS** should take to course-correct:

1. Communication and community engagement, particularly on selection criteria/aid transparency

Affected people have shared via multiple channels (regular feedback, monitoring, validation exercises) that aid providers need to be more transparent in selection criteria for humanitarian assistance. They have suggested the following measures:

- Ensure the inclusion of affected people through household-level or door-to-door outreach to ensure they understand who should and should not receive assistance. The current community outreach is mainly conducted through community focal points. Community members shared they're often excluded from the process, and they also noted that community focal points only selected their closed ones.
- Given the reduced humanitarian assistance within several clusters due to limited resources, it is suggested that the selection criteria should be revised in consultation with communities, followed by awareness raising activities.
- Ensure communication materials are available in accessible formats considering the literacy, disabilities and other inclusive aspects such as languages.

¹ Central, South, North, North-East, East, West regions.

² Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

³ Community perception monitoring on system-wide accountability 2024: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

⁴ Regional reports of community consultation/validation.

- All clusters need to address timely and accurate information about their interventions (scope, limitation, zero tolerance to SEA etc.).

2. Community feedback and complaints mechanisms

- Affected people have shared their main preferences to engage directly with aid workers through face-to-face interaction. Recruitment of community mobilizers at local communities (or scale up, where efforts are ongoing) can help address this input from communities.
- Affected people request that feedback mechanisms are culturally appropriate for them – they have asked for female teams to support community engagement with women and girls (women friendly feedback mechanisms).
- Feedback mechanisms should also be made accessible for young people including organizations engaging with children (to learn about child labor and child marriage as reported by a few regions).
- Ensure various channels are in place, including hotline (mainly through AWAAZ) to allow communities to share sensitive reports such as SEA, fraud and other protection concerns.
- Learn from regular community feedback to improve the communication channels in different localities, considering various restrictions in the local communities, to ensure communities have the right mechanisms to share their feedback and concerns.

3. Participation of women and female-headed households, and persons with disabilities

- Community members shared that both women (including female-headed households) and persons with disabilities are often excluded from humanitarian assistance. They have requested aid providers to use door-to-door communication to allow them to engage in humanitarian assistance.
- Both women and men requested to be part of decision-making process, noting from the beginning of the programs/interventions and throughout the humanitarian response cycle. They shared that so far their involvement has been ad hoc, and during the community validation exercises they asked for more meaningful engagement in humanitarian assistance.

4. Access to humanitarian assistance

- Main access issues highlighted were related to physical distance, lack of women service providers, and unavailability of Mahram. All clusters should improve their planning on distribution sites to be inclusive and accessible by community groups. Each region has also proposed that female staff recruitment needs to be improved to ensure their access to humanitarian assistance.

Community feedback based on themes that should be addressed:

- **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS):** Identified as a **top priority** need, suggested by communities (both female and male), this should be a cross-cutting element of all cluster interventions. Clusters may establish partnerships with MHPSS partners to support communities to access MHPSS services as appropriate.
- **Services for Women:** Regions have requested to make **dignity kits** a standard in emergency response packages.

- **Cash Assistance:** There was a strong preference for cash assistance among communities. However, communities also noted to maintain in-kind support for immediate needs such as food (especially in challenging markets) and shelter.
- **Disaster Preparedness:** Communities have voiced the need for increased investment in disaster preparedness, including early warning systems. This is relevant for addressing climate risks and supporting these communities in preparing for and responding to climatic hazards such as drought, flood and others.
- **Linkages with Longer Term-Programmes:** Ensuring the cluster interventions are connected with long term-programmes to help communities to improve and build their resilience.

Costing

Important to action: Based on the suggestions from communities, all clusters are suggested to include costing, and allocate funds, where relevant to support the improvement of services related to above points. This is a part of cluster based corrective actions to community feedback.

Other references

The reports from two workshops: Community Voices and Community Consultation/Validation provide some analyses of community feedback, suggestions and preferences in humanitarian assistance. The reports are attached.

For specific cluster/sector community feedback, please visit the [Afghanistan Community Voices and Accountability Platform](#).

Additional community insights are also available on [community perception monitoring on system-wide accountability 2024](#).

Community insights and actionable insights within clusters are available on the Afghanistan Accountability Index (AAI) mid-year report.

For more information please contact:

Husni (Chair of AAP WG), UNFPA: husni@unfpa.org

Zahidullah Abdulrahimzai (Co-chair of AAP WG), ACBAR: aapwg@acbar.org