

Awaaz Afghanistan: Promoting Collective Accountability and Community Engagement in Afghanistan

Awaaz Afghanistan (Awaaz) is a collective accountability and community engagement initiative that functions as a toll-free, countrywide hotline number (410) that affected populations can dial to access information and register feedback on assistance programmes. As a two-way communication channel, needs and priorities as reported on the ground are circulated to partners to help improve the quality of programming in Afghanistan.

Operational Context

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is one of the most severe and complex crises in the world, with many people seemingly stuck in a perpetual cycle of critical situations as a rising insurgency, increasing insecurity and the impact of the CoVID-19 pandemic exacerbate existing humanitarian needs while simultaneously generating new ones. The CoVID-19 pandemic and a sustained escalation in conflict across the country has led to unprecedented impact, with 9.4 million people in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance in 2020.

Communication is Assistance

There is growing global recognition that systematic and collective engagement with communities can improve programme quality as well as build safer and more resilient communities. Awaaz functions as an interactive information, complaints and feedback hotline which any Afghan mobile phone user can access for free.

“Awaaz works to improve two-way communication and acts as a catalyst to discuss collective accountability, including PSEA, in Afghanistan”

Protection and AAP Advisor of WFP Afghanistan, January 2019.

Accountability in Action

As a collective protection mainstreaming and accountability mechanism, Awaaz lends itself to the World Humanitarian Summit’s (WHS) Grand Bargain commitments on local leadership, local action, capacity strengthening, and the participation revolution.

Putting Afghan people at the centre of its operations, Awaaz’s ten multilingual operators (50% of which are women) have handled more than 145,000 calls since Awaaz took its first call in May 2018, speaking directly with people from across Afghanistan. Establishing referral pathways with clusters and partners, cases requiring attention are shared (in agreement with the affected person) in a timely manner, helping the humanitarian response to swiftly align its delivery to actual needs.

Having received its first CoVID-19 related call in mid-February 2020, Awaaz has closely collaborated with WHO and other partners on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE). Since then, Awaaz shares pre-recorded awareness-raising messages which were heard by over 22,000 callers from throughout the country and directly handled over 3,400 calls from all 34 provinces with callers enquiring about CoVID-19.

Project Governance

Awaaz is implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with financial support from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF), the European Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Contact us

To call Awaaz for free from an Afghan mobile, please dial **410**. For more information & dashboards, visit awaazaf.org.