



Response Plan to the Earthquake in Morocco

October 2023

In the days following the 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Morocco, claimed thousands of lives and injured thousands more, WeWorld, with the support of CEFA as implementing partner and national and international partners as ChildFund Alliance, ChildFund Korea and Educo intervened in the affected areas to assess the post-earthquake situation and respond to the basic needs of the affected populations.

This document is meant to share the information gathered in the assessment missions and the response that has been put in place to counteract the negative effects on those affected by the earthquake, particularly the most vulnerable children and the elderly.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On the night of Sept. 8-9, a 6.8-magnitude earthquake struck the Atlas Mountains, mainly the Marrakech-Safi region and the Souss-Massa region, straining the already fragile infrastructure and threatening the safety of local communities, especially in the more mountainous and remote areas. It was the strongest earthquake in Morocco in the last century and the deadliest since 1960. The epicenter of the earthquake was in Ighil, a municipality in the province of Al-Haouz (see Figure 2) in the High Atlas Mountain range, an area of about 75 km (44 miles) from Marrakech that has not been associated with high-intensity seismic events in the past. The worst affected areas are in rural and isolated locations. Subsequent aftershocks recorded in the days immediately following, in addition to further complicating the situation, have caused further landslides, blocking the few roads that provide access to "douar" (villages) and thus making rescue and aid arrival more difficult.

On September 9, the Royal Cabinet published a report to delineate the national response efforts. All national rescue and response mechanisms has been activated. According to the Moroccan Ministry of Interior, 2,946 people have been confirmed dead and more than 6,000 injured, including about 2,000 people in serious condition and 86 in intensive care.

UNICEF has issued a report stating that more than 100,000 children are affected by the earthquake. (UN News) and according to the Ministry of Education, 530 schools and 55 boarding schools have been damaged (OCHA).

On September 14, the Royal Cabinet published a second report underlining several urgent initiatives including the organization of temporary shelter, especially through appropriate shelter formats on the spot, in structures resistant to cold and harsh weather events, or in prepared reception spaces that have all the necessary facilities. The program, which has multiple dimensions, will mainly mobilize the private financial means of the state and public institutions, and will be open to contributions from private and collective actors, as well as other countries.

Response: Shelter and NFI distribution, Psychosocial support, Education and Early Childhood

Target: 20,000 people, with special emphasis on children and the elderly

Locations: provinces of Chichaoua, Al Haouz and Taroudant

Budget: \$450,000 USD

OVERVIEW OF WEWORLD'S RESPONSE

After contacting residents and operators on the ground, as CEFA implementing partner, WeWorld decided to intervene in the provinces of Chichaoua, Al Haouz and Taroudant in coordination with local authorities and other international and Moroccan associations. As of Monday, September 11, a contingency plan was activated and included the dispatch of three WeWorld and CEFA teams, consisting of five workers and a psychologist, to identify needs and distribute essential goods. The teams focused on the two most affected regions: the province of Taroudant in the Souss-Massa region and the provinces of Al-Haouz and Chichaoua in the Marrakech-Safi region.

The identified needs are extensive and require immediate response in order to protect the affected populations from the effects of the earthquake. The immediate ongoing response will cover 3 months from October to December 2023 and it consists of providing prompt relief support to the displaced and affected population with supplies to meet their basic needs in temporary shelters with low temperatures on the way. The relief support will also include hygiene kits and kitchen tools for the community kitchens that have been installed. The mid-term response will cover the following 9 months for a total of 12 months and it is multi-sectoral, covering shelter and NFIs, PSS and education. Since the damages from the earthquake will have long-term effects, WeWorld and CEFA are already assessing needs for a longer-term intervention.



SECTORS OF SUPPORT

The three main sectors of response to assist the affected population are listed below. It is important to note that not only should any response aim to be multi-sectoral in its approach, but such responses should also be conducted in an integrated manner. Moreover, the context is constantly shifting, the needs are changing and the response is adapting to them through constant assessments, with the absolute priority being to protect displaced families.

Shelter and NFI distribution

While there are no official figures yet on the number of infrastructures destroyed or rendered unusable by the earthquake, the percentage of damaged homes in the affected areas ranges from 50 percent to 90 percent and informal data estimates 56,000 homes are uninhabitable. Thousands of families have been left without shelter, and with temperatures in those parts of the Atlas Mountains dropping rapidly as winter approaches, it is becoming an urgent priority to provide shelter from the cold weather for the most vulnerable. The government has launched the National Emergency Response Plan, in which it plans to survey the number of damaged buildings and then fund their rehabilitation. In the meantime, WeWorld and CEFA are distributing non-food items such as blankets, warm clothes, solar-powered lamps, hygiene kits, and cooking utensils such as ovens and cookware in the affected areas to increase the beneficiaries' self-reliance and ability to meet their immediate needs.



Planned activities in shelter and NFI sector are:

Sector	Action	Target
Shelter and NFI	Distribution of NFI (blankets, mattresses, solar lamps, kitchen tools, hygiene and dignity kits).	6000 persons, mainly families with children and elderly people, for the immediate emergency response (three months, from October 1 to December 31)
	Assessment of the number of families who are still without temporary housing and the number of tents currently in use that are not suitable for winter.	
	Supply of winterized tents, each dedicated to the same family, to avoid situations of proximity and promiscuity between various families. They will be 12m square on average, a size that allows an average family (6 people per household) to be housed inside. In addition, larger tents would lead to human heat loss, while a tent of about 12m square ensures family proximity that promotes heat retention inside. Winterized tents will be manufactured locally including double walls, inspired by traditional nomad tents. The beneficiaries will be trained and supported to ensure proper assembly of the provided tents.	
	Winterization of existing tents, consisting of two kits, one for roof insulation and the other for floor insulation. The roof insulation kit consists of installing an additional structure on top of the tent, covered with a layer of locally available materials such as sheepskin, plastic sheeting, or another type of covering, to create a double layer of protection. The tent floor insulation kit, meanwhile, consists of an insulating layer covered with a plastic-coated mat, then a pallet-type structure on which the sleeping mats are placed. The beneficiaries will be trained and supported to ensure adequate winterization of existing structures.	

Planned budget for shelter and NFI activities: \$200,000

Psycho-social support

To help affected people cope with the shock they have suffered and to offer them support in dealing with the psychological consequences brought about by the trauma, psycho-social support is crucial. This intervention is primarily aimed at the most vulnerable, primarily children who have lost family members and families who have lost their homes and family members. To do this there is a need, first and foremost, for psychologists trained in emergency situations and who speak the local languages (Berber and Arabic).

Planned activities in PSS sector are:

Sector	Action	Target
Psychosocial Support	Identification and training of staff (psychologists, social workers) to strengthen their capacities and provide the necessary skills to deal with emergency contexts. The trained personnel will speak Amazigh, the mother tongue of most of the population in the affected areas, or Arabic.	20.000 persons, for the immediate emergency response and the mid-term response
	Creation, in the intervention areas, of safe spaces for emotional support and sharing of traumatic experiences. These will be welcoming and listening spaces where affected people can go to talk, confront each other, and share their fears and feelings. In parallel, psychologists and social workers will also offer in-home services to facilitate the participation of those people who have a more difficult time leaving their homes (elderly people, women with young children, people with disabilities) or who are reluctant to see a psychologist in a public space for fear of discrimination.	
	Programming of activities dedicated to families and villages as collectives: these activities will be aimed at strengthening the intrinsic capacities of the target community, teaching trauma management techniques that each person can put in place and creating collective moments of reworking what happened through discussion groups, theater tools, and so on.	

Planned budget for PSS sector: \$100,000

Education and early childhood

Following the September 8 earthquake, Unicef has issued a report stating that more than 100,000 children have been affected. According to the Ministry of Education, 530 schools and 55 boarding schools have been damaged. Since the first days after the earthquake, WeWorld and CEFA have focused on identifying the needs to allow children and youth in the affected areas safe and inclusive access to the educational system. The importance of schooling in these contexts is two-fold: it is extremely important to ensure that students do not lose the school year and second, it is important to allow children to regain a sense of normality, with daily school and extracurricular activities (sports, entertainment, etc.) to facilitate overcoming the trauma suffered. School-aged children, especially adolescents, are vulnerable to protection and GBV threats such as child labor and child marriage.



Planned activities in education sector are:

Sector	Action	Target
Education and Early Childhood	Light rehabilitation of schools impacted or provide temporary school structures (tents) to ensure access to education while reconstruction efforts are ongoing	7.000 children for the immediate emergency response and the mid-term response
	Provision of school materials and equipment based on needs	
	Initiation of para-scholastic play or learning activities to support adolescents and children in overcoming the trauma and encourage a gradual return to normalcy. Cultural and sports activities will be organized, aimed primarily at young people and adapted to the ages and needs of the context, employing social and sports animators, where possible members of local communities who will be supported in organizing and animating activities for boys and girls.	

Planned budget for education sector: \$150,000