

EMERGENCY in AFGHANISTAN – Update #1



A beneficiary of the Cash-for-Food Programme standing outside of her home, where she lives with her mother and 3 siblings in the Khalifa Rahmat Ulia village, Robot-e-Sangi District, Afghanistan - February 2024 ©WeWorld

OPENING STATEMENT

Six months after the earthquakes that struck Afghanistan on October 7th and 15th 2023, WeWorld completed its immediate response to the emergency with the support of ChildFund Australia, ChildFund Korea, Taiwan Fund for Children and Families, ChildFund Deutschland, and Barnfonden. WeWorld is currently implementing a mid-term response. The aim of this document, Afghanistan Response Plan – Update #1, is to share the results of the immediate response and coordinate the mid-term response within the Alliance and with other partners to mitigate the suffering of children, families and other citizens in Afghanistan.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In October 2023, three 6.3 magnitude earthquakes struck Herat province within the span of eight days, destroying and/or causing major damage to approximately 40,000 homes and leaving **275,000 people in need of urgent basic support (including some 96,000 children)**. 1,482 casualties and 2,100 injuries - according to WHO. The most affected locations were 12 villages in Zindajan District, Ghoryan District, Gulran District, and Kushak-e-Rabat Sangi District where WeWorld was implementing a joint humanitarian program in support to women-headed households since late 2021, when the Taliban returned to power.

The earthquake exacerbated **Afghanistan's existing severe humanitarian crisis**, already accounting for **28.7 million people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance**, of which 52% children and 25% women, according to the 2024 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (published in December 2023). Afghanistan continues to grapple with the consequences of four decades of conflict, poverty, climate-induced crises, and barriers to women's equality and participation in public life. Coupled with the *de-facto* Taliban authorities' seizure of control of the country, the consequent withdrawal of foreign aid and the protracted food crisis heavily hitting the country in recent years, Afghanistan is definitely becoming a **neglected and extremely underfunded crisis**.

Humanitarian partners are working with the *de-facto* authorities via the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) to conduct community level assessments. The response has also been coordinated with UN-OCHA and the relevant sectorial Clusters.

RESPONSE

Shelter and NFI (winterization) – Food Security – WASH

TARGET

19,000 Afghan children and their families, IDPs, and other people in need

LOCATION

Herat Province

BUDGET

1,200,000 USD

WeWorld is the Italian member of ChildFund Alliance, and has been present in Afghanistan since 2002, alternating periods of active projects. WeWorld interventions targeted both urban and peri-urban areas as well as rural areas, in different Districts of the country. WeWorld currently relies on a coordination office in Kabul and a **field office in Herat**, where the organization has established efficient partnerships with main local institutional actors.

The current situation in Herat Province is marked by significant ongoing efforts for recovery and assistance, described in the following overview:

Reconstruction and Recovery Needs: rebuilding homes is urgent, representing 41% of recovery needs (\$164.4 million), for a total of 49,578 houses damaged, and 13,516 destroyed. Damage to schools has affected 180,000 students and 4,390 teachers, emphasizing the need to restore education, while loss of crops and livestock has posed challenges for farmers, requiring support for recovery. Over 275,000 individuals, including vulnerable groups like pregnant women, infants, disabled individuals, and elderly families in hardest-hit districts, have been affected. Broader impacts include widespread poverty exacerbating the situation, a fragile economy facing slow recovery, scarce employment opportunities, banking instability, and significant mental health challenges. The province's persistent vulnerability to climate-related shocks, hosting a large population of internally displaced persons, and the heavy impact on women-owned businesses, with approximately 60-70% affected and only 10% resuming operations, underline the need for economic empowerment. Urgent funding, community engagement, and comprehensive strategies are essential for rebuilding lives and communities affected by the earthquakes (Herat Earthquake 2023 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, jointly developed by the UN, the World Bank, the European Union, and the Asian Development Bank).

Humanitarian Update: the humanitarian context in Afghanistan has changed dramatically over the last 6 months, due to the devastating 6.3 magnitude earthquakes in Herat Province, decreasing of humanitarian funds availabilities, the economic crisis, and the ongoing drought. These factors have increased the vulnerability and needs of the target beneficiaries, widow headed households, women, children, elderly, people with disabilities and host communities.

According the 2024 Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, in Herat province 1.7 million out of 3.5 million people are in need, as shown below:

POPULATION, PIN AND TARGETS BY PROVINCE			PEOPLE TARGETED PER CLUSTER							
Province	Population	Total PIN	Total Target	Education	ES-NFI	FSAC	HEALTH	NUTRITION	PROTECTION	WASH
Herat	3.5M	1.7M	1.6M	72K	348K	1.6M	842K	453K	365K	756K

The Humanitarian Country Team prioritized 114,000 of the most affected people by the earthquakes over the winter period (October 2023 – March 2024) with a US\$93.6 million plan focused on the caseload of people whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged.

International Assistance: The recently published Herat Earthquake 2023 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment highlights the scale of the disaster, with direct physical damage amounting to US\$ 217 million and losses reaching US\$ 78.9 million. An urgent need for US\$ 402.9 million has been identified to support critical recovery and reconstruction efforts in the province. Housing, the most severely affected sector, represents 41 percent (equivalent to US\$ 164.4 million) of the total recovery needs.

This overview underscores the continued challenges faced by the population of Herat Province and the concerted efforts being made to assist those affected by the earthquakes and facilitate their recovery.

OVERVIEW OF WEWORLD RESPONSE



Locations

Herat Province, Kushak-e-Rabat Sangi District

Sectors of intervention

Emergency Food Security Shelter and NFI

1,200,000
USD
is the Funding Appeal launched by WeWorld



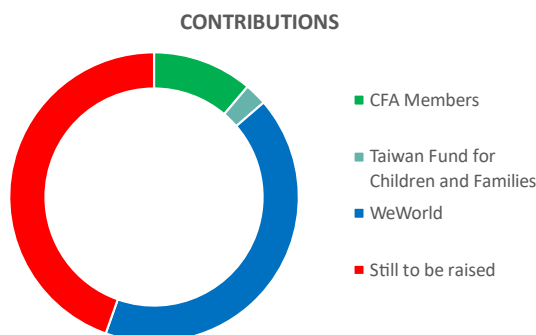
665,000
USD Raised
55% of the Appeal
535,000 USD still to be raised



9,560
People in need served, the large majority being children and women



19,000
The overall target, of people in need to reach

Through the years WeWorld has supported activities related to youth (support of the two biggest orphanages in Kabul, containment of school dropouts, guidance into the labor market), agriculture (support to approximately 1,500 families for infrastructure improvements), food security (distribution of 2,000 livestock for breeding to more than 600 internally displaced families settled in Arirod valley), WASH (construction of a water network and a channelling system of flood water to re-use it for irrigation, in Karukh District).

Since March 2022 WeWorld is contributing to the humanitarian response and supports life-saving emergency cash for food interventions in Herat Province addressing food insecurity in the Kushk Robot-e-Sangi District.

WeWorld, with the support of ChildFund Alliance members and Taiwan Fund for Children and Families, plans to continue responding to urgent needs of the earthquake-affected population. WeWorld was also able to assure institutional resources for the upcoming mid-term response. The needs are extensive, and it is necessary to maintain high financial support for the Afghan crisis and its affected population. WeWorld is the member leading the Alliance response in the field. The organization operates directly in the field in collaboration with RRAA – Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan, and in coordination with the *de-facto* authorities.

The Afghanistan Response Plan – Update #1 provides an integrated approach to support the population affected by the earthquake in Herat with an immediate and mid-term response. The immediate response covered 6 months and it consisted of providing prompt relief support to the displaced and affected population by responding to basic needs in terms of cash-for-food and NFI support. The mid-term response will cover the following 6 months and it is multi-sectorial, covering Emergency Food Security, shelter and NFIs, and WASH, with a protection mainstreaming. The present Response Plan – Update #1 covers a total of 12 months. Since damages of the earthquake will have long term effects, WeWorld is also already assessing needs for a longer-term intervention.

Locations: most affected villages in Kushk / Rabat-e-Sangi District, but also Injil District, Zindajan District, Gulran District, Herat District and Kohsan District (Herat Province), assigned to the Organization in the coordinated response to the emergency within the relevant Clusters.



SECTORS OF SUPPORT

The various sectors of WeWorld's response to assist the affected population are listed below. It is important to note that not only should any response aim to be **multi-sectorial** in its approach, but such **response should also be conducted in an integrated manner**. Our support in addressing vulnerabilities and the risks people face daily can have a greater reach, even when the context is constantly shifting.

The earthquake has placed millions of lives at risk, and protection of the displaced families remains an absolute priority. Incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in aid delivery will be thus a priority in every sector of intervention ensuring to WeWorld response a **full protection mainstreaming approach**. Providing **first aid support through cash assistance and/or non-food items** for the displaced population hosted in the shelters to cope with the freezing temperatures, and **with hygiene kits**, as well as emergency food assistance, is essential in order to renew the access to such basic services as soon as possible and go beyond immediate relief.

EMERGENCY FOOD SECURITY

More than 106,000 people require food security following the earthquakes, which have limited families' ability to access food and adversely impacted their livelihoods. Food assistance has been identified as a priority for families. While conflict-related displacement has drastically decreased since 2021, an estimated 6.3 million individuals—roughly 1 in 7 Afghans—are experiencing long-term displacement, many who left their homes as early as 2012. Even before the earthquake, the economy had drastically shrunk by 40%, partly as a result of the collapse of the financial system that has prevented much-needed cash from entering and sustaining the country. As such, the livelihoods of many families have been lost and households struggle to

pay for basic necessities. The level of food insecurity remains extremely high, with more than a third of Afghans projected to be experiencing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. Over three million children under the age of five experience acute malnutrition, and will be at risk of death if immediate action is not taken.

Starting from November 2023 WeWorld distributed three rounds of cash-for-food (80 USD / month) to 155 highly vulnerable selected households. Families were able to access nutritious food items, ensuring they had sustenance during a critical period of recovery from the disaster.

WeWorld has secured additional funds to target 1,100 HHs (about 7,700 beneficiaries) in the next 6 months.

Planned activities in the Emergency Food Security Sector:

1. Cash-for-food assistance

Target: 11,700 IDP, mainly children and their families

Reached Target up today: 1,020 people (including 669 children and 181 women); additional 7,700 planned to be reached in the next months

Funding Appeal: 800.000 USD

Funds Raised: 590.000 (73% of the updated funding appeal)

SHELTER AND NFI

The earthquakes damaged or destroyed more than about 40,000 homes across 9 districts, leaving at least 56,000 people in need of urgent shelter assistance and non-food items before the onset of winter. Thousands of families have been left without shelter, and with temperatures in this part of Afghanistan dropping rapidly as winter approaches, it has become an urgent priority to provide shelter from the cold weather for the most vulnerable.

This activity intends to contribute by providing emergency relief assistance of emergency NFI kits (inclusive of supplementary items) and winterization kit (inclusive of winter clothing). Cash transfer and in-kind modality is considered, to prevent/minimise the disruption of local markets. In the medium-term response WeWorld will also support the provision of shelter repair.

WeWorld provided emergency relief assistance cash for NFI (winterization). This led to distribution of cash for winterization assistance (200 USD) to 155 earthquake affected households. The financial support not only addressed the immediate survival needs but also offered a means for the families to start rebuilding their lives with a degree of dignity and self-sufficiency during such a challenging time.

Planned activities in the Shelter and NFI Sector:

1. Cash-for-winterization assistance
2. Provision of Shelter Repair kits

Target: 2,300 IDP, mainly children and their families

Reached Target up today: 840 people (including 532 children and 196 women)

Funding Appeal: 200.000 USD

Funds Raised: 75.000 USD (37% of the updated funding appeal)



People displaced by the 6.3 magnitude Earthquake that hit the Herat Province on October 7th, 2023

WASH

Currently 21.1 million people are estimated in need of WASH assistance in Afghanistan. The earthquakes' impact has been particularly severe, leading to substantial damage to essential water points and sanitation facilities in the affected districts, increasing the potential for disease outbreaks. The last year witnessed the spread of acute watery diarrhoea /cholera to 333 districts across all 34 provinces, recording more than 195,000 cases and 94 deaths. Catastrophic severity in AWD among children under age 5 was observed in four provinces, with high caseloads in six additional provinces, both rural and urban. The earthquake has exacerbated an already challenging situation, where access to sufficient clean water, sanitation services and hygiene products was very limited for many segments of the local population. A thorough intervention to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene in of utmost priority.

WeWorld will contribute to provide relief assistance by distributing family hygiene kits, and repair/rehabilitation of WASH infrastructures.

Planned activities in the WASH Sector:

1. Distribution of emergency hygiene kits
2. WASH infrastructure repair/rehabilitation (latrines, water supply, etc.)

Target: 5,000 IDP, mainly children and their families

Funding Appeal: 200.000 USD