

Earthquake Response Plan in Eastern Afghanistan

WeWorld
16 October 2025



Aftermath of the earthquake in a rural village of Kunar Province - September 2025, WeWorld

PERIOD

October 2025-April 2026

Affected population

400,000

Estimated number of people in need of humanitarian aid

Houses totally destroyed: 6,300

Houses partially destroyed: 2,177

Casualties: 1,992

Injured: 3,631

Target population

33,000

Afghan children and their families, women, IDPs and people in need

Response sectors

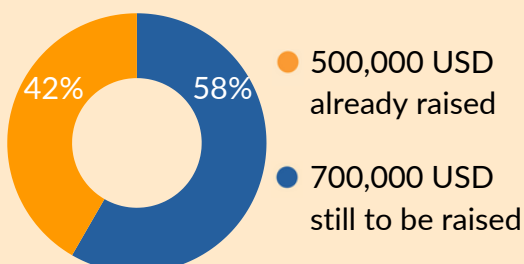
Food Security

Emergency Shelter - NFI

WASH

1,200,000 USD

Total Funding Appeal



Purpose

The purpose of this document, Earthquake Response Plan in Eastern Afghanistan, is to share and coordinate the response within the ChildFund Alliance and with other partners to alleviate the suffering of children, families, and affected communities. The multisectoral, integrated response focuses on **Food Security, Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI), and WASH.**

Situation Overview

On the night of **31 August 2025**, a powerful **magnitude 6+** earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, impacting the provinces of **Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman**. The initial tremor was followed by multiple strong aftershocks, the latest occurring as recently as **8 October 2025**.

According to **OCHA**, **8,471 families**—almost **56,000 people**—have been affected, with **6,300 homes destroyed** and **2,177 damaged**. The confirmed **death toll** stands at **1,992** (52% women and girls), while **3,631 people** have been injured. The earthquake also destroyed or severely damaged essential infrastructure, including **health facilities, schools, water networks, power lines, telecommunications, and livelihoods**, in areas where most people rely on **livestock and agriculture** for income. Nearly **400,000 people**, including more than **250,000 children**, now require urgent **food and agricultural assistance**, as livestock losses and damaged farmland threaten their survival.

Currently, **94% of affected families** are sheltering in the open—many in makeshift shelters or informal settlements—exposed to harsh weather conditions. With night temperatures already dropping in the mountains, the risk of **hypothermia** is acute, especially for children. The earthquake also damaged or destroyed at least **76 water sources** and numerous **sanitation facilities**, in some cases along with their **distribution systems**. Reports indicate that large portions of the population have **insufficient access to water, practice open defecation, and lack handwashing facilities and basic hygiene materials**—conditions that heighten the risk of **waterborne diseases** in areas already facing ongoing outbreaks.

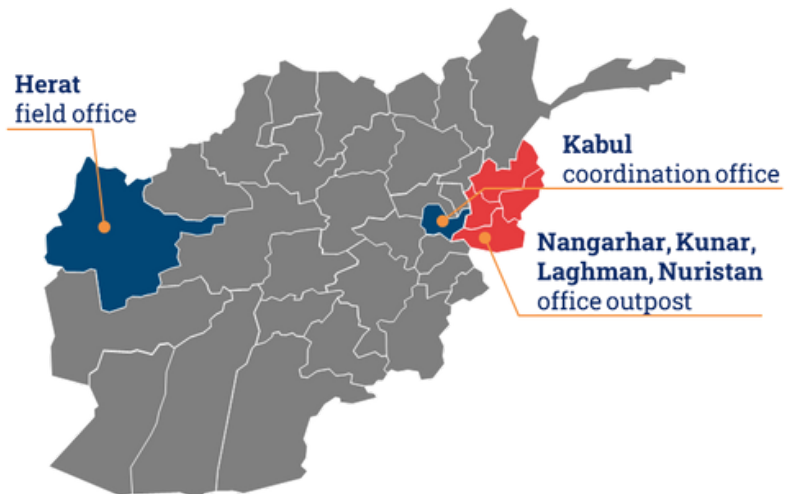
Inaccessible terrain, landslides, and rainfall further hinder the delivery of materials and water, while **contamination from unexploded ordnance** adds risks for both residents and humanitarian workers.

Afghan women and girls face increasingly severe restrictions imposed by the **de facto authorities**, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and heightening risks in a crisis they are disproportionately affected by. Cultural habits have amplified the impact: the earthquake struck around midnight, when men were often sleeping on rooftops during the summer, while women and children were indoors. Limited access to information and bans on awareness-raising hinder women's ability to prepare for or respond to disasters, and in some locations, cultural norms may have delayed **search and rescue operations** for women and girls.

Between **1 January and 30 August 2025**, more than **1.8 million people** returned to Afghanistan—**1.5 million from Iran** and **306,500 from Pakistan**—according to **IOM**. Returns continued even after the earthquake, with over **15,800 Afghans** crossing back on **7 September alone**. Meanwhile, approximately **6.3 million people** remain in **protracted displacement** within the country. Overall, nearly **half of Afghanistan's population**—around **22.9 million people**—requires **humanitarian assistance**, according to the **Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) 2025**.

Overview of WeWorld's response

WeWorld, the Italian member of ChildFund Alliance, has been working in Afghanistan since 2002 until 2017 to support the most vulnerable groups with projects aimed at strengthening civil society and human rights. After the events of 2021 that saw the Taliban's return to power, WeWorld in 2022 decided to resume its activities in order to ensure access to essential services especially for women heads of households, children and girls. WeWorld's humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan is mainly funded by the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS), ChildFund Alliance, and UNOPS. Support and collaboration with local NGOs are crucial, such as Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (RRAA) and New Consultancy and Relief Organization (NCRO).



WeWorld's activities in Afghanistan are possible thanks to a branched presence in the territory: a **coordination office in Kabul**, a **field office in Jalalabad** (Nangarhar province) and a **field office in Herat** (Herat province), with +20 international and national personnel. WeWorld currently operates on Emergency Response, Food Security and Livelihood (FSL), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Shelter-NFI, and Gender.

WeWorld programmes in Afghanistan take a **Conflict-Sensitive Approach** and are in line with **Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus principles**. WeWorld promotes Localization and Community Engagement in target areas, ensuring Accountability to the Affected Population across all projects.

WeWorld's overall effort in 2025 plans to reach at least 49,000 beneficiaries in Afghanistan, of which about 16,500 women/girls, and 15,000 minors. **Key activities of WeWorld's Programme** include emergency response, emergency shelter rehabilitation, food assistance through cash for food (especially targeting women-led households residing in remote rural areas), counselling activities on entrepreneurship and financial education, trainings to strengthen local capacities for anticipatory response to recurring crises resulting from climate shocks (disaster risk reduction), distribution of livestock and drought-resistant agricultural seed kits, awareness-raising initiatives on environmental hazards and emergency management, and the rehabilitation of community works through the cash for work programme.

Sectors of intervention

Below are the key sectors of intervention in WeWorld's response to support the affected population. It's important to emphasize that any response should not only be **multi-sectoral** in nature, but also implemented in an **integrated and cohesive 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 upcoming freezing temperatures, and with hygiene kit, as well as emergency food assistance, is as essential in order to renew the access to such basic services as soon as possible and go beyond immediate relief. The needs are changing and WeWorld's response is adapting to them through constant assessments.

The response will adhere to international humanitarian standards and will be coordinated with the relevant **UN-led Sectoral Clusters**, as well as national and international partners, to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and avoid duplication of efforts. It is fully aligned with the **Afghanistan Eastern Region Earthquake Response Plan - Immediate Humanitarian Response Needs**, published by OCHA in September 2025.

WeWorld, in collaboration with its national partner **NCRO** and using its own funds, began distributing **ready-to-eat meals** immediately after the earthquake. In total, **500 people**—primarily **women and children**—were supported for one week through the distribution of **10,500 meals**. WeWorld also successfully **mobilized institutional funding** to launch a **comprehensive Shelter, NFI, and WASH response** targeting the most affected communities.



Emergency Food Security

Afghanistan's economy has contracted by almost one-third since **August 2021**, with **political isolation**, an **unstable financial system**, and **drastically reduced development funding** hindering recovery and limiting the de facto authorities' ability to deliver basic services and sustain livelihoods. Nearly **half of the population** lives in poverty, **unemployment has doubled**, and underemployment has risen by 25% compared to pre-2021 levels.

These conditions have left households—particularly those **headed by women**—in a precarious situation. Many families have lost their livelihoods and are struggling to afford basic necessities. The **acute food insecurity** crisis remains largely unmitigated:

- **14.8 million people** (32% of the population) are food insecure, including **3.1 million** (7%) severely food insecure.
- Among them are **857,000 children** suffering from **severe acute malnutrition**.
- An estimated **3 million children** and **1 million pregnant and lactating women** are **acutely malnourished**.

Following the earthquake, an estimated **384,387 people** require **food security and agricultural assistance**, as food access has been disrupted and household food stocks destroyed, further worsening already fragile conditions. **Food provision** remains critical until livelihoods are restored. Preliminary assessments indicate that approximately **633,000 livestock** in **Kunar Province** have been affected. Rural households reliant on **agriculture and livestock** face both **immediate food insecurity** and **long-term livelihood collapse**.

Planned activities	1. Immediate food assistance through ready-to-eat meals and Cash-for-Food
Target	4,000 IDP, mainly children and their families
Budget	200,000 USD

The Cash-for-Food Assistance

The **cash assistance modality** is designed with **accessibility criteria** to ensure inclusion of vulnerable groups. **Distribution sites** are identified based on accessibility and security to effectively reach beneficiaries.

The **transfer value** is aligned with the **Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC)** and the **Cash & Voucher Working Group (CVWG)** in Afghanistan, corresponding to a **minimum food basket value of USD 80** (WFP Market Report, April 2025). The **cash-for-food transfer**, converted into AFN at the prevailing exchange rate, represents **100% of the food basket** and covers **100% of the daily energy requirement (2,100 kcal/person/day)** for **four months**, targeting a **household of seven members**.

Distribution of **ready-to-eat meals** continues for households recently affected by shocks and in need of **immediate life-saving food support**, complemented by **sustained dry ration distributions** and **livelihood protection measures** to prevent further food insecurity.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI)

Economic opportunities remain limited in **rural areas**, leaving many households unable to meet basic needs or access essential goods. Seasonal challenges—such as **harsh winters** and **road closures**—further exacerbate these conditions, cutting families off from markets and assistance and leaving them without **adequate shelter, heating, or food supplies** (*Afghanistan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025*).

An estimated **498,130 earthquake-affected people** require **emergency shelter and NFI assistance**. The earthquake destroyed 6,300 homes and damaged **2,177**, leaving thousands of families without safe housing. Many are currently sheltering outdoors, in **makeshift shelters** or **informal settlements**, exposed to the elements.

With winter approaching, families face **freezing temperatures** and **life-threatening conditions**, while damaged homes risk further deterioration during the season.

Affected households urgently need **emergency shelter support** (tents, tarpaulins, repair kits), as well as **non-food items** and **winterization materials** (blankets, warm clothing, heating supplies) through **cash or in-kind assistance**. Longer-term interventions are also required, including **earthquake-resistant shelter repairs**, **transitional and permanent housing solutions**, and **technical reconstruction support** to enable safe rebuilding. Sustained **cash-for-shelter and repair assistance**, combined with **early recovery measures**, will be essential to help families restore safe, resilient living conditions.

Planned activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency shelter rehabilitation through cash assistance; 2. Distribution of emergency core relief items (non-food items) as winterization response;
Target	7,000 IDP, mainly children and their families
Budget	600,000 USD

Emergency shelter rehabilitation

The **cash assistance for shelter rehabilitation** targets households whose homes can be **rapidly repaired** using **locally available materials** and **skilled labour** within affected areas, while integrating **basic seismic-resistant measures**. Households with homes requiring **partial or complete reconstruction** due to severe structural damage are **not eligible at this stage**.

In line with **Shelter Cluster guidelines**, the objective is to **restore minimum habitability conditions**—ensuring **protection from the elements** and an **adequate level of privacy**—as quickly as possible.

Two categories of damage are identified, each corresponding to a distinct level of financial assistance:

- **Minor Damage:** Repairs include replacement or fixing of **doors and windows**, **restoration of boundary walls**, and **roof repairs** to prevent water infiltration.
- **Severe Damage:** Applies to homes that remain **partially habitable** (e.g., at least one usable room) but have suffered **significant structural damage**. Works include **repairing cracks and fissures** in walls and roofs, **replacing beams or rafters** where needed, and **rebuilding collapsed wall sections**, in addition to all interventions under minor damage.

Beneficiary selection within the targeted areas follows **clear vulnerability criteria** to ensure **fairness, transparency, and accountability**.

Criteria include:

1. **Extent of housing damage or destruction;**
2. **Household vulnerability**, including elderly individuals, single-parent households, families with persons with disabilities, and **female- or child-headed households;**
3. **Household income and economic situation;**
4. **Community input**, gathered through **meetings and consultations with local leaders** to validate lists and promote transparency;
5. **Beneficiary commitment** to participate in recovery efforts, including **attending training sessions, supporting community rebuilding initiatives**, and, where feasible, **contributing unskilled labour.**

Distribution of emergency core relief items

The response includes **emergency relief assistance** through a **one-off distribution of kits** containing the most urgently needed items, as recommended by the **Shelter Cluster**—including **winter clothing** and **blankets**. The kits are **adapted and customized** to meet the specific needs of **vulnerable groups**, particularly **children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities**.

To identify the targeted beneficiaries, **ad hoc data collection and analysis** complement the **standard vulnerability criteria**. Priority is given to **displaced families** and households living in the **most precarious housing conditions**. For families **unable to reach distribution points**—due to **disability, health conditions, or protection risks**—additional support is provided through **transport assistance or home delivery** of relief items.

WASH

The earthquake has **exacerbated an already critical WASH situation**, where many communities previously had **limited access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services**. Field assessments indicate that approximately **86% of affected individuals practice open defecation**, while **75% of analysed villages lack handwashing facilities**, compounded by a widespread shortage of **basic hygiene materials**.

Additionally, **32% of water sources** (including hand pumps, aqueducts, tankers, electric pumps, springs, etc.) have been **damaged or destroyed**, and in **43% of affected villages**, the available water is **insufficient to meet basic needs**.

An estimated **498,130 people** now require **life-saving WASH services**, as the earthquake damaged or destroyed at least **76 water sources** and numerous sanitation facilities. Families are forced to rely on **unsafe water** and continue **open defecation**, creating a **high risk of disease outbreaks** in an area already affected by **cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (AWD)**. Immediate priorities include water trucking, household water treatment, emergency environmental sanitation including latrine installation, and distribution of hygiene kits with soap, buckets and jerrycans.

Planned activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitation/reconstruction of community water systems; 2. Installation of emergency latrines; 3. Hygiene promotion and distribution of water purification kits;
Target	33,000 IDP, mainly children and their families
Budget	400,000 USD

Rehabilitation/reconstruction of water systems

Water systems for rehabilitation or reconstruction are identified through **technical assessments** conducted in coordination with **local authorities** and the **WASH Cluster**. Most systems rely on **natural spring catchments** and **gravity-fed distribution networks**, adapted to the **geographical and hydrogeological context** of the area.

Key technical interventions include:

1. **Capture and protection of water sources** through construction or restoration of intake structures to ensure water quality and prevent contamination.
2. **Construction of decompression tanks**, where necessary, to regulate water pressure and prevent damage to pipelines.
3. **Excavation and laying of HDPE pipes**, a durable material suitable for local environmental conditions, to ensure efficient and long-lasting water distribution.
4. **Creation of community water points**, strategically located with community input to ensure **safe, equitable access** for all, with particular attention to **children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities**.

Installation of Emergency Latrines

Most sanitation facilities have been destroyed, forcing communities to **resort to open defecation**, which poses serious contamination risks and increases the likelihood of disease outbreaks. Emergency latrines are installed in the most affected areas to meet **immediate needs** of displaced or high-risk communities. Interventions follow **WASH Cluster guidance** and **Sphere Standards**, with **approximately 50 users per latrine**, **gender-separated facilities**, and **security features** (e.g., door locks). Locations are selected with **consultations with women** to ensure **safety, dignity, and accessibility**, including for **people with disabilities**.

Hygiene Promotion and Distribution of Water Purification Kits

The assessment highlighted **severely compromised hygiene conditions** due to damaged water and sanitation systems, increasing the risk of **waterborne diseases** and potential **epidemics**.

Hygiene interventions include:

- **Targeted awareness campaigns** promoting **safe hygiene practices**, proper use and maintenance of latrines, and safe water handling. Separate sessions are organized to reach **women and girls**, and topics include **gender equality, women's empowerment, and PSEAH**.
- **Participatory methodologies and practical demonstrations** are used to engage communities effectively.
- **Distribution of hygiene items** such as soap, sanitary pads, or other essential materials depending on the session focus.
- **Emergency water disinfection kits** are provided to support **safe domestic water treatment** while restoration work is underway. Kits include **jerry cans (10–20 L)**, **Aquatab disinfection tablets** for at least 3 months of safe water, and **culturally adapted, visually clear instruction leaflets** suitable for low-literacy users.

Distributions are carried out **participatively**, with **community leader involvement**, to avoid conflicts or risk for vulnerable groups such as **single women**. Demonstration sessions teach proper **water collection, filtration, and disinfection methods**, including natural methods like **SODIS (solar water disinfection)**. Messages are **locally adapted** and delivered using community engagement approaches accepted by the population.

Earthquake Response Plan in Eastern Afghanistan, as of October 2025

WeWorld response will continue to adapt to the evolving situation and people's needs accordingly

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