

# AFGHANISTAN EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY RESPONSE



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*Progress Report: 29 February 2023*

### OVERVIEW OF DISASTER

Communities in Herat Province, Afghanistan were struck by a series of shallow, strong earthquakes (between 5.5 and 6.3 in magnitude) and aftershocks which have rocked the same area in Western Afghanistan starting on 7 October 2023, and continue through 15 October, when another 6.3 magnitude earthquake shook Herat province. In addition, on 12 October, a dust storm in Zindajan, Kohsan and Kushk/Rabate-Sangai districts in Herat destroyed several hundred tents. The epicentre of the first earthquake (6.3 in magnitude) was less than 25 miles (40.2km) from Herat city, where our Afghan office is located.

Following days of response to the initial magnitude 6.3 earthquake and aftershocks, as well as the magnitude 6.4 earthquake on 11 October, this latest earthquake has caused more damage, especially to unstable buildings within the city limits, and increased the number of casualties.

According to OCHA, around 1.6 million people have been directly affected by the earthquakes in western Afghanistan, leaving at least 114,000 in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Many have lost their lives, and many more have been injured and displaced from their homes. Some villages have been wholly destroyed and many others badly damaged. The humanitarian community is asking for approximately \$93.6 million to address this. Additionally, the needs are severe, and risk getting overlooked in light of other recent tragic news. The earthquakes struck vulnerable communities with little resilience to cope with multiple successive shocks. Many of the communities nearest the epicenters of the earthquakes are already dealing with the consequences of decades of



Map showing increased area of reach where  
World Vision has been responding

conflict, under-development, economic strife and unemployment. The earthquakes also struck right before Afghanistan's winter and the start of their lean season, when households' food resources are most exhausted and constrained.

### **WORLD VISION'S RELIEF RESPONSE: IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS**

Despite being directly affected, World Vision stepped in to support affected people within hours of the earthquakes by working in the earthquake-affected areas of Western Afghanistan. The first phase of the response, "Rapid Response Phase", was conducted during the first 14 days of the Response from 8 October 2023 to 21 October 2023.

World Vision has since completed its second phase of response, "Protection Response", whereby all planned activities were aimed at ensuring that the most vulnerable populations who were most affected by the earthquake were cared for. World Vision has also been transitioning into the "Recovery Response Phase" as well as preparing affected communities for the winter season.

In total, World Vision has reached **59,420** earthquake survivors, including children, in Afghanistan .

#### **Key activities implemented**

- **26,829 people** received life-saving healthcare services, including medical, nutritional, mental health and psychosocial support:
  - 4,626 individuals received psychosocial counselling and mental health treatment
  - 1,122 injured individuals received wound care and dressing
  - 1,562 affected pregnant women received maternal health support
  - 318 children, 66 pregnant women, and 68 lactating mothers received nutritional support
  - 137 individuals with severe injuries received immediate first aid care and stabilization before being referred to specialised secondary health services
  - 4 of the Mobile Health & Nutrition Teams deployed have been providing 24-hour round-the-clock services to five villages within the affected areas
  
- **831 individuals**, including children, were reached with child protection services:
  - 5 child-friendly spaces have been established, with 331 children participating in these centres
  - 5 community-based child welfare committee networks have been established
  - 5 child protection help-desks have been set up in the five most affected villages
  - 251 parents from the five most affected villages have been educated on child wellbeing and child protection related issues
  - 124 child protection cases have been identified
  
- **24,745 people** received critical water, sanitation, and hygiene support and benefitted from NFI kits to meet basic their WASH needs:
  - 2,896 WASH consumable kits were distributed, benefitting 20,272 people
  - 639 family hygiene kits were distributed
  - 358 NFI kits (including blankets, cooking pots, jerrycans, soap, etc.) were distributed

- 10 water networks have begun assessment for rehabilitation to provide affected communities with access to clean drinking water
  - 4 of these communities have completed the needs assessment and the technical proposal is currently under review
- **7,015 individuals** received multi-purpose-cash assistance to support them and their families food security, health, shelter/rent and basic utilities, etc.

PHOTOS



"I have been working in this area for two months. The impact of our work, as female employees, is that for most of the women who were injured in this incident, I went to their tents to treat them and bandage them. There was a woman who was pregnant. She came to our clinic and gave birth here. This had a great impact on that woman. They think that this is a place where they can feel comfortable because of the female employees working here. There were children who were malnourished because some of them had lost their mothers, and their relatives did not know what to do. When they came here, we screened them and saw that they were malnourished. We were able to help them recover."

– *Ruqia, Nutrition Nurse*

"Kids [in the child friendly space] are courageous at the moment. They were initially not interested in playing. They were suffering from apathy and fear due to the earthquake. They didn't even smile. It is interesting that now they know the names of all the games and want to play different games. I am very happy that they have changed a lot. And I think everyone is back to a normal situation. In these areas, if there is no female teacher, they do not allow even their six-year-old daughters to attend classes [child friendly spaces]. In the beginning, there were fewer female participants. After they were sure that a woman is teaching, the number of girls and women participants increased."

– *Sofia, Child Friendly Space Animator*

## MOVING FORWARD

Thank you for your generosity and love for children and their families in their time of greatest need. On behalf of the children and families affected by the Afghanistan earthquakes who may never have a chance to thank you personally, we would like to extend our appreciation for your gift of hope and help in this emergency. As humanitarian needs are immense and the impact on children, including safeguarding risks, is enormous, World Vision will continue to respond to the needs in Western Afghanistan to save lives and protect children. Key needs that persist include:

- **Community Winter-Preparedness:** As the earthquakes struck right before Afghanistan's winter season, displaced families and children, those still living in hastily erected dwellings, have been most at risk, and winterisation interventions have been a critical priority to keep vulnerable families and children safe. Rapid response to affected communities' winter needs has been ongoing, although weather conditions have also made Recovery Phase interventions more complex.
- **An already dire situation further compounded by the earthquakes:** Prior to the earthquakes, 29.2 million Afghans were already in great humanitarian need, with 15 million in urgent need of food aid after facing decades of conflict as well as worsening climate impacts such as drought. These earthquakes exacerbated the protracted human crisis in Afghanistan, causing further human suffering and strife, and created new long-term needs particularly in the area of psychosocial support and protection. People who were already most at risk and lacked social protection are among the most vulnerable, with unaccompanied children being perhaps most vulnerable of all. It is anticipated that these will also have to be addressed with longer-term funding support, post-earthquake response.

Moving forward, we will be focusing on the following:

- **Phase 3 – Recovery (Dec 2023 to Apr 2024):** Transition to longer-term rehabilitation and livelihoods regeneration and gradually phase out response interventions, which are to be integrated into the longer-term ongoing programming.

- **World Vision Afghanistan plans to reach:**

- 16,100 individuals with life-saving food assistance in the form of cash or food
- 2,800 individuals with cash for work to rehabilitate their productive assets
- 14,000 individuals with early livelihoods recovery

Thank you for saving lives. To make a difference to children affected by other disasters, please support The Survival Fund. Visit [www.worldvision.org.sg/the-survival-fund](http://www.worldvision.org.sg/the-survival-fund) to learn more.