

December 2023



Herat Earthquake, Afghanistan
2023



Photo: IFRC

FEMALE

COMMUNITY LISTENING

Community Engagement and Accountability
Protection, Gender, and Inclusion
Safeguarding

HERAT EARTHQUAKES

Description

A series of earthquakes hit Herat province on 7 October 2023 in Zinda Jan district. The strongest tremor measured a magnitude 6.3 and was followed by multiple aftershocks. Those struck western Afghanistan, Herat provinces and strongly felt across four provinces. The week after a second magnitude 6,3 earthquake followed affecting 30 new villages and increased damages in the already impacted areas.. Official data indicates that over 2,000 people have been killed and over 9,000 injured, some 21,500 houses destroyed or damaged. In several affected villages, not a single house remains standing. Thousands of people are living in open space under tents or tarpaulins as their houses were destroyed or are afraid of returning home due to frequent aftershocks. Afghan Red Crescent Society with IFRC conducted the rapid assessment to communities in two affected area: Zenda Jan and Rabat Sangi.

Methodology

Data was only collected from adult and elderly women through FGD (90) and one-on-one interviews (6) in ARCS Marastoon Herat and door-to-door interview. Key questions asked where about:

- Information needs, trusted channels for communication, and community participation,
- Access and social inclusion,
- Non-discrimination and staff or volunteer's behaviour.

Disclaimer

As there is a movement limitation on women, the feedback only came from women in ARCS Marastoon. The collected data is not representative all affected women and should be triangulated with other sources. However, the analysis gives us valuable insights into the views of people affected by the earthquakes.

KEY FINDINGS

Preferred Communication Channels



Television



Radio



ARCS personnel

Important Notes:

Most of women in Afghanistan stay at home. They answered that they looked information through TV and Radio as those devices are in their houses, yet, in some places particularly in rural area, there are no electricity and still many communities don't have access to TV, radio, and mobile phone. Women also relied on the ARCS personnel to get information.

*“We do not know how to get information and we do not have information to get assistance” –
Female, FGD in Herat city*

KEY FINDINGS

Assistance Needs



Cash



Medicines



Fuel to light
fire/heater



Vocational
training

Important Notes:

The winter is coming and the needs of basic medicines for cold, cough, fever are needed. In addition, the fuel to light up fire heater is important to keep house warm.

Rumors

- Rumor still circulates that the earthquake will happen again soon.
- As now is started raining in Herat, people believe that will be a heavy raining and their village will be flooded.

Information Needs

- What assistance is available for the affected community.
- How can get the assistance and services.
- How to maintain our stress for our mental health and how to seek the help.

KEY FINDINGS

Community Trust

- Most of women do not know how to bring their problem and share it to whom as they have a lack of trust and feel that no one listens to women.
- Some women only share their complaints to the trusted ARCS personnel as they are afraid that the complaint spread to community leader.
- Women felt that men is always being prioritized than women.

“We do not know how to share our problems. We have many problems and have shared, but no one listen to us.” – Female, FGD in Herat city

Protection and Social Inclusion

- Women felt left behind to receive information and aid as women are not included in the community's decision and if participated, they are not allowed to speak.
- There is a lack of functioning latrines in the camps which makes feel unsafe and uncomfortable. Women are worried if should stay longer in camps, then they got stressed and any risk of violence.
- Due to restriction of women meets men which most of aid providers are men, women felt being forced to have a man relative to take aid item on behalf of them, instead of getting it by their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication

- Engage women volunteers or staff to share important information to women communities during distribution or door-to-door.
- Develop key messages that community needs (i.e detail of aid) and distribute it through flyers and put in the aid kit (i.e dignity and winterization kits)
- Conduct mental health awareness session to women and should integrate in Mobile health services
- Work with local television (Tolo TV) and local radio in Herat to provide life-saving information.

Feedback Mechanism

- Ensure the confidentiality and safety of feedback mechanism to gain trust of women communities.
- Facilitate open dialogue within women communities and ARCS personnel, especially in Marastoon.
- Train women staff and volunteers in collecting feedback from community and to respond the feedback.

Protection and Inclusivity

- Involve women volunteers or staff in the distribution to engage women communities.
- Ensure affected women received dignity kits and health services including pregnant and lactating women.
- Brief staff and volunteers are briefed on Protection, Social Inclusion, and Safeguarding.
- Ensure that all women and girls have access to functional latrines, and they are comfortable and safe.

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