

July 2024



Herat Earthquake Operation  
Afghanistan 2024



FEMALES

# COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

Community Engagement and Accountability  
Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

SHELTER ASSISTANCE

DIGNITY KITS

# HERAT EARTHQUAKES

## Background

On October 7th, two powerful earthquakes struck near the city of Herat in Afghanistan, followed by numerous aftershocks over the following weeks. The districts of Ghoryan, Injil, Kohsan, Robat Sangi, and Zinda Jan were primarily affected. On October 12th, severe dust storms also hit the Zinda Jan, Kohsan, and Kushk/Rabat-e-Sangi districts, causing significant damage to temporary shelters and forcing the relocation of affected populations to Herat City. They were able to return to their homes by October 15th. Subsequent assessments by the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) revealed more extensive destruction than initially estimated. Entire villages in Zinda Jan were flattened, and numerous houses in Ghoryan and Kushk/Rabat-e-Sangi districts were damaged. In response, ARCS with the support of the IFRC planned to build 300 new houses - 3 in Zinda Jan 2 in Chashma-e-Ghori, 1 in Kariz-e-Marwee, 297 in Gulran district, 25 in Sang-e-Kotal (including 1 demo house), 113 in Band-e-Afzal (including 2 demo houses), and 159 in Shakar Ab (including 3 demo houses).

## Methodology

Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with female beneficiaries in the Gulran district to understand their experiences with the ARCS and IFRC assistance, particularly in relation to shelter and dignity kits.

- **FGDs** were conducted with 35 female participants of different age groups during humanitarian aid distributions.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** were carried out, though the specific informants are not detailed.
- **Observations:** Observational data was also collected as part of the assessment.
- **Assessment Tool Adaptation:** The data collection tools were adapted from the WHO Quality Rights Toolkit and WHO Quality Assurance resources for the Herat Gulran district.

## Disclaimer

This report is not representative and should be triangulated with other sources. However, this community feedback gives us valuable insights into the views of people affected by the earthquakes.

# KEY FINDINGS

## Information Needs

- The community receives information through community/religious leaders and representatives.
- There is inadequate information about the ARCS organization itself, some people think that ARCS is a government organization, while others only know ARCS provides shelter support.
- **There is no hygiene promotion during the distribution. Females are not familiar with the sanitary pads inside the dignity kits. They ignored the pads as they don't know what that is and how to use it.**
- Lack of information about availability of health services – where and when to get.

## Needs of Assistance

- There are still vulnerable families that have not received the shelter assistance. The ARCS/IFRC was only able to provide shelter support to 300 families.
- **The females expressed their priority need is food packages rather than cash assistance in current situation.** The reason is that their village is far from shops, and it is not accessible for them. Therefore, they preferred to get food assistance than buy to the shops by themselves.
- After the earthquake and flood, the mental state of children and women has deteriorated, they **need psychological training and counseling.**
- Shelters have been built, but **there is no a toilet.**
- **Other assistance** needed by females' communities:



Medicines



Livelihood training



Water sanitation



Fuel to light fire during winter



Health facility

# KEY FINDINGS

## Access and Social Inclusion

- In the community, predominantly Dari (Persian) speaking community.
- Information shared through the **Mosques, which is not accessible for female** community.
- There is a gap in a community to access the assistance. The male's community have a better access to information while **women rely on male relatives as their main information source**. Other challenges for **females are most of them are illiterate and occupied with household duties**. Younger males are more likely to be educated and many work abroad, particularly in Iran (border with Herat), to support families.
- Some families were not registered on assistance because the family-headed house should be male.

## Community Participation and Feedback

- The females feel that their needs are not met, because **female communities were not involved in the community discussion** meetings. Therefore, their needs for dignity kits, clothes, and scarves were not met. This also affected that during the recovery stage, they did not receive those essential items and in winter, they only received some shoes and winter clothes.
- The females have also shared their concern **to not distribute all the packages to the Arbab (Community leaders)**, but the suggestion was not heeded.

## Non-Discrimination and Staff Behavior

- **ARCS staff and volunteers were perceived as respectful and considerate**, ensuring the community's needs were met without any expectation of personal gain.
- **Unfair cash disbursement and Arbab's control over distribution** raises concerns about fairness and transparency.
- **Lack of consultation with female to address their specific needs**, it demonstrates a significant gap in the humanitarian response.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Concerns and Recommendations

- Advocate for the community's water needs at the provincial and national levels.
- Establish a **Hotline and have dedicated female personnel to handle feedback** from the female community.
- Conduct information and awareness sessions in schools/shelters, which would be more accessible for women, especially **promotion on the hygiene and dignity kits.**
- Ensure **shelters have a proper toilet facilities and accessible for vulnerable group.**
- Provide **psychological training and counseling** for children and women to address the deterioration of their mental state.
- Engage and **mobilize young males to help bridging the household's information** gaps.
- To conduct any information or **awareness sessions in a school or shelter** which would be more accessible for women.
- Ability to leverage the community's homogeneity and ARCS's broad service accessibility for inclusive response.



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