

Badakhshan Earthquake Response Evaluation Assessment Summary



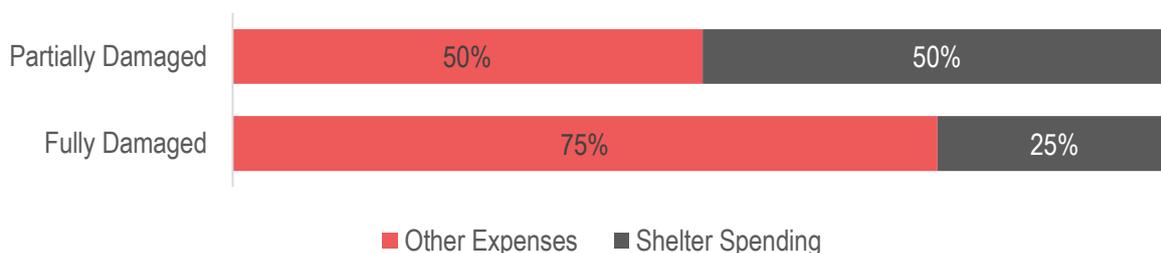
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The 7.5 magnitude earthquake in October 2015 struck Badakhshan province, leading to livelihood and infrastructure damage, and large-scale displacement throughout Afghanistan's mountainous regions. Due to the rapid need for emergency winterised shelter assistance to affected communities, cash grants were distributed by Emergency Shelter and Non-food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster partners to completely and partially damaged households to finance fuel, essential winter NFIs, repairs and reconstruction work. In early 2017, REACH conducted an assessment, evaluating the impact of the humanitarian response on the improvement of affected households' shelter conditions. As such, 954 affected households in Badakhshan, Baghlan and Kabul were surveyed; all of whom received cash assistance as part of the ES/NFI Cluster's emergency shelter intervention.

The primary objective of this report was to evaluate response to the ES/NFI Cluster to the Badakhshan earthquake, specifically considering a) the use of cash assistance as an emergency shelter intervention approach, b) the change in shelter conditions and c) any assistance gaps or limits to recovery. Preliminary findings indicated that 48% of sampled households were destroyed by the earthquake, while the remaining 52% were partially damaged.

As such, this assessment found that the cash assistance response was successful in the following ways:

- Those receiving assistance benefitted from the freedom to manage their own redevelopment by spending money on shelter recovery and their own needs** – Shelter spending is summarised in the figure below:



2. **Across all three provinces, shelter conditions were found to have improved** – Amongst surveyed households, 32% had completed repairs. However, 29% are still missing doors, windows and/or roofs and the remaining 39% are uninhabitable. Where household repairs remained incomplete (68%), a considerable number of participants' repairs had not yet started or were on hold (75% of destroyed and 42% of damaged houses).
3. **The safety of household members has improved, alongside the reconstruction of their homes** – However, 92% of households which had not yet completed repairs reported that, despite receiving cash assistance, they could not afford shelter materials, while a further 83% reportedly could not afford labour.

Although numerous successes tied to the intervention have been found, the report also aimed to discover limits in coverage and where residual gaps in intervention exist. Firstly, some aspects omitted from the rapid assessment, such as a closer focus on gender, would shed further light on the effectiveness of cash interventions. Secondly, the rapid assessment did not identify food as a priority need, despite it being the second primary use of financial assistance. Finally, in terms of programs, income generating habits of specific provinces was not fully taken into consideration during cash assistance interventions.

These limitations may be mitigated for future cash assistance interventions by the following recommendations:

- **ES/NFI assessments could be further standardised**, incorporating details on coping mechanisms and female perspectives, thus harmonising future evaluations.
- Future program design ought to **focus more thoroughly on income generating habits and other priority needs**, ensuring funds are distributed appropriately and accurately.