



2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

JOINT PROJECT

## HERAT EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY RESPONSE

A Norwegian Embassy delegate receives a poster from the head of a rehabilitated school in Herat Province, thanking Norway for its contribution to STFA after earthquakes destroyed the school. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal

# Contributing Donors



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Programme <sup>1</sup> Title & Project Number		Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s)/ Strategic Results <sup>2</sup>	
Programme Title: Post -Earthquake Recovery & Resilience-Building in Herat  MPTF Office Project Reference Number <sup>3</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 140669</li> <li>• 140670</li> <li>• 140671</li> <li>• 140672</li> </ul>		Country: Afghanistan Region: Western  Priority areas/Strategic Results: UNSFA Outcomes 1, 2, 3  Outcome 1: Sustained Essential Services Outcome 2: Economic opportunities and resilient livelihoods Outcome 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights, and Rule of Law	
Participating Organization(s)		Implementing Partners	
Organizations that have received direct funding from the MPTF Office under this programme: 7 PUNOs  1. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) 2. International Labour Organization (ILO) 3. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 4. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 5. International Organization for Migration (IOM) 6. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 7. United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-HABITAT)		Please refer to PUNO-specific reports	
Programme/Project Cost (US\$)		Programme Duration	
Total approved budget as per project document:	8,000,000	Overall Duration	20 months
MPTF /JP Contribution <sup>4</sup> :	8,000,000		
Agency Contribution	N/A	Start Date <sup>5</sup>	17 Apr 2024
Government Contribution)	N/A	Original End Date <sup>6</sup>	16 Oct 2025
Other Contributions (donors):	N/A	Current End Date <sup>7</sup>	28 Feb 2026
Total Contributions:	8,000,000		
Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.		Report Submitted By	
Assessment/Review - if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mid-Term Evaluation Report – if applicable please attach Yes No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name: Peter Nordstrom</li> <li>• Title: Senior Trust Fund Manager</li> <li>• Participating Organization (Convening Agent): UNDP</li> <li>• Email address: peter.nordstrom@undp.org</li> </ul>	

[1] The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

[2] Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

[3] The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[4] The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[5] The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

[6] As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

[7] If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

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Two children in front of their newly built shelter supported by STFA in Herat Province, after devastating earthquakes destroyed their family home. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal

# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>CAP</b>	Community action plan
<b>DRM</b>	Disaster risk management
<b>FHAG</b>	Family health action group
<b>FHH</b>	Family health house
<b>LIC</b>	Local implementation committees
<b>MCHC</b>	Mother and child health centres
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>PAIDAAR</b>	Participatory Action for Integrated Developmental Assistance to Areas of Return
<b>PHVCA</b>	Participatory hazard, vulnerability and capacity assessments
<b>PSCC</b>	Psychosocial counselling centre
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>PSS</b>	Psychosocial support services
<b>PUNO</b>	Participating United Nations organization
<b>RMNCAH</b>	Reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health
<b>SME</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>STFA</b>	Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan
<b>UNSFA</b>	United Nations Strategic Framework for Afghanistan

مرکز صحتی طفل و ماد

MCHC

زندگي سالم برای مادران و  
کودکان با حمایت سخاوتمندان  
STFA

Healthy Lives For Mothers

and children - Generously

# Executive Summary

Local resident at the Mother and Child Health Centre supported by STFA in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal



The Post-Earthquake Recovery and Resilience-Building in Herat project benefitted:



# 169,821<sup>8</sup>

people (130,195 women and girls, 76.7%)

in Herat Province in 2025. In response to the socioeconomic impacts of the October 2023 earthquake, the project advanced recovery by empowering earthquake-affected communities with assets and skills. These helped them to overcome earthquake-induced vulnerabilities, better manage the post-disaster transition and increase resilience to future shocks.

Participating UN organizations (PUNOs) successfully implemented and concluded a multisectoral recovery programme in Kushk District, combining employment-intensive infrastructure rehabilitation, enterprise development and skills enhancement, in coordination with communities and local authorities. Eight infrastructure projects were completed using labour-intensive approaches. This improved disaster risk mitigation, restored essential services, enhanced mobility and strengthened resilience.

PUNOs rehabilitated seven schools and began reconstructing another five, improving academic performance, student well-being and teacher morale.

They strengthened access to life-saving health and psychosocial support (PSS) services for women and girls through family health houses (FHHs), mother and child health centres (MCHCs), psychosocial counselling centres (PSCCs) and dedicated PSS teams.

The delivery of natural disaster resilient shelters for 400 vulnerable families enhanced safety, dignity, physical protection and resilience. In parallel, to address immediate protection concerns, the project provided cash assistance to persons with specific risks, meeting basic needs and boosting access to services.

Community-based assessments across Herat Province generated a comprehensive evidence base on population mobility, vulnerability and post-earthquake needs. These assessments shaped targeting decisions across sectors and informed broader project interventions. Findings from seven community action plans (CAPs) were shared with PUNOs and partners for coordinated follow-up, including on school rehabilitation and water system upgrades.

To strengthen community-based disaster management, PUNOs trained nine disaster risk management (DRM) committees and provided essential supplies, significantly improving local capacities for crisis preparation and response.

*[8] Beneficiary numbers are generally fluid and are subject to change following routine data verification and validation exercises that are conducted through the three layers of monitoring (PUNO – TFMU – TPMA).*



# Purpose

A family in front of their new shelter built with STFA support after earthquakes destroyed their home in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal







# Results

A worker in a capret weaving centre supported by STFA in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal



## Outcome

Since its inception, the Post-Earthquake Recovery and Resilience-Building in Herat project has benefitted 204,359<sup>[9]</sup> people (162,150 women and girls, 79.3%). In 2025 it reached 169,821 people (130,195 women and girls, 76.7%). In response to the socioeconomic impacts of the October 2023 earthquake, the project advanced recovery by empowering earthquake-affected communities with assets and skills. These helped them to overcome earthquake-induced vulnerabilities, better manage the post-disaster transition and increase resilience to future shocks.

PUNOs realized important progress in achieving expected results. They improved health, education, water supplies and other services through constructing latrines, restoring essential community-based infrastructure facilities, rehabilitating and constructing schools, and supporting community-based health facilities for women and girls. Restored infrastructure enhanced mobility, reduced travel times, secured water access for agriculture and households, increased household purchasing power and enhanced protections from climate and disaster risks. All these factors contributed to inclusive development and strengthened social cohesion.

Rebuilt shelters and latrines supported a profound transformation from distress and vulnerability to dignity, safety and community resilience. Integrated health services strengthened community-facility linkages and promoted timely health-seeking behaviours.

Communities gained livelihood and income-generation opportunities, including through cash-for-work schemes to rehabilitate damaged productive community assets. Unconditional cash assistance helped vulnerable individuals meet basic needs. Women acquired expanded income-generation opportunities in animal husbandry.

Crucial support for rainwater conservation and watershed management improved water security, reduced land erosion and enhanced climate adaptation. With training and the provision of emergency kits and other supplies, DRM committees increased local abilities to respond to disasters and mitigate risks. They strengthened community preparedness and institutionalized local risk management mechanisms.

The project advanced community engagement, inclusion and accountability, which are central to social cohesion. This ultimately reinforces foundations for long-term resilience, equitable participation and more effective, locally driven governance. Community members were not only consulted but directly involved in prioritizing interventions. This decision-making autonomy increased trust, transparency and collective ownership of project outcomes. Communities have become more capable of articulating needs, negotiating priorities, coordinating with external actors and monitoring implementation.

Representation of women in DRM committees and local implementation committee (LIC) structures increased their participation in local decision-making, helping to embed more inclusive norms in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

*[9] Beneficiary numbers are generally fluid and are subject to change following routine data verification and validation exercises that are conducted through the three layers of monitoring (PUNO – TFMU – TPMA)*



# Output-level Results

## UNSFPA Priority Area 1: Sustained Essential Services

Output

1



Essential services and community infrastructure – including for health, agriculture, education, and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.

### Output 1 benefitted

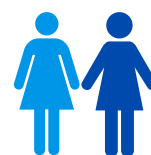
Number of Beneficiaries

143,780



Number of Women and Girls

119,059



82.8%

19,250

(including 9,430 women and girls, 49.0%) benefitted from eight projects restoring access to vital public services and enhancing community resilience to future disasters in Kushk District. Projects were selected in close consultation with community representatives. They included:

- Rehabilitation of Khwaja Gulbied Village Road to gravel standards with improved drainage, covering a total length of 1,620 metres
- Rehabilitation of Baghcha Abdul Hakim Village Road to gravel standards with improved drainage, covering 2,190 metres, including 259 metres of stone masonry protection wall and eight slab culvert structures
- Rehabilitation of Khwaja Qasim Village Road to gravel standards with improved drainage, covering 880 meters, including 540 metres of irrigation canal lining
- Construction of a 171-metre lined Irrigation canal in Darwish Ali Village, including a 148-metre gabion protection wall and 16-metre stone masonry protection wall
- Renovation of the primary school building in Fazal Ahmad Jan Village, including the renovation of a six-classroom building, provision of 60 sets of student desks and chairs (accommodating 120 students) and construction of a 222-metre boundary wall
- Construction of a 4x2x6-metre slab culvert and a 26.2x5-metre causeway in Ayubi Village, including downstream protection.

- Protection of the traditional kariz system in Qala-e-Safid Village, including the construction of a 20.5-metre stone masonry wall and a super-passage structure
- Renovation of the social centre building in Qala-e-Gerdak Village to serve as a primary school for 120 students (70 girls, 59.2%), including renovation of a four-classroom building, provision of 28 sets of student chairs and desks (accommodating 56 students), and construction of a 50-metre water well with a handpump, one three-cell latrine block, 118-metres of boundary walls and 40-metres of gabion protection walls.

## 7

damaged schools were rehabilitated and retrofitted, benefitting 7,074 students (2,023 girls, 28.6%) and 145 teachers. Projects were based on a thorough joint assessment among PUNOs and with community stakeholders to identify structural deficiencies, determine necessary interventions, and train engineers and masons on build back better approaches (specifically, earthquake-resistant construction techniques, including structure reinforcement and non-structural mitigation). Completed schools include Amani High School, Berganak Elementary School, Chahar Dara High School, Cheshma Yaqoob Primary School, Jaghartan High School, Qush Asiab High School and Quwa Char Zaredar School.

## 7

FHHs served as a critical front-line maternal and child healthcare service delivery point in remote and underserved areas, including earthquake-affected locations.

## 54,188

people (including 46,284 women and girls, 85.4%) were reached through integrated reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) and primary healthcare services. Of these, 24,836 individuals benefitted from essential health services; 1,927 beneficiaries were reached through community health workers at health posts, and 655 community members were engaged through family health action groups (FHAGs).

## 1,120

women received their first antenatal care visit, with maternal health services remaining a core focus. A total of 504 women completed the recommended fourth antenatal care visit, contributing to improved maternal monitoring and early detection of complications. Postnatal care services were scaled up; 603 women benefitted from their first postnatal care visit and 392 women completed a third follow-up. In addition, skilled birth attendants conducted 530 deliveries, leading to safer childbirth outcomes in hard-to-reach and earthquake-affected communities.

The FHHs played a vital role in identifying obstetric complications and referring 78 complicated maternal cases to higher-level facilities. Five complicated maternal and child health cases were successfully transferred through an ambulance referral system, ensuring timely access to higher-level care and reducing risks of maternal and neonatal complications.



## 7,292

outpatient consultations were provided to children under age 5; 3,043 individuals benefitted from routine immunization services, improving child health outcomes.

## 9,778

beneficiaries received family planning counselling; 3,417 women had their demands for modern family planning methods met, which improved modern contraceptive uptake.

## 48,226

women and girls accessed services through three MCHCs, reaffirming the model as a trusted, secure and vital access point for women and adolescent girls. In total, 3,604 received individual psychosocial support; 7,268 participated in group counselling sessions; 4,612 accessed general and reproductive health services. Community engagement was strong, with social mobilizers reaching 15,157 women and girls through awareness sessions, and 4,612 participating in reproductive health education activities. The provision of dignity kits benefitted 924 women and girls; 3,910 participated in menstrual hygiene management sessions. The combination of the kits and awareness-raising addressed immediate needs and supported longer-term well-being.



Women in a session at a Mother and Child Health Centre supported by STFA in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal



### An adaptive response to service provision

The project strategically transitioned the women-friendly health space model into the MCHCs model as an adaptive response, aimed at the continuity of life-saving services within a culturally appropriate, safe and gender-responsive framework. The MCHC model enhanced the health component of the project by recruiting qualified female medical doctors, providing essential medical equipment and supplies, and integrating a comprehensive life-saving health and PSS approach. Delivering services through female healthcare providers supported uninterrupted access to reproductive healthcare, mental health and PSS, and other basic health services for women and adolescent girls. These interventions led to measurable improvements in emotional well-being, coping capacity and social resilience. Life skills training further supported recovery by providing women with practical skills, stress relief, and increased self-confidence and self-reliance.

## 6,058

women and girls accessed services through two PSCCs strategically embedded within hospitals to provide free, confidential, survivor-centred, and comprehensive gender-based violence and PSS services. Integration within the health system has enabled discreet service delivery in highly constrained operational environments. Among the beneficiaries, 2,061 received individual psychosocial counselling, 689 accessed essential health services and 1,612 participated in awareness-raising sessions. In addition, 376 received dignity kits and 1,320 benefitted from psychological first aid, supporting both immediate needs and longer-term psychosocial recovery.

## 5,144

women and girls were reached by three PSS teams, including 468 who received individual services, 1,868 who participated in group sessions and 2,808 who benefitted from awareness activities.

## 158

households (17 women-headed, 10.8%) with 1,211 individuals (649 women, 53.6%) gained permanent natural-disaster resilient shelters in earthquake-affected communities in Robat Sangi Sharqi, Ayoubi, Baqcha Haji Qurban, Darwish Ali and Tanosh Bik. Land ownership verification helped to mitigate risks of land disputes and associated protection risks. Shelters were constructed using locally available materials and include two rooms, a kitchen and a corridor, and a standalone latrine. They were constructed with reinforced concrete to ensure resilience to earthquake shocks.

## 400

persons with specific needs for protection (212 women, 53.0%) received a one-off cash transfer.



### 3

major assessment exercises helped to better understand community conditions and vulnerabilities. Findings from an assessment based on a survey of 3,000 communities confirmed that Herat Province hosts the largest population of internally displaced people in the country and highlighted significant service gaps. Some 90 per cent of communities lack emergency services, and nearly one quarter have no communication networks. Assessment results were disseminated to partners and published online, including an [analytical report](#), a [population and mobility report](#) and [interactive dashboards](#), where users can filter results by district for more specific data.

A [household-level multisectoral needs assessment](#) of nine vulnerable communities in Kushk District, based on a representative sample of 244 households, showed deteriorating access to water and sanitation, weakened livelihoods and high debt levels, constrained health and education access, and persistent shelter damage, with safe drinking water, cash assistance and livelihoods emerging as top priority needs.

A third round of community-level exercises in Herat Province assessed 3,194 communities, with data collection completed on 31 December 2025. Data are currently undergoing cleaning and analysis.

### 133

women and 3 adolescent girls in nine villages participated in awareness sessions on women's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and safe access to complaint mechanisms such as AWAAZ 410. Nine women's voice groups were created, providing dedicated spaces for 54 women to engage in community decision-making and fostering a strong sense of agency. A total of 58 women in need of psychosocial support were referred to PSS sessions.

### 400

people were reached by an awareness campaign on grievance redressal, with 27 grievance cases recorded and a 95 per cent resolution rate. Cases included concerns on beneficiary selection, material quality and shelter entitlements. Orientations on PSEA were delivered to 220 community members who participated in DRM and earthquake-resilient construction training and to 400 shelter beneficiary households (including 83 women-headed households). Sessions empowered community members to understand their rights, uphold codes of conduct and report protection concerns confidentially.

### 90

individuals (60 masons, 30 engineers) were trained on vernacular housing techniques before being engaged in shelter construction and retrofitting. For the 60 masons, all men, hands-on technical capacity-building covered earthquake-resilient construction and retrofitting methods and proper material selection. The 30 engineers, including 7 women, were trained on DRM and vernacular housing techniques for both construction and retrofitting. This training enhanced knowledge of structural assessments, construction quality control and earthquake-resilient design principles, using specialized curricula and testing tools.



## 220

community members, including 130 women participated in training on DRM, covering issues related to hazards, disasters, vulnerability, risk, prevention, preparedness, coping and response capacity. Specific attention to earthquakes and risk reduction measures included earthquake-resistant building techniques. Pre- and post-test comparisons indicated improved understanding of seismic risks and practical mitigation strategies.

To institutionalize community-based disaster management, the project facilitated the formation of nine DRM committees, one in each village, to lead local risk prevention, preparedness and response, as well as nine women’s DRM subcommittees to enable women’s participation in these processes. These bodies conducted awareness sessions reaching 238 community members (148 men and 90 women). The provision of DRM kits to the committees strengthened preparedness and response capacities. The committees are engaged in the systematic documentation of their activities, which supports the sustainability of DRM actions.

UN-Habitat Country Programme Manager for Afghanistan stands with Abu Ali Sina school students in Herat Province after earthquakes damaged the school, which was rebuilt with STFA support. © UN-Habitat/Shirin Nikzad



## UNSFA Priority Area 2: Economic Opportunities and Resilient Livelihoods

Output

2



Livelihoods, businesses and the local economy can recover, more sustainable and more resilient to instability.

### Output 2 benefitted

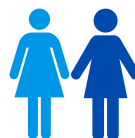
Number of Beneficiaries

4,918



Number of Women

1,789



36.4%

8

infrastructure projects generated immediate income opportunities for vulnerable households through labour-intensive models using local resources.

25,560

workdays were created, engaging 1,779 workers, including 146 women and 26 persons with disabilities. These opportunities were particularly critical in earthquake-affected communities where livelihoods had been severely disrupted. Infrastructure rehabilitation contributed not only to physical recovery but also to job creation, skills development and social protection. All workers received fair wages and worked under conditions aligned with decent work standards, while gaining practical experience and exposure to improved occupational safety and health practices. The intervention emphasized inclusion by providing equitable opportunities for women and persons with disabilities to participate meaningfully in public works.

24

in-class and on-the-job training sessions targeting contractors, site engineers, workers and community members enhanced employability and implementation quality. Sessions trained 562 individuals, including 33 women, on decent work principles, occupational safety and health, and labour-based implementation methods. These efforts improved the quality and safety of infrastructure delivery while strengthening local workforce capacity and institutional knowledge. The inclusion of women in technical and field-based training reflected a deliberate effort to promote gender-responsive recovery and increase women's participation in infrastructure and livelihoods initiatives.



## 13

small and medium-sized enterprises in sectors key to recovery, including carpet weaving, handicrafts, tailoring and saffron, were supported with technical and financial assistance. This created 234 jobs for women, returnees, internally displaced people and host community members. The support served as a bridge between emergency recovery and sustainable economic development, strengthening enterprise resilience, revitalizing local value chains, and promoting inclusive and sustainable business growth.

## 34,261

paid-labour days were generated through cash-for-work activities, reaching 1,459 workers, above the planned number of 1,260. This initiative injected critical cash into the local economy while ensuring strong gender inclusion, as 450 women were employed, surpassing the target of 378.

## 1,080

women-headed households received a comprehensive poultry support package, including 15 birds (13 hens, 2 cocks), feed and equipment, along with practical training on poultry husbandry. This initiative benefitted over 7,500 family members, creating a new and sustainable source of income and improving household nutrition.

## 600

people (including 126 women) gained short-term employment in 20 villages through 30 organized work groups that carried out 56 consecutive days of rehabilitation efforts, resulting in visible improvements in community access, mobility and agricultural capacity. The intervention restored damaged roads, kariz systems, protection walls and debris-affected public spaces, reestablishing vital lifelines that support market access, schooling and safe movement. The rehabilitation of water systems, particularly kariz cleaning and well digging, improved crop irrigation and household water availability, helping to prevent secondary displacement due to agricultural loss.

All participants received personal protective equipment and worked under structured supervision, improving safe work practices in an environment where occupational safety standards are often limited. Skilled workers embedded within each work group supported on-the-job learning, contributing to incremental improvements in construction skills and local problem-solving.

Digitized payment of wages through MPaisa mobile money increased transparency, security and financial inclusion in remote rural communities. Households gained safe access to income during a fragile recovery period, while local markets saw increased liquidity. Cultural barriers were navigated through community consultations, transparent beneficiary selection and coordination with *de facto* authorities, allowing women to access income-earning opportunities.



Output

3



Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate and environment shocks and natural disasters.

Output 3 benefitted

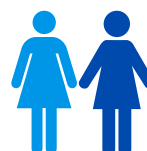
Number of Beneficiaries

21,123



Number of Women and Girls

9,347



44.3%

7,576

community members (3,765 men and 3,811 women) participated in structured awareness sessions on rainwater conservation, watershed management, disaster risk reduction, hygiene promotion and sustainable livelihoods. The formation of six community-based disaster risk reduction committees and six water-user committees created focal points for managing early warning systems, coordinating maintenance and promoting community resilience.

2,539

individuals received messages on PSEA. Complaint mechanisms (Awaaz 410 and hotlines) were established for safe reporting.

10,127

individuals in six villages benefitted from the construction of water harvesting and watershed management infrastructure, which improved water security, reduced erosion and enhanced climate adaptation. The physical works included 29 check-dams, five ponds and 23,000 units of terraces/trenches. Key changes to ensure functionality comprised the addition of 296 metres of plain cement concrete canal lining to prevent seepage; the installation of five screen boxes at pond inlets for water filtration; and an extension of the total combined check-dam length by 28 metres to maximize water capture.

A major modification was the conversion of 1,666 originally planned bench terraces into contour trenches, resulting in 1,335 terraces and 21,665 trenches to optimize land use and soil moisture retention. Solar-powered pumping systems were installed in two villages (Sanjari and Tanosh Beg) without gravity-fed water sources, supporting irrigation reliability.



## 9

villages with new DRM committees gained greater capacities for emergency responses, community alerts and evacuation support through the provision of early warning kits, solar lighting equipment, family tents and first-aid supplies. This marked an important shift towards community-led disaster preparedness and climate resilience.

## 400

households and representatives were trained on earthquake-resilient community housing, including 83 women from selected women-headed households.

## 224

destroyed homes were newly constructed and certified to meet minimum seismic safety standards

## 176

partially damaged homes were retrofitted or repaired and certified to meet minimum seismic safety standards

## 2,800

people regained access to safe, hazard-resistant and dignified housing, and reported improved mental well-being and reduced fear of structural collapse.

An owner-driven reconstruction approach empowered households to rebuild using conditional cash assistance, technical guidance and community-level support. Each household contributed labour and, in many cases, locally sourced materials (sand, stones or timber). Continuous on-site coaching, monitoring and quality assurance supported the reconstruction and retrofitting of shelters in accordance with technical standards. Demonstration shelters, such as one built in Muhajir Abad, served as live classrooms to train and guide local masons and household representatives. This hands-on approach enabled beneficiaries to internalize key techniques such as proper wall bonding, safe roof anchoring and techniques to retrofit damaged structures.

Shelter designs incorporated community inputs to ensure cultural appropriateness and affordability. The model used supports safety and longevity. It features a flexible and ductile structure that absorbs and dissipates seismic forces, in accordance with anti-seismic features and adapted vernacular techniques, minimizing the risk of collapse. Key features included:

- Shelter walls are built with brick masonry or stabilized compressed mud blocks, reinforced with galvanized gabion wire mesh bands and vertical ties to resist seismic forces.
- Flexible joints are included to absorb earthquake energy and minimize structural damage.
- The stonemasonry foundation distributes the building's weight evenly, reducing the risk of foundation failure during seismic events.

- All newly constructed shelters have integrated bathrooms and smokeless kitchens.

The inclusion of smokeless kitchens and private bathrooms addressed gender-specific health and hygiene concerns. Women beneficiaries consistently expressed appreciation for these additions.

Each household received cash assistance in tranches, aligned with physical construction milestones and the type of support: \$3,064 for new construction, distributed in five tranches, and \$1,000 for retrofitting, distributed in three tranches. Disbursements were conducted transparently, with all transactions monitored by PUNOs, implementing partners and community witnesses.

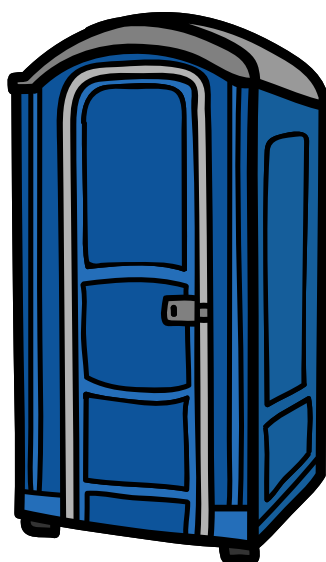
**A safe place with room to hope**

The intervention restored a sense of normalcy and safety by reconstructing homes. Community members also gained a renewed sense of agency, ownership and pride.

One beneficiary, Mina, a 40-year-old widow, said: “This project gave me hope. It gave my children a safe place to sleep.”

## 122

latrines were constructed for the most vulnerable households (including 22 women-headed households) among those already supported through shelter construction. They included six latrines accessible to people with disabilities. Cash assistance in two installments supported construction of the latrines, which improved sanitation and the health, safety and dignity of community members.



## UNSFA Priority Area 3: Social Cohesion, Inclusion, Gender Equality, Human Rights and Rule of Law

Output

4



Social cohesion, respect for human rights – including, in particular, the rights of women and girls and access to justice are progressively strengthened at the local level – contributing to greater community resilience.

14

LICs supported by PUNOs created tailored, localized approaches to overcome restrictions on women’s participation. They played crucial roles in maintaining engagement with women and girls and including their needs, such as access to services, in project activities.

7

CAP reports were formally consolidated and shared with PUNOs to encourage aligned follow-up and resource mobilization. In line with the CAPs, the project achieved several tangible results, directly contributing to community priorities such as road rehabilitation, debris removal and the restoration of water systems.





# Delays in Implementation, Challenges, Lessons Learned & Best Practices

A worker displays a jacket produced at an STFA-supported garment production company in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal



# Challenges

## 1

Restrictions on women in community activities: Overcoming these constraints required engaging community leaders and elders to encourage women's involvement. A female community liaison officer facilitated outreach, allocating segregated workspaces and introducing home-based tasks such as gabion basket weaving. These measures led to the recruitment of women workers as 8.2 per cent of the total workforce for infrastructure projects, slightly below the 10 per cent minimum target.

## 2

Delays in infrastructure activities resulted from reduced productivity during holidays and intermittent adverse weather conditions. The seasonal availability of labour varied; as construction activities progressed into the spring agricultural season, some beneficiary families became preoccupied with farming, slowing construction and requiring additional sensitization, support and monitoring by field teams. Another issue was the limited availability of quality stone and masonry materials, which required finding alternative sources, including outside the province.

## 3

Technical and design constraints required design modifications, including in response to excavation difficulties created by the project area's hard soil and the lack of gravity-fed water sources in two villages. Responses to these challenges comprised solar-powered pumping systems, screen boxes for water filtration, an extension of check-dam length, the addition of canal lining, and a reduced number of terraces and trenches based on feasibility and community recommendations.

## 4

An unexpected outbreak of infectious bronchitis virus affected a portion of the poultry stock immediately following distribution. The implementing partner brought in a qualified veterinarian and immediately replaced all 4,288 affected poultry using internal resources, ensuring all beneficiaries received the full support package. This demonstrated robust project quality assurance and quick adaptability to address issues encountered.

## 5

The Iran emergency required diverting significant human resources to respond to the critical needs of more than 20,000 arrivals per day on the border. This initially slowed the review and approval of cash assistance, requiring an extension to complete the initiative.



## Lessons Learned

1

Proactive and coordinated engagement with the *de facto* authorities based on close PUNO collaboration is critical to reinforce alignment with local requirements and mitigate operational risks and delays. Gender-sensitive data collection should be deliberately designed at the project outset, with diversified informant networks that do not rely solely on male community representatives.

2

Engaging local shuras and FHAGs in the recruitment and support of midwives improved community ownership and security for female staff. Where FHAGs were active, the retention of staff and community trust were significantly higher. While FHHs primarily deliver RMNCAH services, midwives increasingly encountered cases of stress, trauma and gender-based violence, especially after the earthquake. This highlighted the need to further integrate psychological first aid and basic psychosocial support in training FHH midwives.

3

Earlier and more comprehensive site assessments should consider water sources and types as well as topography given the potential impact on project design, and define alternative systems, such as solar energy, from the outset.

4

Mobile payment contingency planning is important in low-connectivity environments, including pre-verification of SIM ownership, network mapping and alternative payment windows.

### Best practices included:

- Integrating infrastructure rehabilitation with livelihood and small and medium-sized enterprise support to create a stronger recovery pathway, linking short-term employment with longer-term economic opportunities
- Delivering technical training alongside project implementation, particularly on labour-based methods, occupational safety and health, and decent work, to improve the quality and safety of infrastructure delivery and build long-term community and contractor capacity
- Community-based monitoring and feedback allowing communities to report access barriers, referral challenges and service gaps in real time, and directly informing adjustments in outreach scheduling and service prioritization
- Training engineers through a tailored field session to strengthen the alignment of engineering knowledge with rural realities

### Responding to climate risks across interventions

Recovery interventions consistently followed principles of environmental protection, a best practice in an area highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. Interventions integrated both climate mitigation and adaptation. Examples include the protection of traditional kariz, use of local construction materials in shelter construction, promotion of saffron for business development as a local drought-resistant and high-value crop, and the installation of solar power.

## Risk Analysis

Most risks anticipated during the project's design, particularly those related to access restrictions, gender limitations and connectivity, materialized but were successfully managed through adaptive approaches and strong field-level coordination.

A prolonged dry season delayed a pistachio tree plantation initiative, underscoring that climate data must inform project planning. High daytime temperatures and soil dryness were unsuitable for planting and would have compromised sapling survival. This risk was mitigated through close coordination with the implementing partner, local authorities and the donor to select a more suitable period, corresponding to the dormancy of the plants and increasing the survival rate.

A directive by the *de facto* Ministry of Education to transfer all school reconstruction project budgets to local non-governmental organizations presented a financial risk. This resulted in challenges in obtaining authorization, which severely affected the plan to construct six schools. After one contractor cancelled a contract due to the delayed approval and market price increases, a workplan adjustment from six to five schools was approved and some funds were required. Funds were reimbursed to STFA accordingly.

## Qualitative Assessment

The Post-Earthquake Recovery and Resilience-Building in Herat project demonstrated strong results in integrating infrastructure rehabilitation with livelihoods and enterprise development. High-impact, inclusive livelihood support bridged emergency needs and early recovery. It restored essential community infrastructure and generated income for earthquake-affected households, contributing directly to community resilience, stability and socioeconomic recovery. Capacity-building on labour skills, operational safety and health standards and social safeguards strengthened local institutional and workforce capacity.

Durable shelter solutions mitigated the potential impacts of future natural disasters and seismic movements, contributing to immediate physical protection and a sense of security, comfort and overall quality of life. In tandem, cash assistance enabled highly vulnerable households to address their most urgent and unmet needs, such as food, essential household items and critical medical care, allowing families to overcome chronic shortages and stabilize their daily living conditions. This reduced protection risks, including for women-headed households, persons with disabilities and elderly individuals with no income. Surveys found that 92 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the support received.

Despite a challenging context, the project achieved a high level of success in safeguarding the participation, dignity, health and psychosocial well-being of women and girls. Strong partnerships, a gender-sensitive and culturally adapted approach, and integrated health and PSS service models were among the key drivers. Women participated as workers, trainees and beneficiaries of skills development activities. Timely, high-quality data collection strengthened decision-making. The programme produced an integrated evidence base on displacement patterns, service gaps, infrastructure needs and climate-related vulnerabilities.

The value of these assessments was reflected in their extensive uptake by partners, with over 82,000 downloads of datasets and reports, and wide use of dashboards and analytical tools to inform operational planning.

Data products informed the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and directly supported returnee monitoring, durable solutions and area-based planning across PUNOs. Joint engagements through working groups, donor briefings and technical coordination ensured that assessment findings were translated quickly into programmatic action. Close coordination with the Afghanistan Natural Disaster Management Authority was central to maintaining uninterrupted field access for data collection, enabling rapid deployment of assessment teams. Weekly information sharing with provincial authorities throughout the year proved to be an effective mechanism for ensuring operational continuity. This approach has become a best practice for subsequent rounds.

A strong social mobilization process throughout the project secured the buy-in of communities and community leaders. Multiple interventions applied community engagement and accountability mechanisms, including beneficiary feedback and outreach initiatives, to ensure continued relevance and cultural acceptance. Community awareness was raised on project objectives, approaches, gender-responsive governance and community accountability.

Findings from seven CAPs shared with all PUNOs early in the year guided partner alignment with community-identified priorities in subsequent interventions. The results demonstrated how the CAP process has become a practical tool for community-driven planning, enabling local voices to influence multiagency investment and ensuring that recovery priorities reflect community needs.

One particular success was the mobilization of complementary resources to address CAP priority needs, including the rehabilitation of a water point and secondary school. CAPs also steered the provision of support for poultry raising as part of water harvesting and watershed management activities. Community members consistently highlighted the significant potential of egg-laying chickens as a sustainable source of income and a crucial means of economically empowering women and their families. Egg production offers a relatively low-cost entry point into livelihood generation, requiring minimal initial investment compared to other agricultural or entrepreneurial ventures.

By advancing community-driven planning, strengthening social cohesion structures and engaging earthquake-affected communities in shaping their own recovery, the programme encouraged a shift from project-led decision-making to genuinely community-owned prioritization processes. The owner-driven approach to rebuilding and restoring shelters ensured that beneficiaries were not passive recipients but active participants: trained, consulted and empowered. This strengthened local ownership, accountability and resilience. Masons trained by the programme have since begun using vernacular housing techniques in neighbouring areas for income generation, supporting local recovery and skills transfer.

Local DRM committees have institutionalized local risk prevention, preparedness and response. They have improved social cohesion by becoming platforms for resolving disputes, coordinating local actions and upholding accountability. Community members trained on responding to natural hazards have already led household preparedness efforts and shared early warning principles and evacuation techniques with their families, showing how capacity-building catalyses knowledge transfer.



Programme performance was strengthened through effective collaboration among PUNOs and sustained engagement with communities and *de facto* authorities. Strong coordination among PUNOs built on regular information-sharing, joint planning and the organization of joint field visits. This helped to develop synergies and maximize impacts, including through service referrals and combined support on disaster risk reduction. Third-Party Monitoring findings from 2025 independently confirmed that the project's integrated recovery model generated strong and sustained benefits across shelter, livelihoods, social cohesion, and disaster preparedness. Monitoring highlighted high beneficiary satisfaction, effective targeting of vulnerable populations, and broad community acceptance of interventions designed through participatory and owner-driven approaches. Evidence from field visits suggests that the combination of infrastructure rehabilitation, localized capacity-building, and livelihood support created reinforcing pathways toward resilience rather than isolated short-term gains.

TPM observations further underscored that programmes embedding technical oversight, community accountability, and adaptive implementation mechanisms were better positioned to preserve quality standards and strengthen long-term sustainability. In particular, investments in local skills transfer, community structures, and risk awareness contributed to durable outcomes that extended beyond direct beneficiaries. These findings position the programme as a replicable model for post-crisis recovery that balances immediate relief with long-term resilience-building in complex and hazard-prone environments.

The programme was guided throughout by the UN Principled Approach and the Afghanistan Coordination Group principles, emphasizing inclusion, gender-responsiveness, local ownership and climate resilience. Programme design, implementation, risk management and stakeholder engagement consistently reflected these principles.

## Partnerships

# 1

The scale of the disaster in Herat Province required strategic coordination to effectively link a humanitarian response to recovery. A collaborative and unified framework guided the project, leveraging the specialized strengths of the seven PUNOs. This cohesive strategy kept efforts both aligned and complementary, maximizing impact across key regional priorities, such as social and productive sectors. Such collaboration brings greater value to end-users, on a larger scale, delivering higher programmatic returns on investments.

# 2

Ultimately, collaboration contributes to higher-quality programmatic interventions (i.e., tapping more effectively into the advantages of a greater division of labour); greater cost-effectiveness in the use of limited programmatic resources (reducing unnecessary duplication); and improved knowledge generation and dissemination. Such benefits, in turn, contribute to improved coverage (outreach to end users/end-beneficiaries) and greater socioeconomic impacts (i.e., higher returns on programmatic investments) as well as greater sustainability and improved advocacy (i.e., helping to communicate more effectively, and with one voice, with other stakeholders).



# 3

Key partnerships with district authorities, community elders and religious leaders supported access negotiations, community acceptance and the protection of women’s participation throughout 2025. This local buy-in helped to deepen alignment with community-identified priorities and equitable participation across demographic groups. Implementing partners guided localized, community-driven responses and helped facilitate community trust and service uptake.

# 4

**Private sector engagement:** Private sector engagement was strengthened through targeted outreach and high-level meetings in Dubai. These efforts secured commitments from financial institutions and business partners to enhance MSME access to finance, lower operational costs and open new international market channels.

Students at a school rehabilitated by STFA after it was destroyed in the earthquake wave their hands in appreciation of the support in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal





# Annexes

A woman displays a carpet at an STFA-supported carpet weaving centre in Herat Province. © STFA/Mohammad Omar Kamal

## Annex I. Indicator-based Performance Tracker

(The figures in brackets are female figures.)

Annex I - Indicator-based Performance Review	Unit	Baseline	Target	Progress	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
<b>Output 1. Essential services and community infrastructure - including for health, agriculture and energy supply - are functional, sustained and expanded to meet different needs of women and men.</b>						
1a. Number of people that have benefitted from UN-supported essential services and/or new/rehabilitated infrastructure, disaggregated by type of service and sex.	Households	0		158 (17)		PUNO reports
	Other	0		136 (136)		PUNO reports
	People	0	6,000 (6,000)	89,592 (72,775)		PUNO reports
1d. Number of functional, UN-supported, facilities providing basic health assistance (including basic health assistance services for women and girls)	Facilities/Infrastructure	0	5 (0)			PUNO reports
1b. Number of people that have benefitted from UN-supported maternal/reproductive health care services (health)	Facilities/Infrastructure	0	7 (0)	7		PUNO reports
	People	0	20,000 (16,500)	54,188 (46,284)		PUNO reports
1f. Number of enabling initiatives implemented or knowledge products produced.	Knowledge products	0	4	14		PUNO reports
<b>Output 2. Livelihoods, businesses and local economy are able to recover and are more resilient to instability</b>						
2b. Number of people who have benefitted from newly-created income-generation opportunities, disaggregated by sex, age and province	People	0	1,080 (1,080)	1,680 (1,206)		PUNO reports
2b.1. Number of people who have benefitted from productive employment through cash-for-work schemes (at least 30 per cent women; 50 per cent youth)	People	0	1,260 (378)	3,238 (583)		PUNO reports
2f. Number of MSMEs that benefit through financial capital support, training and/or other forms of asset support, disaggregated by women-led and men-led MSMEs	MSMEs	0		13 (13)		PUNO reports

Annex I - Indicator-based Performance Review	Unit	Baseline	Target	Progress	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target	Source of Verification
<b>Output 3. Communities have improved infrastructure, access to water and preparedness mechanisms to protect farm-based livelihoods and cope with climate shocks and natural disasters</b>						
3a. Number of districts with functional early warning systems and other preparedness mechanisms for climate shocks and natural disasters	<i>Districts</i>	0	1	1	Access became increasingly challenging as provincial authorities in Herat imposed additional restrictions on the participation of female staff and beneficiaries	PUNO reports
3b. Number of people who acquired knowledge and skills on disaster preparedness (including explosive hazard awareness) and climate-resilient livelihoods (at least 30 per cent women)	<i>People</i>	0	7,560 (3,780)	8,196 (4,024)		PUNO reports
3d. Number of people that benefit from rehabilitated and/or newly constructed disaster-resilient community infrastructure and nature-based solutions	<i>Households</i>	0		400		PUNO reports
	<i>People</i>	0	7,560 (3,780)	12,927 (5,323)		PUNO reports



## Annex II. Stories from the Field

### A Young Returnee Finds Dignity Building a Road



Abdul Hakim working on a road in Herat Province. © ILO

Aziz Ahmad, a young returnee in Baghcha Abdul Hakim village, Herat Province, is the eldest son in a family of 10. Aziz has been financially responsible for his elderly parents and seven younger siblings since he was a teenager.

Unable to finish school, Aziz repeatedly migrated to Iran in search of work. He endured difficult conditions and was deported multiple times, but the desperate need to feed his family kept pushing him back across the border.

In early 2025, that cycle of forced migration finally broke. Aziz was hired to work on a 2.19-kilometre rehabilitation project for a village road in his own community. The initiative was launched by the joint project.

Aziz was engaged as an unskilled worker, and he appreciated the value the job gave him. “We didn’t need personal connections or favours. Everyone filled out the same forms, and we were chosen based on our need to work.” Aziz said.

“For someone like me, who never had such opportunities before, this means a lot; it made me feel seen and respected.”

Though the rehabilitated road only stretches 2 kilometres, its impact on the village is significant. It reduces travel time, lowers transportation costs and eliminates stagnant water and heavy dust.

While the roadwork provided short-term employment, it sparked something that had long been missing in Aziz’s life: a reason to stay home.

“For a long time, I only thought about survival,” he said. “But after this job, I feel more motivated to find work in Afghanistan and stay with my family. It may take time, but it’s a start.”



## Breaking the Pay Gap for a Working Mother



For 12 years, Gul Afroz, a 46-year-old widow from Khwaja Qasim Village in Herat Province, has been the sole provider for her seven children. To put food on the table and keep her children in school, she took on any manual labour she could find.

“Despite doing the same work as men, I was always paid less,” Gul Afroz remarked. “Gender inequality is a reality in remote villages like ours. Over time, I learned to accept it.”

That reality shifted when she attended a local community meeting that introduced her to a new village infrastructure project funded by STFA. The officer explained the recruitment process and emphasized a strict policy: The project offered equal pay for equal work, guaranteeing a daily wage of 450 Afghanis (\$7) for all workers, regardless of gender.

“When I heard I would be paid the same as the men, I was shocked,” Gul Afroz recalled. “I immediately filled out the application form to join.”

Unlike past jobs that severely strained her health, she was assigned manageable duties such as site cleaning, material curing and general support work. With her earnings, Gul Afroz bought new clothes for her children for Eid, something she had not been able to afford in years. She also purchased food supplies for the months ahead.

Although she had to leave school after the third grade, Gul Afroz always hoped for a world where women were paid fairly for their labor. With this project, that concept became a reality.



## A 9-Year-Old Returns to a Safe Classroom



Sunbul writing on blackboard inside her classroom in Herat Province. © UN-Habitat

Chahar Dara High School was among the buildings in Herat Province severely damaged by the 2023 earthquake. That's where 9-year-old Sunbul (name changed) studies, a third-grader who dreams of becoming a teacher.

After the disaster, going to school became a source of fear for Sunbul yet she continued to attend. "There were cracks everywhere, in the walls, the roof, the hallways," she recalled. "It made me feel unsafe, and I could not focus on my lessons."

Herat's notoriously harsh "120-day winds" worsened the situation, leaving the students exposed. "The windows were broken," she said. "On windy days, dust filled the classroom, and I could hardly breathe."

The situation changed when the joint project started a school rehabilitation intervention. It repaired seven earthquake-damaged schools; five new ones are currently under construction. Together, these facilities will provide safer learning spaces for more than 16,800 boys and girls every year.

The project prioritized earthquake- and climate-resilient construction. It used local labour and materials, which created temporary jobs for affected families. It improved classroom ventilation and rebuilt unusable toilets and handwashing facilities to protect student health. The school rooftops were renovated using isogam (a moisture insulator) to prevent leaks.

"When I first entered the new classroom, it was pure delight," Sunbul said. "The walls were freshly painted, the fan was running, the lights worked and the blackboard looked perfect. It finally felt like a real classroom."

"Building disaster-resilient schools is a crucial step towards advancing the inclusive recovery process in earthquake-affected areas," commented Stephanie Loose, Country Programme Manager for UN-Habitat in Afghanistan. "Afghan girls are being excluded from many parts of public life. Through rebuilding schools and improving their living conditions, we stand with them and support their rights in every possible way."

## From Tents to Safe Homes



Nasser Mohammadi in front of his new home under construction in Herat Province. © UNHCR/Faramarz Barzin

During the 2023 earthquakes in Herat Province, 46-year-old Naser Mohammadi's house developed cracks, and the roof collapsed. Unable to afford repairs or alternative accommodation, Naser and his large family were forced to abandon the unstable structure and take shelter in makeshift tents.

This dire situation finally ended when the joint project selected Naser's family to receive a new, earthquake-resilient house. For a father struggling to support his family, the new home represented far more than just four walls.

"We will start our lives again in the new house," Naser said. "We will have a secure shelter, electricity thanks to solar panels, and peace of mind."

Naser's family is part of a much broader recovery effort that has constructed disaster-resilient housing units across Herat Province, delivering critical, long-term shelter to families who lost their homes in the earthquakes.



## Lifesaving Maternal Care Reaches an Earthquake-Hit Village

When 27-year-old Khadija arrived at the Fushkan Family Health House in Pashtun Zarghun District in Herat Province, she was in active labor. Living in a remote village, she had never visited a medical facility before.

This was her fourth pregnancy, but it would be her very first time receiving skilled maternal care.

Distance, poverty and lack of awareness had always kept Khadija away from routine check-ups. Her community was also heavily affected by the recent earthquakes in Herat, which damaged local infrastructure and made travelling to a hospital even more difficult.

To bridge this gap and ensure continuity of care in earthquake-affected areas, the joint project reinforced the local clinic. Improved facilities and the midwife's timely intervention helped Khadija safely deliver healthy twin baby girls.

She remained under observation until she was completely stable, and the newborns received their first vaccinations before the family returned home.

For an economically vulnerable family living far from a major hospital, the safe, professional delivery was a profound relief. “Saving the mother and the babies is the greatest gift for us,” her family shared.

The experience also shifted Khadija’s understanding of healthcare. Before leaving the clinic, she received counselling on the importance of antenatal care and how to recognize danger signs in pregnancy.

Knowing that complications are preventable has given her new confidence.



“I feel safer knowing that a midwife is available within our community,” Khadija said.

“I hope that the clinic will continue operating with the same dedicated midwife so that other women in our village can deliver safely.”

The need for these localized services is clear. In August 2025 alone, the STFA-supported Fushkan clinic served 1,270 people, including 1,148 women, managing safe births and providing routine family planning and postnatal care.

Keeping these facilities open, even in the aftermath of a crisis, means women do not have to face childbirth alone.



## Finally a Safe Place for Her Seven Children to Sleep



Halima with her children inside their new shelter in Herat Province. © UNDP

At 35, Halima is the sole provider for her seven children.

Since losing her husband to cancer, she has kept her family afloat by taking in sewing work, relying on her 14-year-old son and the occasional kindness of relatives to make ends meet in Kushk Robot Sangi District, Herat Province.

When a series of powerful earthquakes struck the region in October 2023, Halima’s home collapsed.

Left without shelter, the family of eight was forced to move into her brother-in-law’s house, living in crowded, stressful conditions.

Relief finally came through a newly established village shelter committee.

Recognizing her family’s severe vulnerability, local leaders selected Halima to participate in the post-earthquake recovery project funded by STFA.

Halima was empowered to oversee her own recovery. Over several months, she received just over \$3,000 in cash installments.

Under the technical guidance of structural engineers, she used these funds to purchase her own construction materials and manage the rebuilding of her house.

After months of displacement and uncertainty, Halima and her children finally gained access to a safe, earthquake-resilient place to call their own.

“I am deeply grateful that we’ve been given hope and a new beginning. This shelter means everything to my children and me.” Halima said.



## After Two Winters in a Tent, an Afghan Father Finally Brings His Family Home

Living with a speech disability, Ahmad has always struggled to find steady work. Four of his six children face similar challenges. His wife has supported the household by washing neighbours' clothes. Even before the earthquakes struck Herat Province in 2023, their lives were fragile. Afterward, the situation became critical. "When the earthquake severely damaged our home, we lost our sense of safety," Ahmad said.

For two years, the family spent freezing winters in thin tents and scorching summers in open gardens.

Their circumstances changed when the joint project selected them to receive technical and financial support to rebuild their home, using local materials reinforced with earthquake-resistant structural bands.

"We were supported step-by-step in reconstructing our house, and that made us feel this home truly belongs to us," Ahmad's wife said.

Today, their new shelter includes two rooms, an indoor cooking space and a private bathroom. A heater provides essential warmth, something they once went without. Ahmad's story reflects a broader recovery effort across the region that is making communities better prepared for the future.



Ahmad with his family in front of their shelter in Herat Province. © UNDP





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