

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Rapid Post-Distribution
Monitoring Survey

**Emergency cash
assistance to earthquake-
affected families caring for
children with disabilities**

Aleppo Governorate
UNICEF Syria - March 2023

UNICEF Syria

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Earthquake Emergency Cash Response

In collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, UNICEF is delivering emergency cash assistance to earthquake-affected families through the vertical and horizontal expansion of two Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) programmes:

- ➔ **Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme (CBNSP):** The programme provides unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance to help vulnerable families cover their basic needs during winter. The programme targets highly vulnerable families in urban and peri-urban slums, including those (i) headed by females and (ii) with persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses and/or orphans. When the earthquake happened, over 75,000 people were benefitting from the programme in Aleppo (9,507 families) and Hama (5,822 families).
- ➔ **Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities (ISPP - CWD):** The programme provides unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance to families caring for children with severe mental and/or physical disabilities. When the earthquake happened, over 11,000 people were benefitting from the programme in Aleppo (984 families) and Hama (864 families).

UNICEF emergency response consists in the provision of two rounds of cash assistance to vulnerable families to help them meet their basic needs and mitigate the economic shock created by the earthquake. The value of each transfer is SYP 1,540,000¹. Each payment is taking place at 6-8 weeks interval.

Vertical expansion: Cash-top ups to existing beneficiaries who have been affected by the earthquake.

Three criteria are used to determine eligibility: (i) the death or injury of one or more family members; (ii) damaged dwelling or loss of livelihood (assets and income); and (iii) displacement.

- ➔ In Aleppo, 100 per cent of the CBNSP caseload and 23 per cent of the CWD caseload were affected by the earthquake, or a total of 9,732 families (about 50,000 people²).
- ➔ In Hama, 36 per cent and 21 per cent of the CTBN and CWD caseloads were affected, respectively, or a total of 2,292 families (about 12,000 people).

Horizontal expansion: Cash assistance to new families who have been affected by the earthquake.

- ➔ **CBNSP:** Cash assistance to additional families who have been affected by the earthquake in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia. To avoid duplication of coverage among humanitarian partners, UNICEF is covering specific geographical areas where cash assistance will be provided to all families with children 0-17 years of age³.
- ➔ **CWD:** Cash assistance to families caring for children with severe disabilities who have been affected by the earthquake and who were either (i) previously enrolled in the programme or (ii) waiting to be enrolled.

UNICEF plans to reach 28,000 families (about 140,000 people) through the horizontal expansion of the CBNSP and ISSPP-CWD: 17,000 families in Aleppo (85,000 people); 6,000 families in Latakia (30,000 people); and 5,000 families in Hama (25,000 people).

1 Equivalent to US\$ 233 (Minimum Expenditure Basket of December 2022), using the exceptional exchange rate of SYP 6,600.

2 The average number of family members enrolled in the CBNSP is 5 while the average family members in the CWD programme is 6 (source: UNICEF PDM).

3 Geographical expansion of the programmes targets the following locations: (1) Aleppo: Jabal Saman sub-district (communities of Salheen, Kar adoudou, Assukari, and Tal azrzer); (2) Hama: (i) Hama city (community of Arba'een/ Fayhaa1); (ii) Ain AL Kroum sub-district (communities of Balluneh, Ein Elkorum, Shahta, Jras Castle, Mashta Elshalahmeh); and (iii) As-Suqaylabiyah sub-district (community of Aziziyeh/ Madiq Castle); and (3) Latakia: (i) Jablieh sub-district (communities of Al-Rmaileh, Al-Assaleh, Al-Fayd); and (ii) Al-Fakhoura sub-district (communities of Istamo, Kamyn).

I- Introduction

This report highlights the findings of the rapid Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey, which was conducted in Aleppo Governorate among families caring for children with disabilities (CWD) who have been affected by the earthquake and who have received emergency cash assistance to help them meet their basic needs and mitigate the economic shock created by the earthquake.

Families caring for children with disabilities were highly vulnerable prior to the earthquake.

Families benefitting from the Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities in Aleppo were facing multiple deprivations prior to the earthquake, especially female-headed families.

→ The baseline [PDM survey](#) conducted among families in January 2022 had indicated that the monthly expenditure (mean) of families was on average about 40 per cent lower than the monthly Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) required by a family to meet its basic needs. Income dependency was much higher among female-headed families, with more than 40 per cent relying on charity, borrowing, remittances and sale of assets compared to less than 10 per cent among male-headed families. Children with disabilities faced high level of exclusion: nearly 70 per cent had never attended school or received any other forms of education.

About a quarter of families were directly impacted by the earthquake, which exacerbated their vulnerabilities and poverty.

When the earthquake hit Aleppo on 6 February 2023, 984 families were benefitting from the programme. Three criteria were used to assess eligibility for the cash top-up:

1. Families with dead or injured members
2. Families with a damaged dwelling or loss of livelihood
3. Families that were displaced from their homes

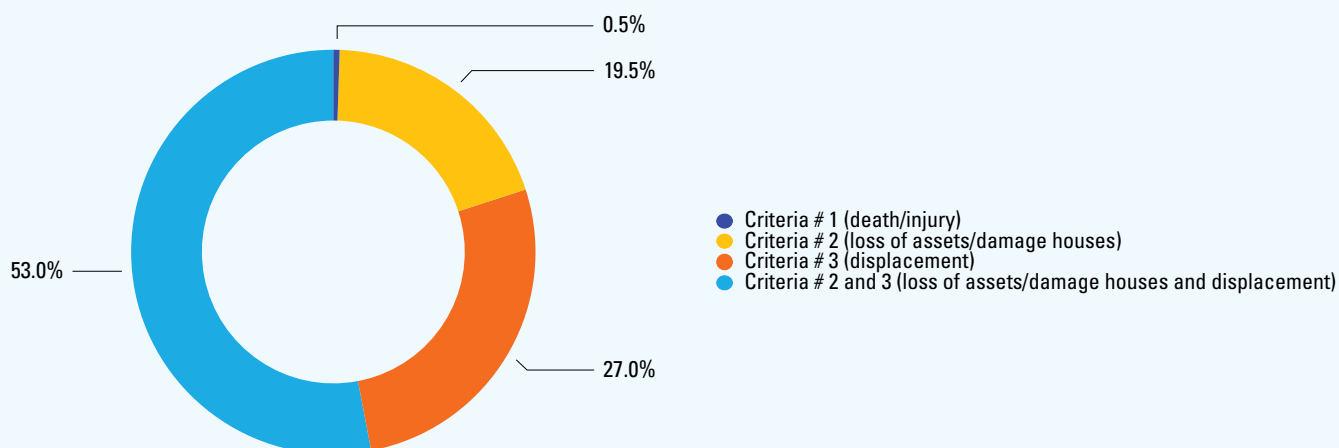
Of the 984 families enrolled in the programme, 223 families (or 23 per cent) were directly impacted by the earthquake (i.e. they met one or more of the above criteria).

The most significant impact was displacement and loss of assets/livelihoods.

Only one family reported a death/injury (less than 0.5 per cent) (Figure 1). Over half of families (53 per cent) were displaced and at the same time reported damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood. Twenty-seven per cent of families were displaced but did not report loss of livelihoods or damage to their home, while 19.5 per cent reported loss of livelihoods or house damage but were not displaced.

→ **All 223 families received their first cash top-up of SYP 1.54 million between 19 and 26 February (i.e. less than three weeks after the earthquake).**

Figure 1: Breakdown of families according to eligibility criteria



Rapid Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey

A rapid PDM survey was conducted to understand how families have used the cash top-up and to gauge their level of satisfaction with the emergency response. The survey **sample size was 100 per cent**.

Data were collected from all benefitting families from **5-11 March 2023** by eight enumerators using Kobo. Four of the 223 families refused to be interviewed, which amounts to a 2 per cent non-response rate. There was a total of 1,337 people in the 219 families surveyed.

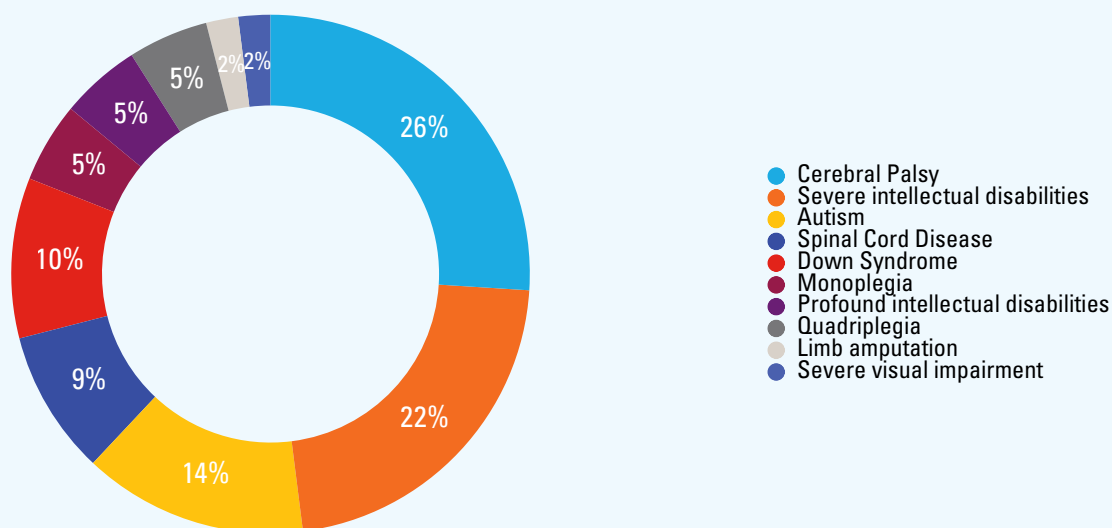
II- Profile of beneficiaries

Two thirds of family members were children.

The demographic composition of surveyed families was as follows: 33 per cent were girls; 35 per cent were boys; and 32 per cent were adults.

There were 223 children with disabilities in surveyed families (four families had two CWD). The main disabilities among children were as follows: 26 per cent had cerebral palsy, 24 per cent had severe intellectual disabilities; 14 per cent had autism; 10 per cent had Down syndrome; and 9 per cent had spinal cord diseases (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Medical profile of children with disabilities whose families benefitted from the cash top-up assistance



III- Highlights

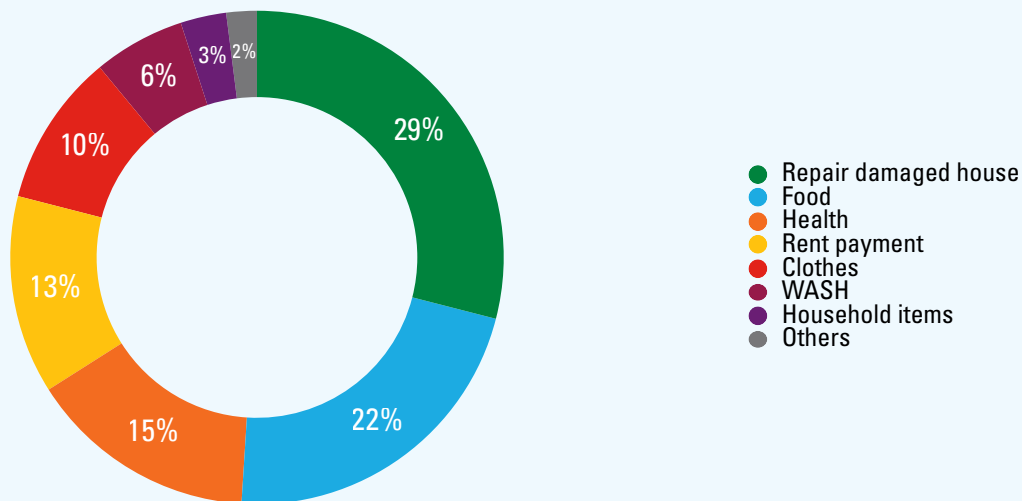
1 Over forty per cent of the cash was used to repair homes and pay rent

Surveyed families reported that 29 per cent of the cash was used to repair damaged dwellings, on average (Figure 3). The second biggest expenditure was food (22 per cent), followed by health (15 per cent), rent (13 per cent), clothes (10 per cent), and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) (6 per cent). Almost no cash was used for education (0.3 per cent).

2 There was a direct correlation between the eligibility criteria for the cash top-up and the use of the top-up

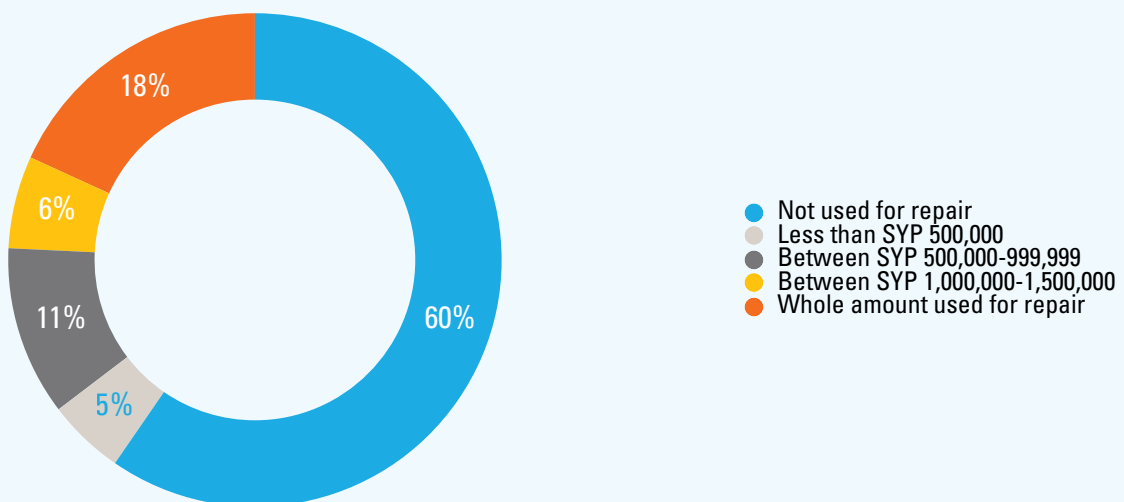
Families used the cash to address their specific needs, which varied based on their unique vulnerabilities. Families who were displaced but did not experience house damages/loss of livelihood spent twice as much on rent (18 per cent) as families who had damaged homes/livelihood losses but were not displaced (9 per cent). Similarly, families with damaged houses spent more on house repairs (35 per cent) than displaced families (24 per cent).

Figure 3: Use of cash assistance



Note: "Others" include education, debt repayment, energy and transportation costs.

Figure 4: Use of cash for house repairs



➔ **These findings confirm the importance of providing families with unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance.** If restrictions had been imposed on the use of the cash or if families had been given vouchers or in-kind support, their most important needs would have gone unmet. To mitigate the negative impacts of the earthquake, the survey confirms that families prioritize different areas, based on their specific vulnerabilities and needs.

3 Spending patterns before and after the earthquake were very similar

The [PDM survey](#) conducted before the earthquake (in January 2022) among families enrolled in the CWD programme in Aleppo indicated that the top expenditures with the regular cash assistance were for food (27 per cent), clothes (17 per cent) and health (14 per cent). While house repairs and rent were the top expenditures in the aftermath of the earthquake, the PDM survey shows that basic consumption patterns have not changed, with families still prioritizing food, health and non-food items. This is also illustrated by the fact that the use of the cash top-up to purchase food was consistent across eligibility criteria (21-23 per cent) while health expenditures remained very high among families caring for children with disabilities (Figure 5).

4 The use of cash to repair homes varied significantly across families

Nearly 60 per cent of families did not spend any cash on house repairs while about 20 per cent of families invested everything on the house (Figure 5). The use of cash for house repairs and rent appear consistent with family profiles. For instance the [PDM survey](#) conducted in January 2022 showed that around 40 per cent of families owned their residences, with 30 per cent renting and 25 per cent hosted by others.

5 One quarter of families used all cash support to address a single need

On average, families used the cash on 3.3 categories (i.e. areas in which the cash was spent on). This is relatively similar to the average number of categories families had used the regular cash transfer (3.7 categories in the January 2022 PDM survey). However, the use of the top-up in one category only was almost three times higher than observed with the regular cash transfer (24 per cent versus 9 per cent respectively) (Figure 6).

This indicates that the earthquake created sudden, major expenses that families had to meet. For instance, among families who spent all the cash on one field, 75 per cent went for home repairs, 13 per cent went for rent, and 12 per cent went for health.

Figure 5: Use of cash by eligibility criteria

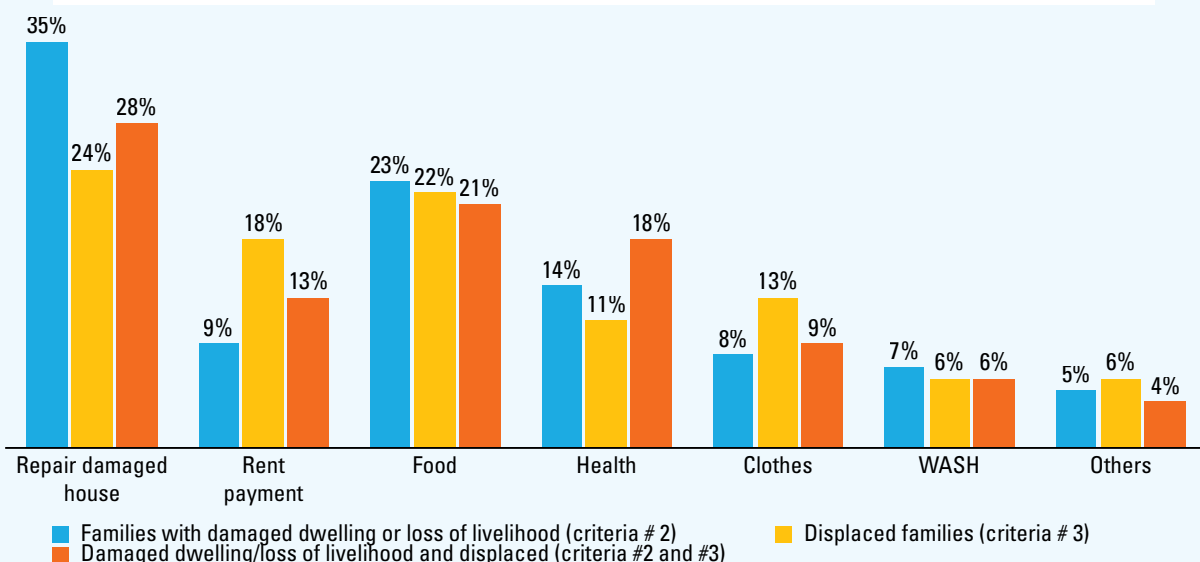
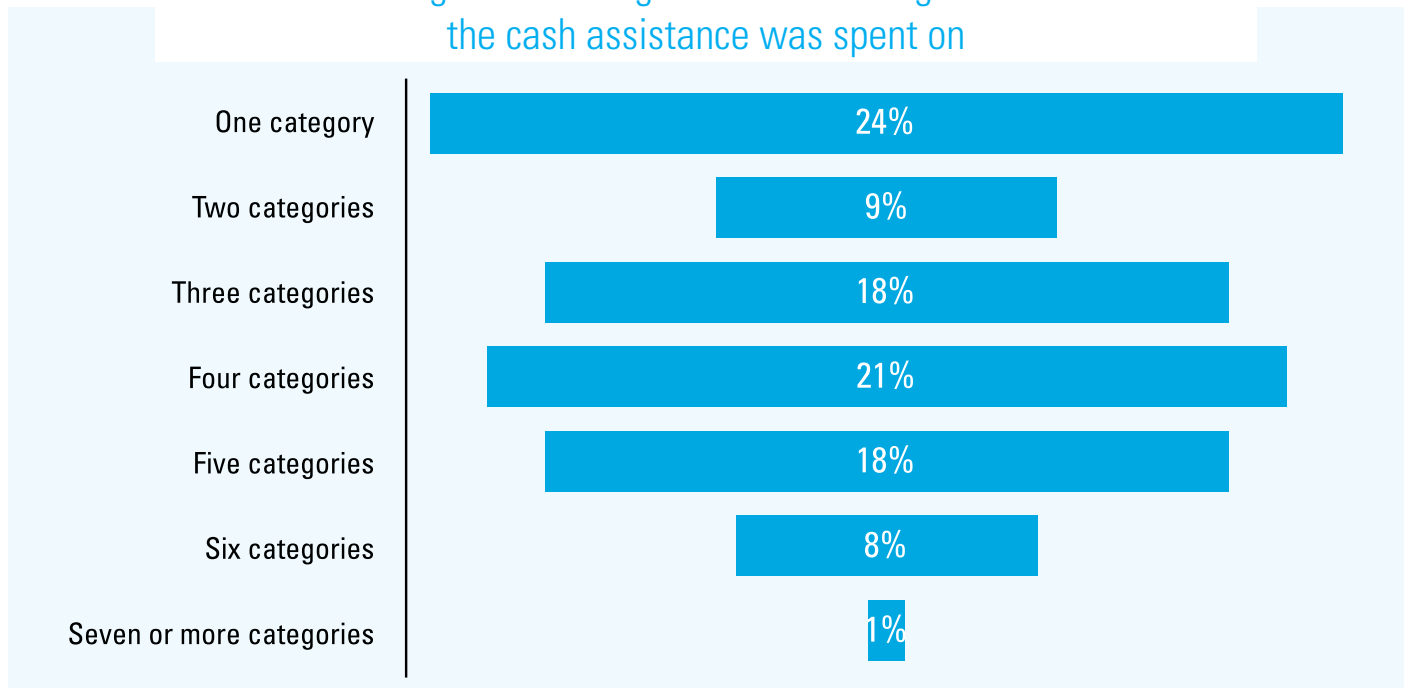


Figure 6: Average number of categories the cash assistance was spent on

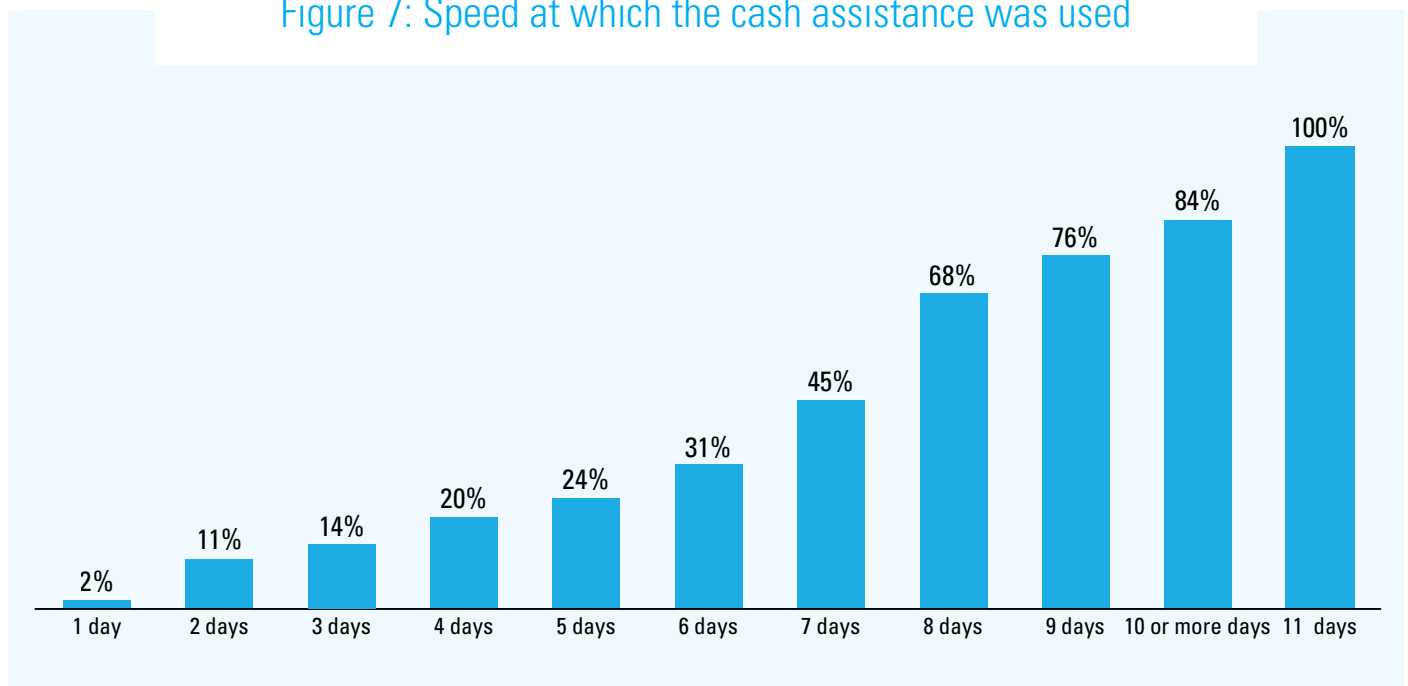


6 Most families spent the cash within 8 days

On average, families spent the cash in 7.2 days (Figure 7). Ten per cent of families reported using all the cash in just two days. The proportion of

families who reported spending all the cash increased to 20 per cent after four days, 32 per cent after 6 days and almost 70 per cent after 8 days.

Figure 7: Speed at which the cash assistance was used



7 High level of satisfaction with the cash response

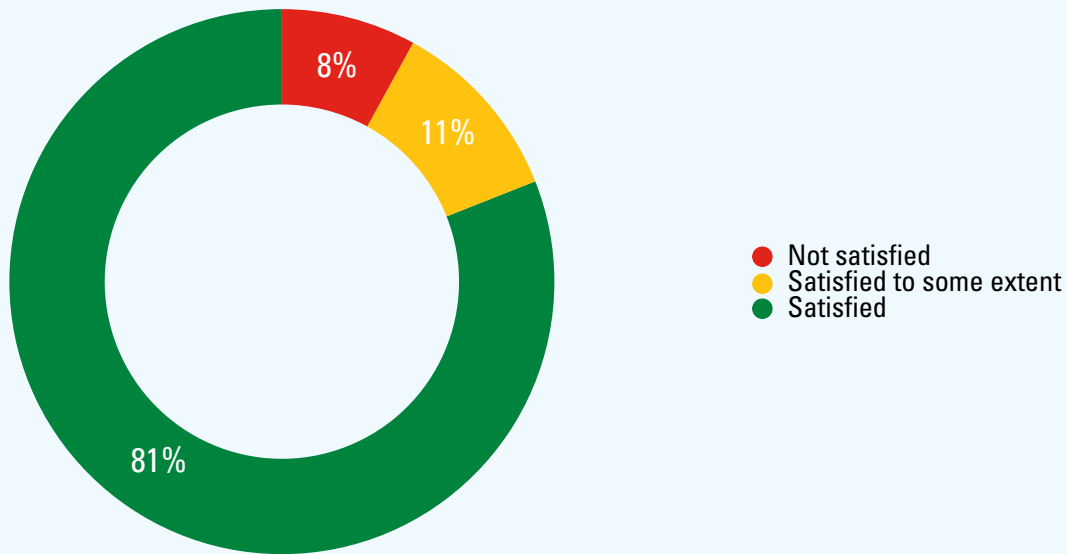
More than 80 per cent of beneficiaries reported that they were “satisfied” with the cash response (Figure 8). In contrast, eleven per cent reported they were satisfied to “some extent” while 8 per cent reported they were not satisfied.

IV- Expression of thanks and funding gap

UNICEF is grateful to the following partners and donors, which have provided early financial contributions to support the emergency cash response: (i) ECHO; (ii) UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund (EPF); (iii) UNICEF National Committees; and (iv) UK FCDO.

These early contributions have been instrumental to quickly respond to the needs of affected families. To scale up the cash response and reach 200,000 highly vulnerable people with two rounds of cash assistance in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia governorates in the period March-May 2023, UNICEF **urgently requires US\$ 22 million.**

Figure 8: Satisfaction with the emergency cash response



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