

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Rapid Post-Distribution
Monitoring Survey - Hama
Governorate

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

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For any enquires please contact:

Social Policy Section, UNICEF Syria Country Office
East Mazzeh, Al Shafiee St., Bldg. 2
P.O. Box 9413
Damascus, Syria
Tel: (+963) 11 619 1300

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. Prior to the earthquake, 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. Prior to the earthquake, over 25,000 people were benefitting from the programme in Aleppo (984 families) and Hama (3,094 families).

All families are receiving/will be receiving two rounds of cash assistance at 6-8 week intervals to help them meet their basic needs. The value of each transfer is SYP 1,540,000¹.

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 24 per cent of the CTBN and CWD caseloads were affected, respectively, or a total of 2,844 families (about 15,000 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.

In addition to the 12,500 families (62,000 people) targeted through the vertical expansion, UNICEF plans to reach an additional 28,000 families (about 140,000 people) are targeted 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).

1- Introduction

This report highlights the findings of the rapid Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) survey, which was conducted in Hama Governorate to assess how families affected by the earthquake have used the cash top-up they received.

The survey was conducted among families enrolled in the [Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities](#) who have been directly affected by the earthquake. When the earthquake hit Hama on 6 February 2023, 3,273 children with disabilities (CWD) living in 3,094 families were benefitting from the programme, which is implemented in partnership with ALBir Charity for Social Services.

Assessments conducted immediately following the earthquake revealed that among enrolled families, 748 families (or 24 per cent) were directly impacted by the earthquake and met one or more of the eligibility criteria for the cash top-up:

- Families with dead or injured members;
- Families with a damaged dwelling or loss of livelihood;
- Families that were displaced from their homes.

Following a verification exercise conducted together with ALBir Charity for Social Services, **all 748 families received their first cash top-up of SYP 1.54 million between 14 February and 16 March.**

Families who received the cash top-up were already highly vulnerable and facing multiple deprivations, especially female-headed families. [The baseline PDM survey](#) conducted among families in October 2021 indicated that:

- ➔ The monthly expenditure (mean) of families was on average less than half the monthly Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) required by a family to meet its basic needs.
- ➔ Unemployment rate was four times higher among females (55 per cent) than males (14 per cent).
- ➔ 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.

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 total number of affected families (or 748 families) was used as the sampling frame. Surveyed families were selected randomly according to a standard statistical formula to represent a five percentage-point confidence interval and an anticipated non-response rate of five per cent. **The sample size was 28 per cent, or 213 families.**

Data were collected from **24 March to 2 April 2023** by 15 enumerators using Kobo. Of families selected in the sample, three refused to be interviewed, or a **non-response rate of 1.5 per cent.**

2- Characteristics of survey population

There was a total of 1,260 people in the 210 families surveyed. **Thirteen per cent of families were headed by women and 87 per cent by men.** Fifty-three per cent of family members were children.

The demographic composition of surveyed families was as follows: 23 per cent were girls; 30 per cent were boys; and 47 per cent were adults. There were 226 children with disabilities in surveyed families (16 families had two CWD).

The most significant impact of the earthquake on surveyed families was displacement and loss of assets/livelihoods. About half of families (49 per cent) were displaced and at the same time reported damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood. The other half (also 49 per cent) reported damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood but were not displaced. Only 1 per cent of families had a death/injury and another 1 per cent were displaced but did not report damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood (Figure 1).

The main disabilities among children were as follows: 24 per cent had cerebral palsy; 23 per cent had quadriplegia; 14 per cent had monoplegia; 13 per cent had Down syndrome; 13 per cent has severe intellectual disabilities; and 11 per cent had autism (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Breakdown of families according to targeting criteria

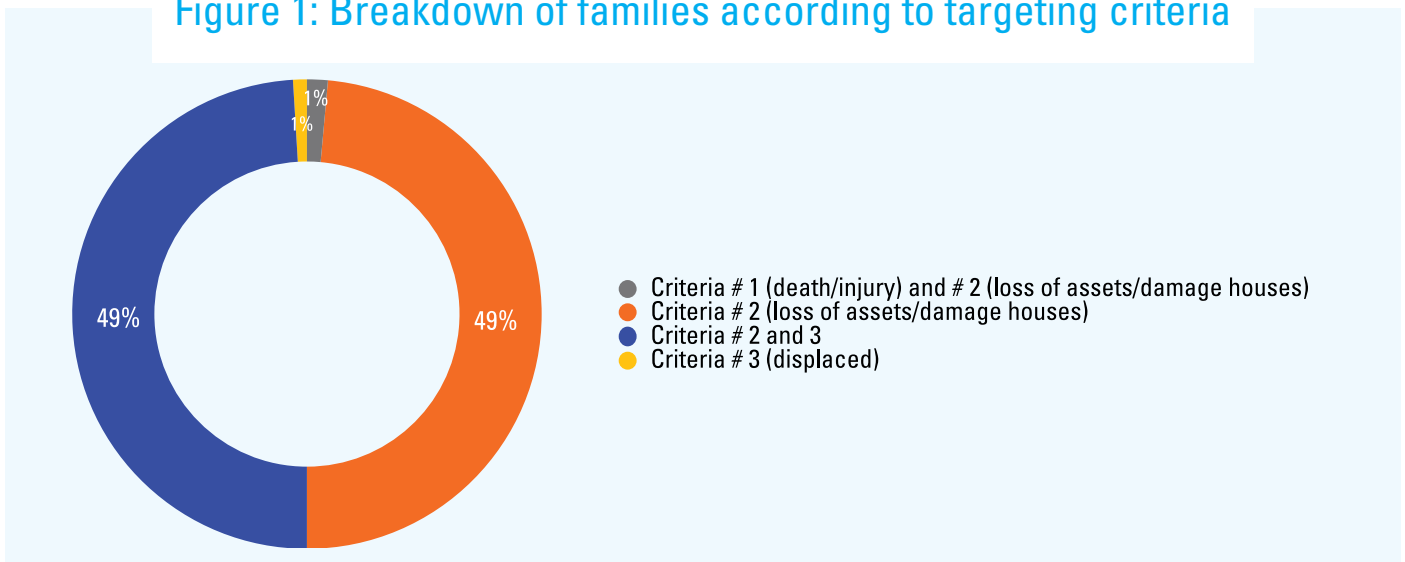
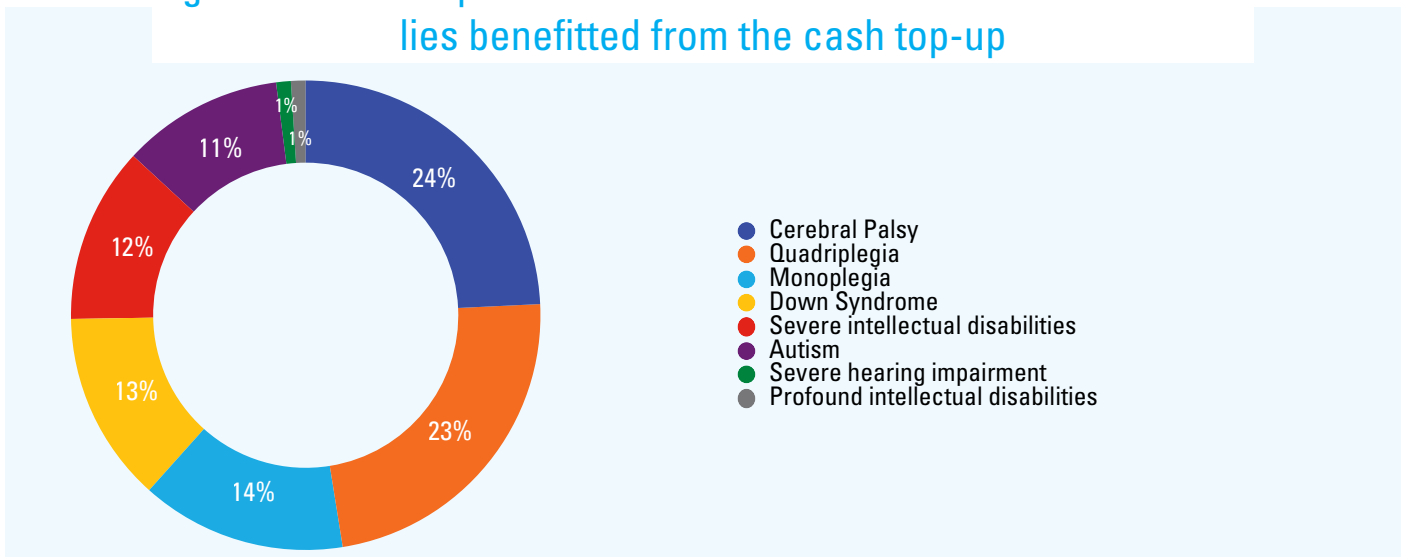


Figure 2: Medical profile of children with disabilities whose families benefitted from the cash top-up



3- Key highlights

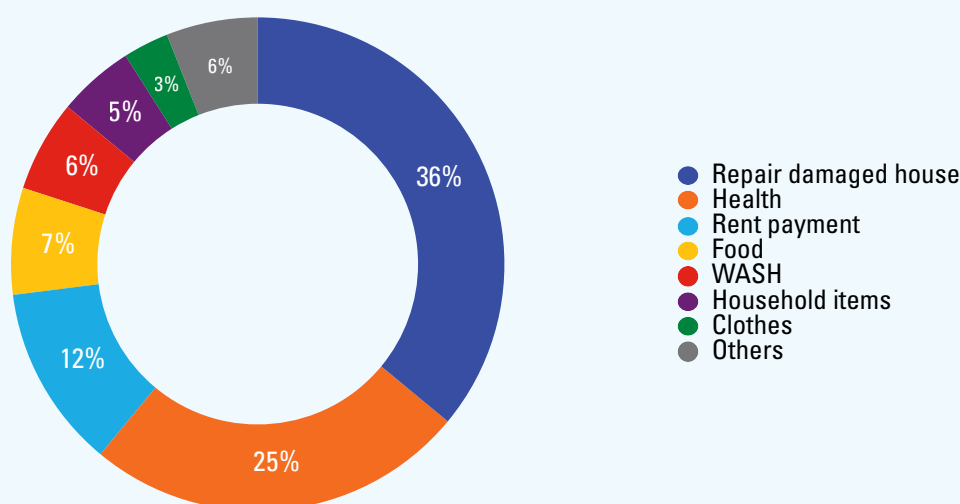
1 Almost half of the cash was used for home repairs and rent payment

The top expenditure with the cash top-up was for house repairs (36 per cent). The second largest expenditure was health (25 per cent), followed by rent (12 per cent), food (7 per cent), and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) (6 per cent). Almost no cash was used for education (0.3 per cent) (Figure 3).

2 The significant amount of cash used for health highlights the high level of pre-existing vulnerabilities among beneficiaries

One-quarter (25 per cent) of the cash assistance was used by families for health-related expenditures. This high level of expenditure is similar to that observed in the October 2021 [survey](#), which indicated that 26 per cent of the regular cash assistance was used on average by families for health.

Figure 3: Use of the cash assistance



Note: “Others” include education, debt repayment, energy, assistive device, transportation costs.

Almost half of the top-up was used for home repairs and rent (48 per cent), indicating that the assistance was used to address new humanitarian needs directly resulting from the earthquake.

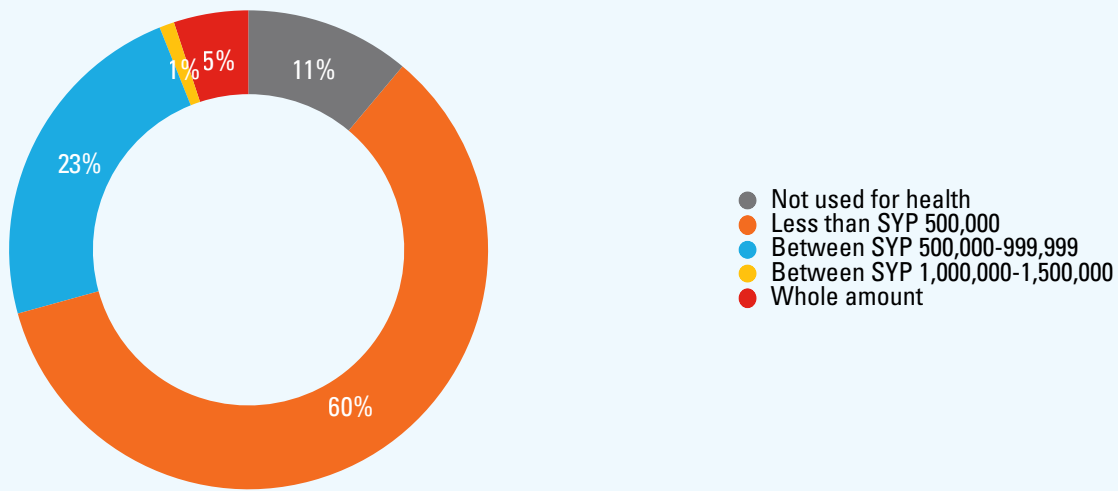
The [baseline survey](#) conducted in October 2021 in Hama indicated that the top expenditures with the regular cash assistance were food (31 per cent), health (26 per cent), clothes (14 per cent) and debt repayment (11 per cent). The use of the regular cash for rent was negligible (1 per cent). In this regard, data show that families have used the cash to address new basic needs that resulted from the earthquake⁴.

Almost all families have used the cash top-up to cover health expenses (88 per cent). The majority (59 per cent) used one third or less for health; 23 per cent used between one-third and two-third for health; and six per cent used two-third or all for health (Figure 4).

The high out-of-pocket health expenditures illustrates that the earthquake has further aggravated poverty and vulnerability of families caring for CWD. Since the programme specifically targets children with medically diagnosed physical or mental disability, the health needs of families remain as dire as they were before the earthquake. In fact, the 2021 October [survey](#) highlighted that affording health services was the biggest challenge for families, with 63 per cent reporting that they could not afford the health services that their children with disabilities need.

4 The October 2021 survey did not have “house repair” as a specific category to assess cash usage. It is assumed however that these expenditures were minimal pre-earthquake.

Figure 4: Use of cash for Health



3 The share of the cash used for food was unusually small

On average, only 7 per cent of the assistance was spent on food. This is very small when compared to the share of cash devoted to food observed in other PDM surveys (consistently over 20 per cent).

The low level of food expenditure indicates that when families received the cash, they prioritised their most important needs, which at the time was not food. **This reconfirms the importance of providing families with unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance.**

4 Eighty per cent of beneficiaries have used some of the cash for house repairs, confirming the relevance and targeting approach of the cash response

Most families have used some of the cash for house repairs (79 per cent). Furthermore, the majority, or 56 per cent, have spent between one-third and two-thirds of the cash for house repairs (Figure 5).

Use of cash for house repairs in Hama was higher than in Aleppo, where on average 41 per cent of families had spent some of the cash for house repairs (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Use of cash for house repairs

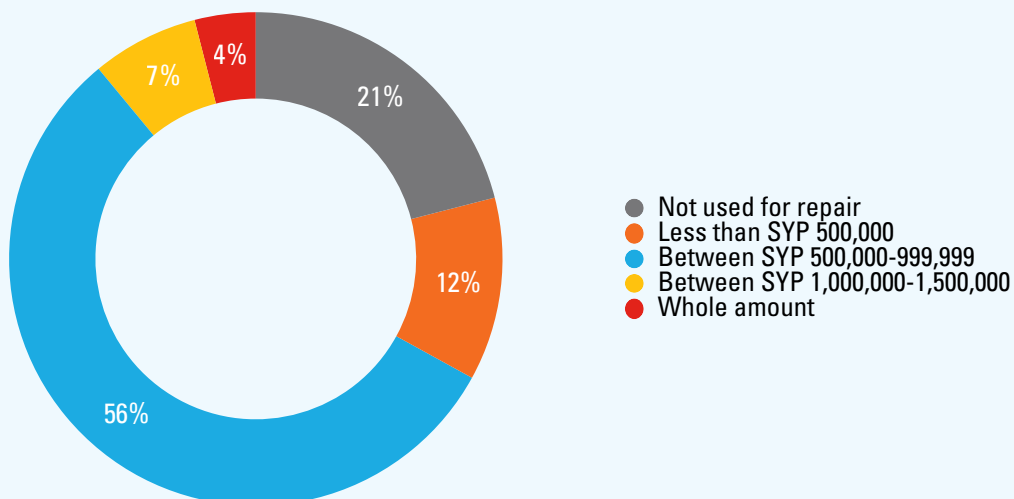
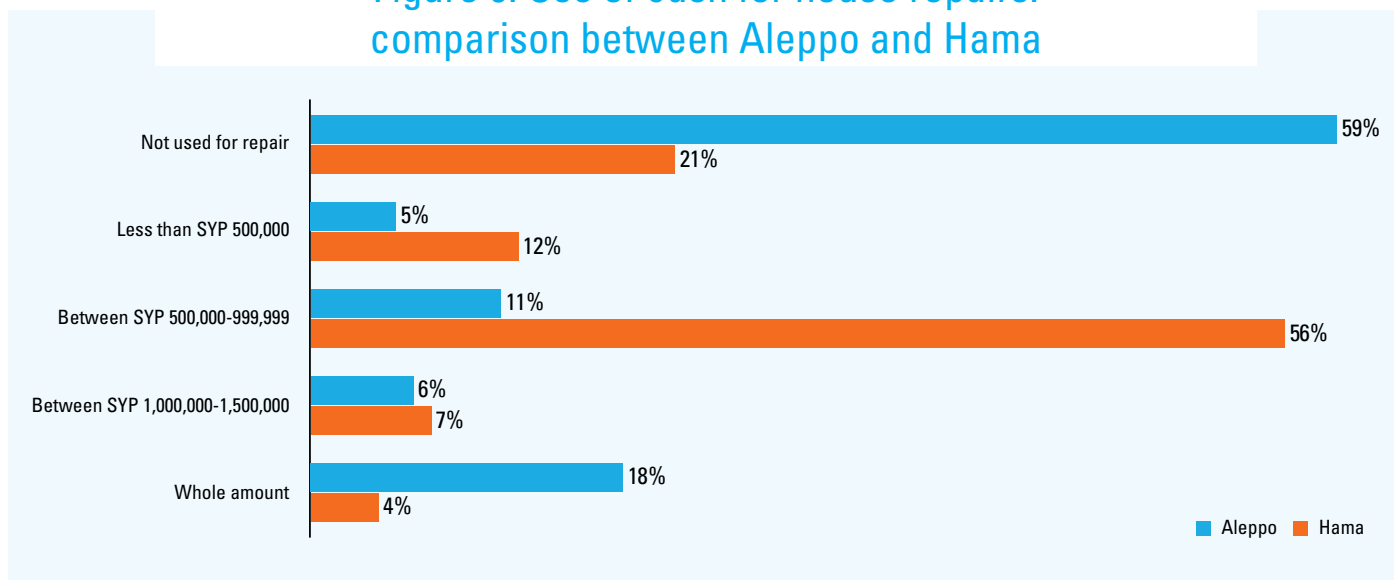


Figure 6: Use of cash for house repairs: comparison between Aleppo and Hama



In Hama, 56 per cent of families spent between one and two-thirds of the cash for house repairs, compared to only 11 per cent in Aleppo.

Conversely, the proportion of families in Aleppo who used the entirety of the cash for house repairs was almost five times higher than in Hama (18 per cent versus 4 per cent).

Data reflect the varying levels of earthquake-related damages between Hama and Aleppo.

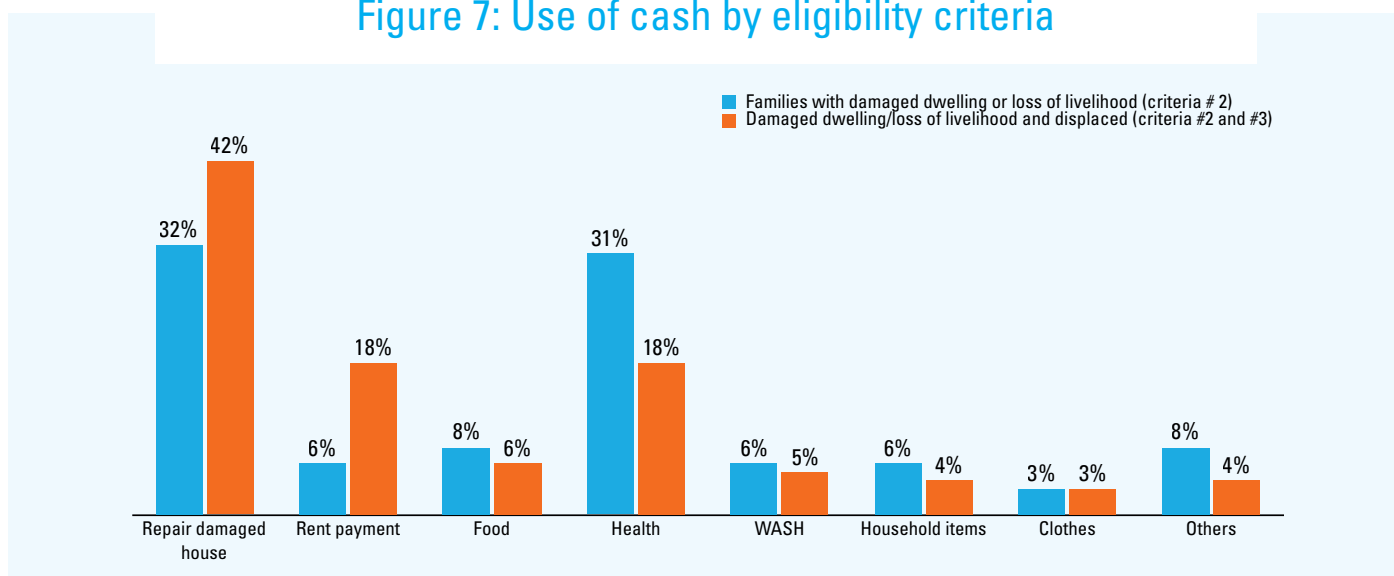
While in Hama damages were moderate, the level of damages in Aleppo was more severe.

5 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 and priorities, which varied based on their unique vulnerabilities.

Families who were affected by two targeting criteria (i.e. families who were displaced and who also reported house damages/loss of livelihood) spent three times more on rent (18 per cent) than families who were affected by one criteria only (i.e. families with damaged homes/livelihood losses but who were not displaced (six per cent) (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Use of cash by eligibility criteria



Note: Due to the negligible percentage of families with a death/injury (criteria # 1) and those who were displaced but did not report damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood (criteria # 3), both categories have been excluded from the Graph.

Altogether, families affected by two criteria spent 60 per cent of cash on rent and house repairs compared to only 38 per cent among families affected by one criterion only. Conversely, families affected by one criterion (i.e. families reporting loss but who were not displaced) spent almost twice more on health than families affected by two criteria.

→ **These findings confirm the importance of providing families with unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance.** If conditionalities and/or 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.

6 Female-headed families spent more cash for rent than male-headed families

Among families who used cash for rent in Hama, the share of cash used for rent was higher among female-headed families (19 per cent) than male-headed families (12 per cent) (Figure 8). This might be related to the fact that more female-headed families were living in rented accommodation than male-headed families. For example, the October 2021 [survey](#) indicated that 27 per cent of female-headed families were living in rented accommodations compared to 20 per cent of male-

headed families.

In Hama, there was almost equal division in terms of the amount spent by families for rent: 10 per cent spent one-third or less; 8 per cent spent between one-third and two-thirds; and 10 per cent spent two-thirds or more on rent. The profile of rent expenditures was different in Aleppo.

The proportion of families who used cash for rent was slightly higher in Hama (28 per cent) than in Aleppo (24 per cent) (Figure 9).

7 Families have used the cash on 3.8 categories on average

Over two-thirds of families have used the cash assistance to cover basic needs in four or less areas. This is similar to what was observed in Aleppo, where the [March 2023 PDM survey](#) indicated that on average families had used the cash on 3.3 categories. There were however important variations between Aleppo and Hama, especially in relation to the proportion of families who have used the cash in one category only. In Aleppo, a relatively large proportion of families had used the cash to cover expenses in one category (24 per cent), while in Hama nine per cent of families used the cash in one category (Figure 10).

In Hama, among families who spent all the cash in one category, 53 per cent spent it all for health, 42 per cent spent it all for house repairs, and five per cent spent it all for rent.

Figure 8: Use of cash by sex of the family head

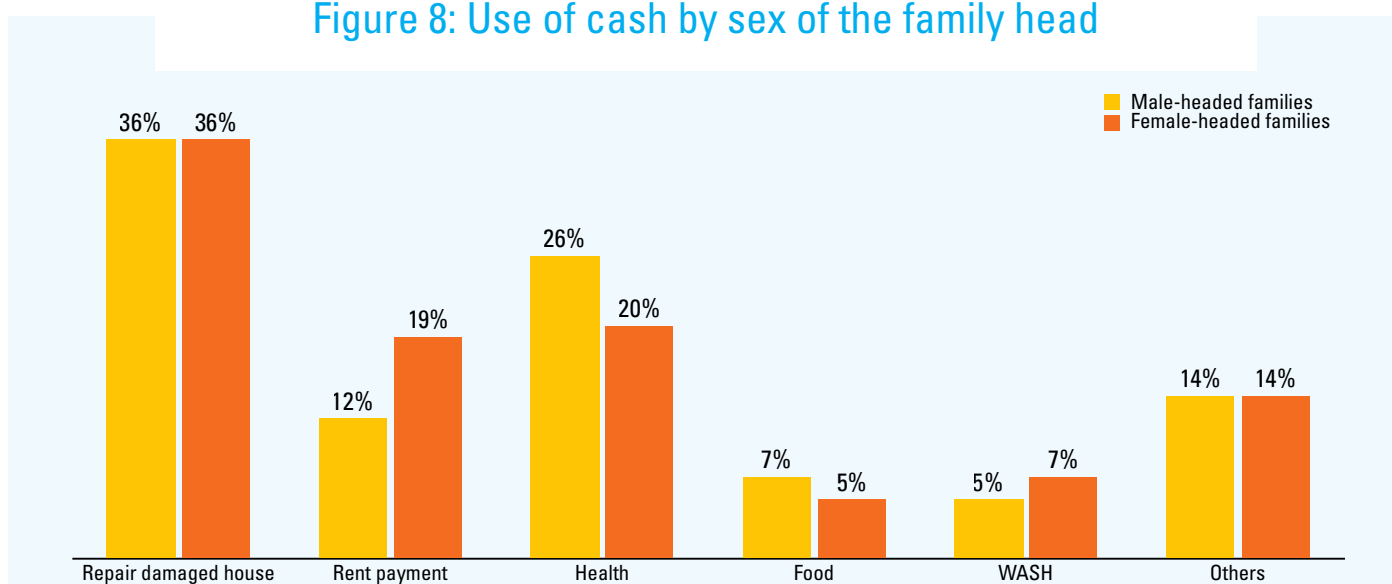


Figure 9: Use of cash for rent: comparison between Aleppo and Hama

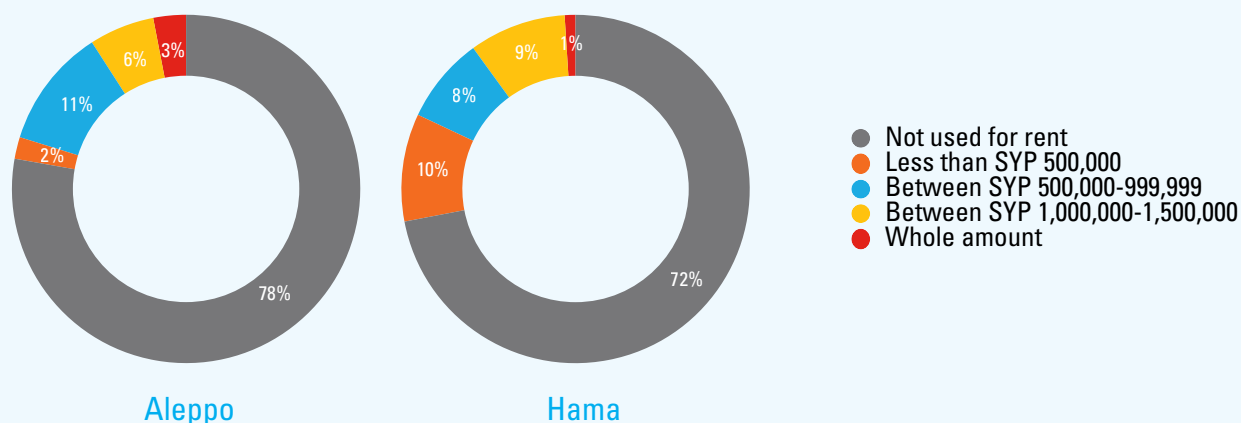
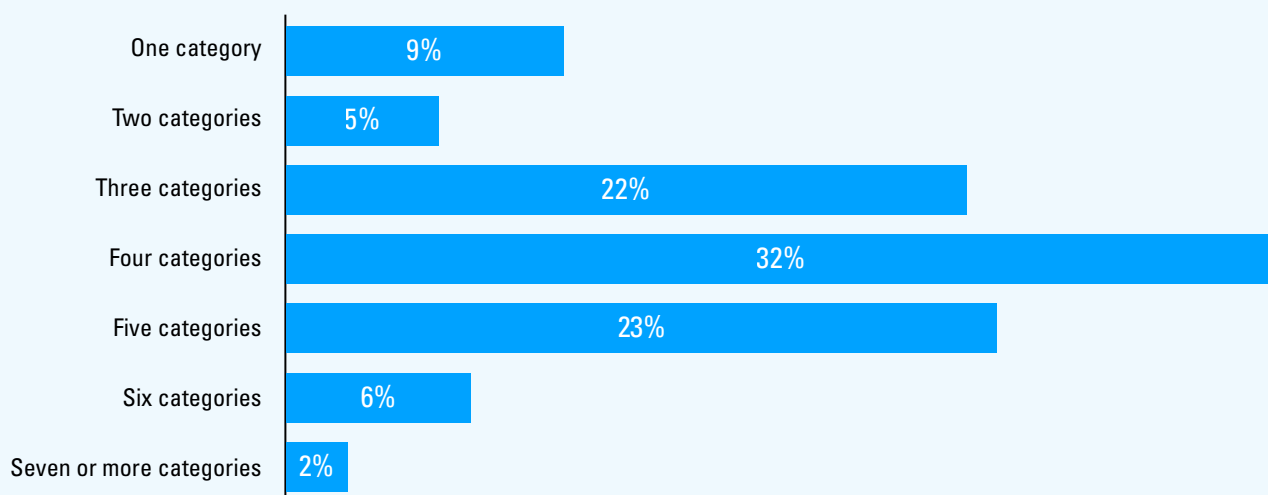


Figure 10: Average number of categories the cash assistance was spent on



8 Most families spent the cash in less than one week

On average, families spent the cash in 4.9 days. Eleven 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 43 per cent after four days, 78 per cent after six days and almost 95 per cent after eight days. The use of cash in Hama was quicker than in Aleppo (Figure 11).

9 High level of satisfaction with the cash response

More than 90 per cent of beneficiaries reported that they were “satisfied” with the cash response (Figure 12). In contrast, five per cent reported they were satisfied to “some extent” while four per cent reported they were “not satisfied”.

Figure 11: Speed at which the cash assistance was used: comparison between Aleppo and Hama

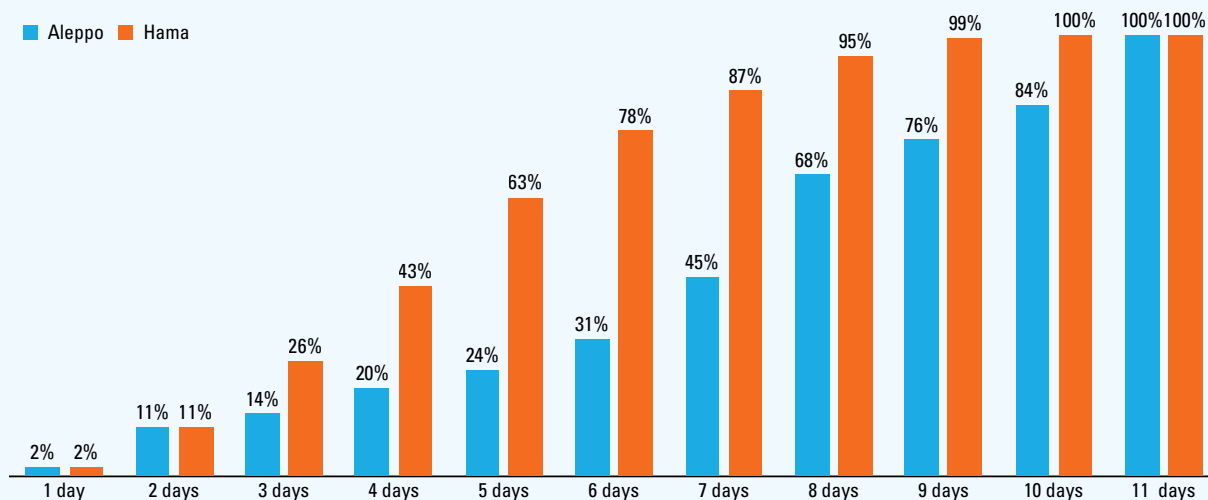
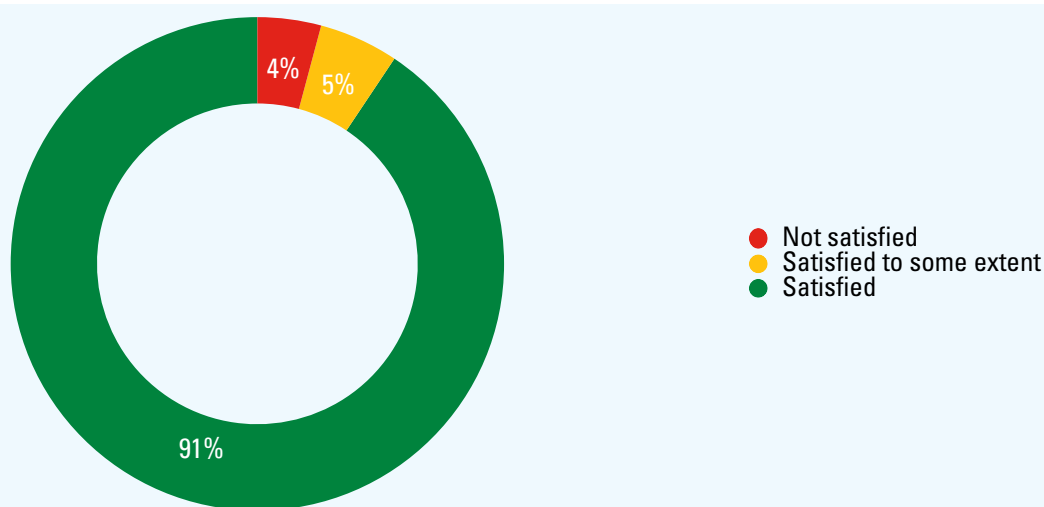


Figure 12: Satisfaction with the emergency cash response



4- Expression of thanks

UNICEF is grateful to the following partners and donors for their financial contributions to support the emergency cash response: (i) ECHO; (ii) Government of New Zealand; (iii) UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund (EPF); (iv) UNICEF National Committees; and (v) UK FCDO.

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