

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Rapid Post-Distribution
Monitoring Survey

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

Aleppo Governorate

UNICEF Syria - June 2023

UNICEF Syria

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UNICEF 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: (i) female-headed families; and (ii) families with people with disabilities; chronic illness and/or orphan children. 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, about 25,000 people were benefitting from the programme in Aleppo (984 families) and Hama (3,094) families.

All families are receiving two rounds of unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance at 6-8 weeks 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) families with dead or injured members; (ii) families with damaged dwelling or loss of livelihood (loss of assets and income); and (iii) displacement.

- ➔ In Aleppo, 100 per cent of the CBNSP caseload and 33 per cent of the CWD caseload were affected by the earthquake, or a total of 9,836 families (about 50,000 people²).
- ➔ In Hama, 36 per cent and 24 per cent of the CBNSP and CWD caseload 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 and defined 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 (using the three criteria used for vertical expansion) and who were either (i) previously enrolled in the programme and (ii) waiting to be enrolled.

In addition to the 12,500 families (62,000 people) targeted through the vertical expansion, UNICEF plans to reach 28,000 families (about 140,000 people) through the horizontal expansion of the CBNSP and ISPP-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 to assess how families affected by the earthquake have used the cash assistance they received.

The survey was conducted among families caring for children with disabilities who benefitted from the cash emergency response as part of the **horizontal expansion** of the [Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities](#).

The **horizontal expansion** focused on earthquake-affected families who were *previously* enrolled in the programme and families who were *waiting* to be enrolled in the programme in Aleppo, or a caseload of 4,048 families. Previous rapid PDM surveys published in [March 2023](#) (Aleppo) and [May 2023](#) (Hama) focused on the **vertical expansion** of the of the programme (i.e. cash

top-up to *existing* beneficiaries who were affected by the earthquake).

Between 7 February and 5 April 2023, assessments were conducted by UNICEF and Al Raja Association for Special Needs among each of the 4,048 families who were previously enrolled or waiting to be enrolled in the programme. Following the identification, registration, and verification exercise, a total of 1,040 families were identified as eligible for the earthquake cash emergency response, or 26 per cent.

- ➔ **All 1,040 families received their first cash top-up of SYP 1.54 million between 14 March and 10 April 2023.** Payments were made to families in two batches:
 - A first batch of 590 families received their first payment from 14 to 28 March 2023.
 - A second batch of 450 families received their first payment from 27 March to 10 April 2023.

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 was conducted among the first batch of 590 families who received their first cash tranche of cash assistance between 14 to 28 March 2023.

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 survey sample was 194 families (**sample size of 33 per cent**).

Data were collected from **6 and 11 April 2023** by eight enumerators using Kobo. All families responded to the survey (**100 per cent response rate**).

II- Characteristics of survey population

The most significant impact of the earthquake was displacement and loss of assets/livelihoods. More than half of families (57 per cent) were both displaced and suffered damages to their dwellings and/or loss of livelihood (i.e., eligibility criteria # 2 and # 3).

Thirty-three per cent of families reported loss of livelihoods or house damages, while 9 per cent reported

loss of livelihoods or house damages but were not displaced. Only one family reported a death/injury. This family also reported loss of assets and displacement (Figure 1).

The main **disabilities among children** were as follows: 27 per cent had severe or profound intellectual disabilities; 20 per cent had cerebral palsy; 20 per cent had autism; 13 per cent had Down syndrome; 10 per cent had spinal cord diseases; and 9 per cent had monoplegia or quadriplegia (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Breakdown of families according to targeting criteria

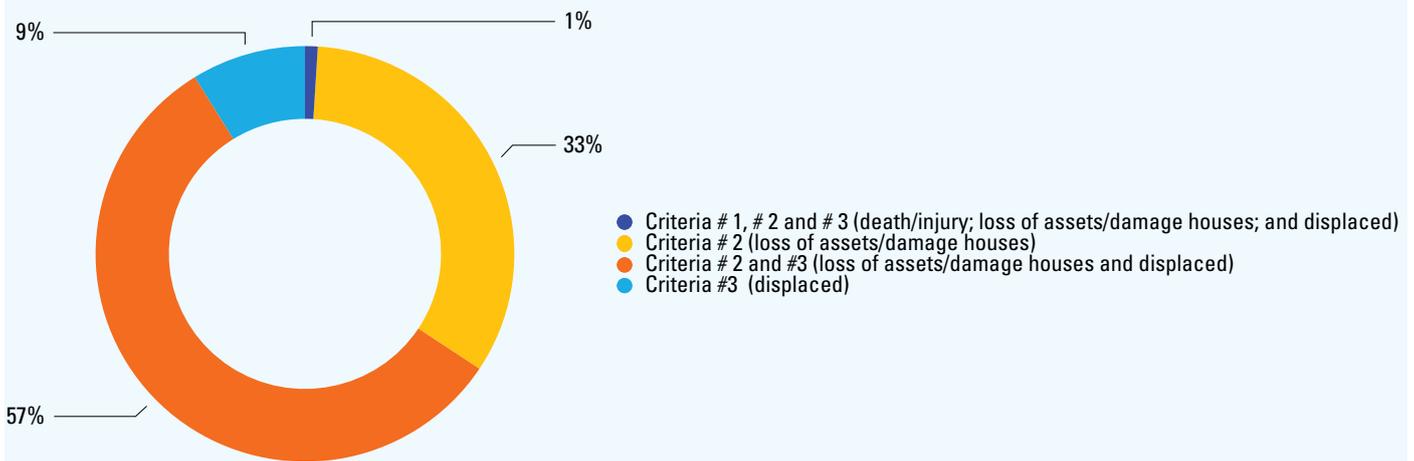
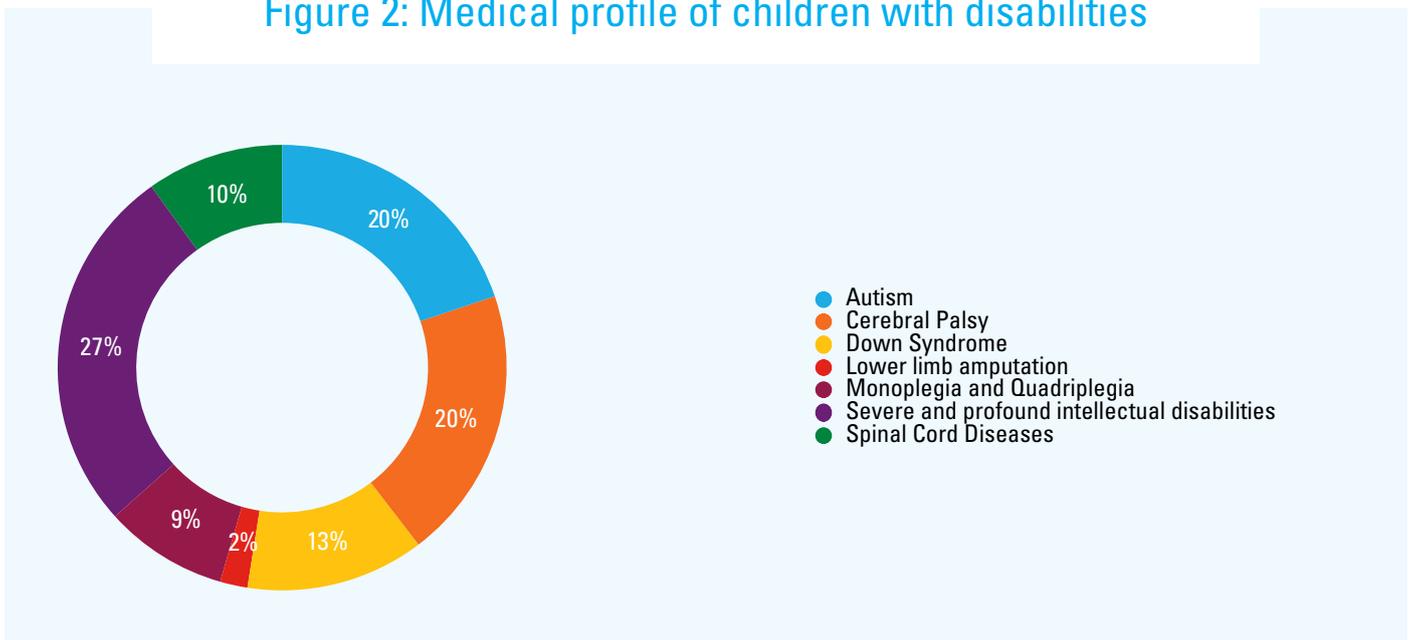


Figure 2: Medical profile of children with disabilities



III- Highlights

1 Two-thirds of the cash was used for shelters, health, and food

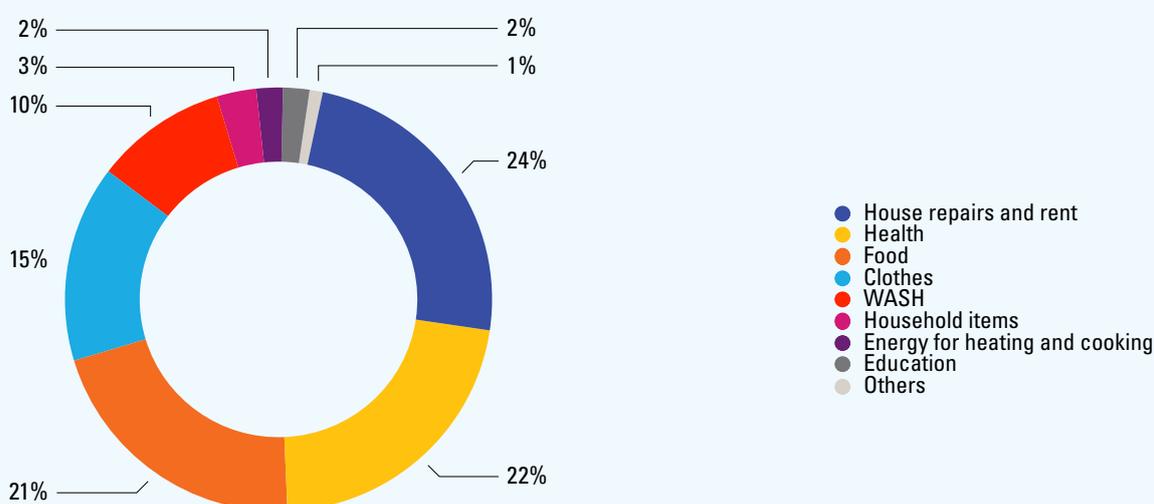
The top expenditure with the cash assistance was house repairs and rent (24 per cent), followed by health (22 per cent), food (21 per cent), clothes (15 per cent), and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (10 per cent). Use of cash for education was only two per cent (Figure 3).

Families spent more cash to meet other basic needs than shelters such as health, WASH and clothes.

In total, 47 per cent of the cash was used by families for health, WASH and clothes. In comparison, 31 per cent was used for health, WASH and clothes among families who were already receiving regular benefits from the programme, in the forms of regular cash assistance and case management services.

Expenses for food was however very consistent among both groups, representing about one-fifth of the cash (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Use of cash assistance



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

2 Families prioritised non-shelter needs, highlighting both their high level of pre-existing vulnerabilities and the importance of providing unconditional cash assistance

Less cash was used for shelter than among families of the vertical expansion. Forty-two per cent of the first round of cash assistance received in February 2023⁴ by existing beneficiaries of the programme in Aleppo ([vertical expansion](#)) was used for shelters. In comparison, among newly enrolled families after the earthquake, the use of cash for house repairs and rent was 24 per cent.

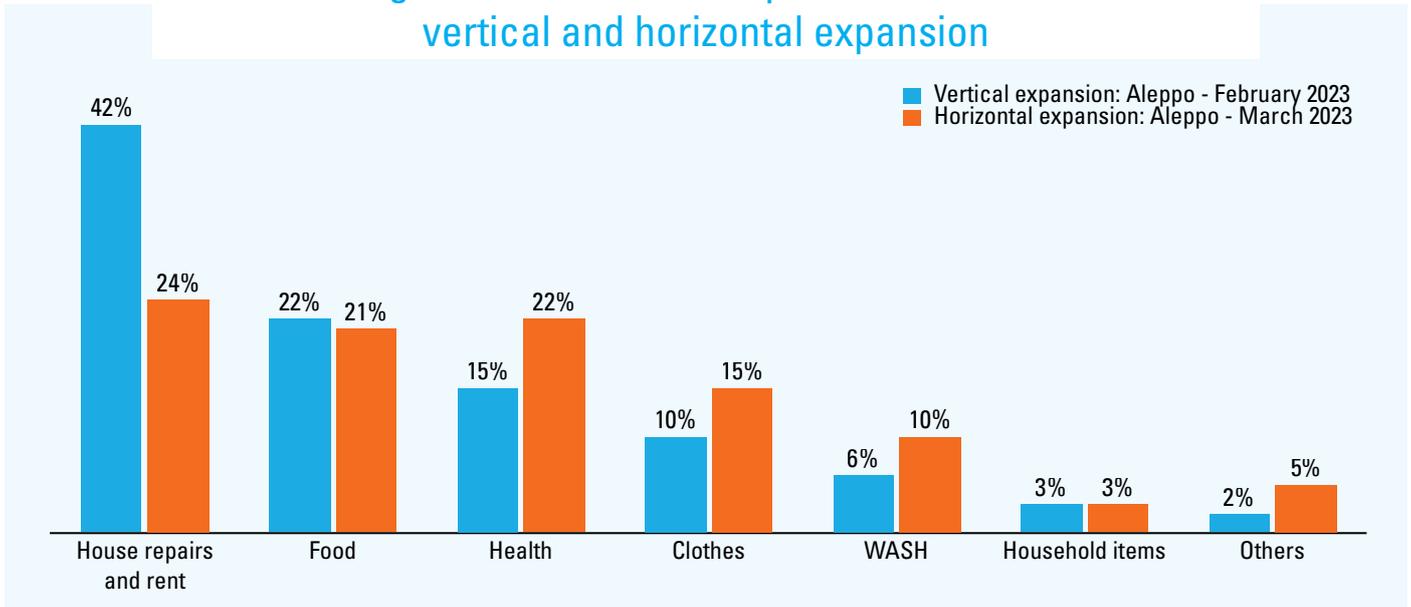
Since families were selected on the basis of the same targeting criteria⁵, the survey indicates that families used the cash to address their specific needs and priorities, which varied based on their unique vulnerabilities at a specific time.

→ **This confirms 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.

4 Families of the vertical expansion received their first cash top-up in Aleppo between 19 and 26 February.

5 Three criteria were used to determine eligibility for earthquake cash response: (i) families with dead or injured members; (ii) families with damaged dwelling or loss of livelihood (loss of assets and income); and (iii) displacement.

Figure 4: Cash use: comparison between vertical and horizontal expansion

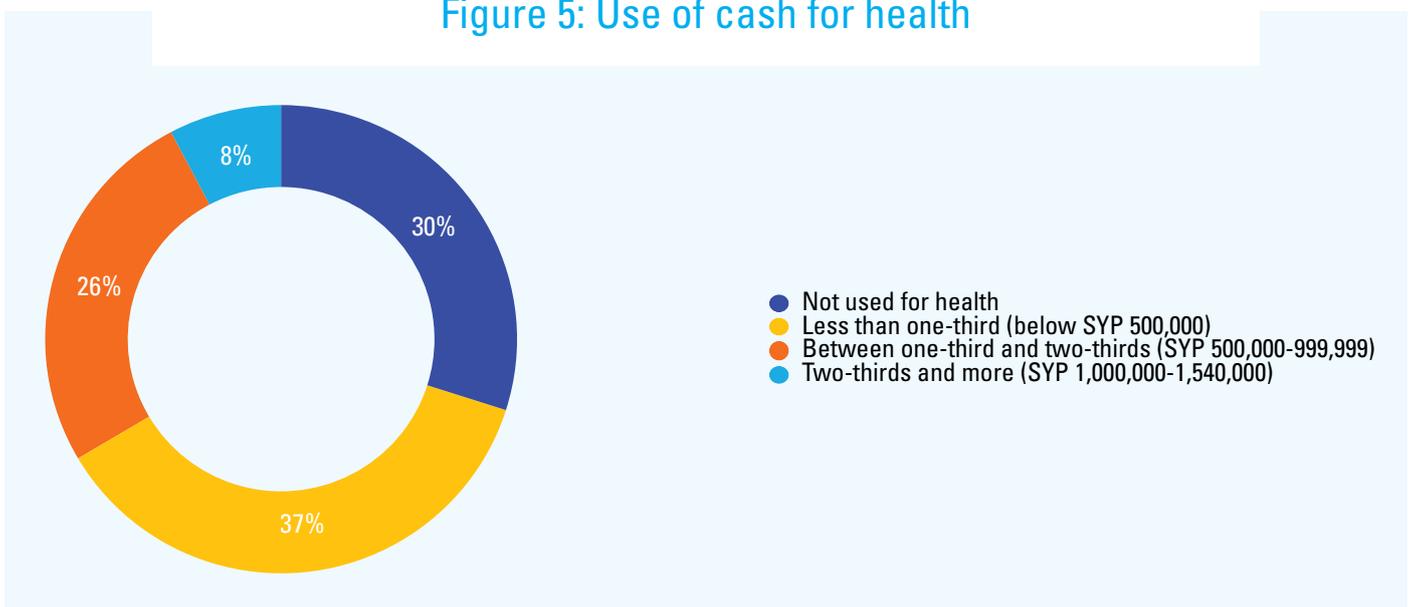


→ **This confirms that the earthquake has further aggravated poverty and vulnerability among families caring for children with disabilities.** For many families, the earthquake has created new shelter needs. At the same time, the socio-economic situation of families caring for children with disabilities was catastrophic prior to the earthquake, with significant unmet basic needs in essential areas such as food, health, and non-food items like clothes and WASH.

3 Over two-thirds of families have used cash for health

On average, 22 per cent of the cash was used for health. Seventy per cent of families have used cash for health. Thirty-seven per cent spent one third or less for health; 26 per cent spent between one-third and two-thirds; and 8 per cent spent two-thirds or more (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Use of cash for health



All families reached through the vertical and horizontal expansion spent a significant amount of cash on health: 15 per cent in Aleppo (vertical expansion, February 2023); 29 per cent in Hama (vertical expansion, February 2023); and 22 per cent in Aleppo (horizontal expansion, March 2023).

The proportion of families who spent one-third or more of the cash for health was higher than among the vertical expansion families in both Aleppo and Hama.

- ➔ Since vertical expansion families had been receiving regular cash assistance and case management services for almost **two years** when the earthquake happened, this likely reflects the fact that health needs of children with disabilities are more acute among children who were not receiving regular benefits from the programme (Figure 6).
- ➔ **The high level of out-of-pocket health expenditures illustrates the immense health needs of families caring for children with disabilities.** In a context of extreme poverty and limited access and availability of quality health services, health needs of children with disabilities are largely unmet. For example, the July 2022 survey in Aleppo

indicated that 35 per cent of families could not afford health services for their children. In Hama, the May 2022 survey indicated that affording health services was the biggest challenge for families, with 63 per cent of families reporting that they could not afford the health services that their children with disabilities need.

Recommendation:

Enrol families into the regular social protection programme upon completion of the emergency earthquake cash response.

4 Almost two-thirds of families did not use cash for shelters

Most families (62 per cent) did not use cash for shelters. However among those who used cash for shelters, the amount spent was significant. For example, 21 per cent of families spent more than two-thirds or the entirety of the cash for shelters (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Use of cash for health: comparison between PDM surveys

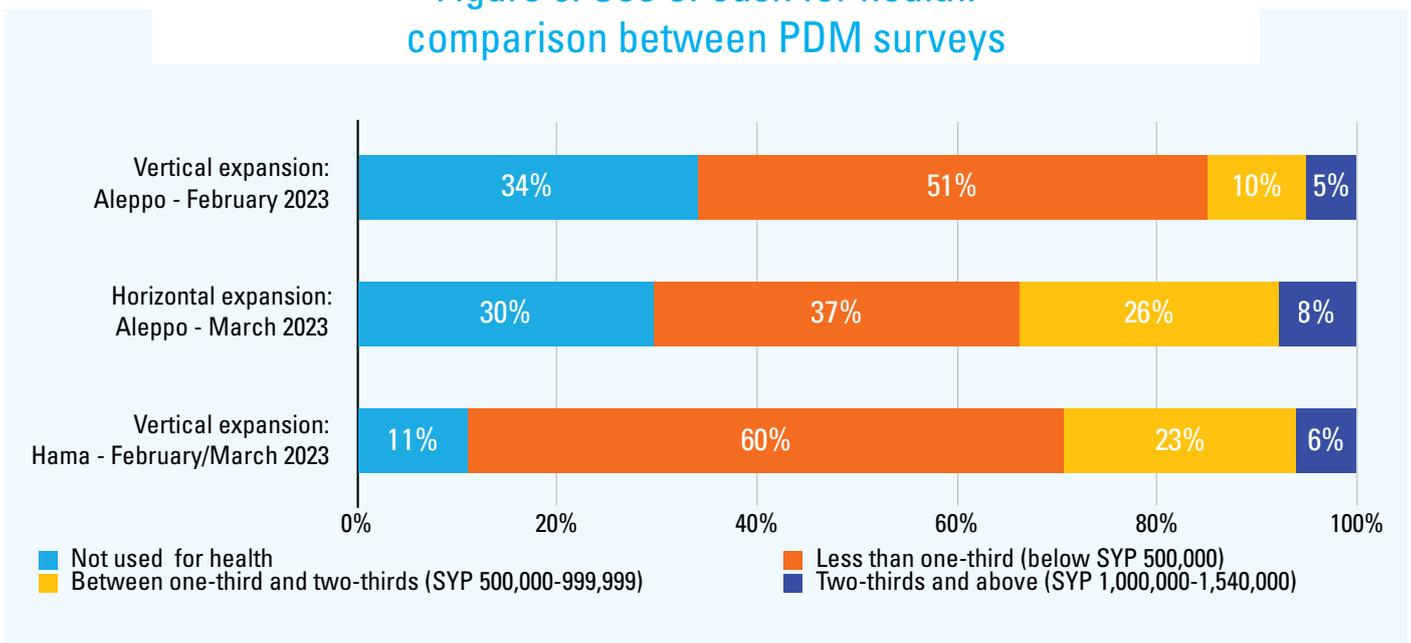
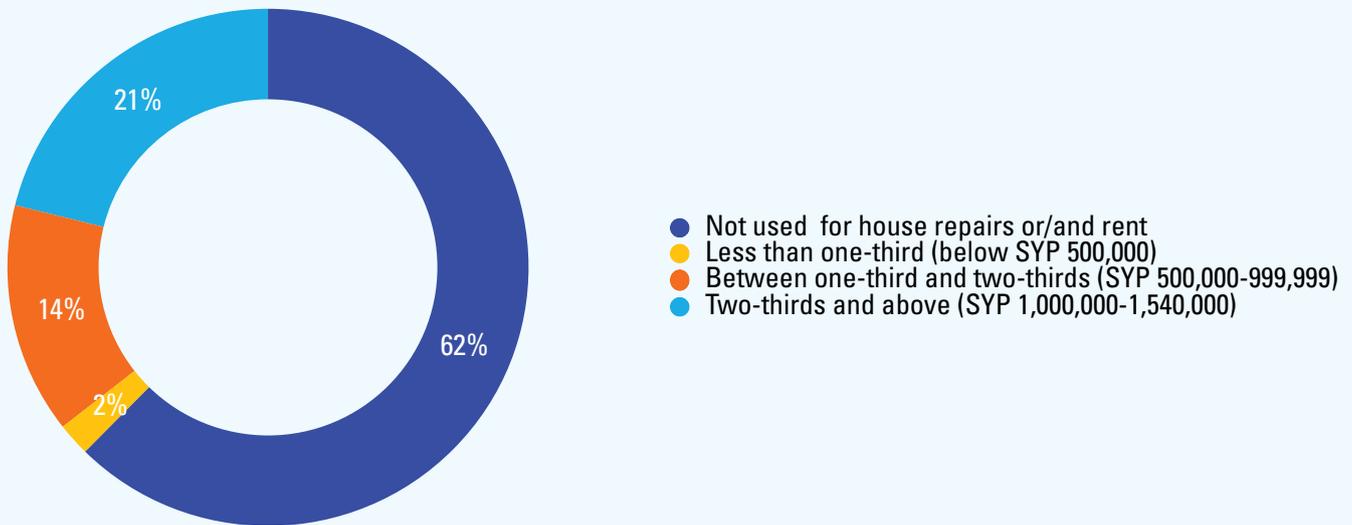


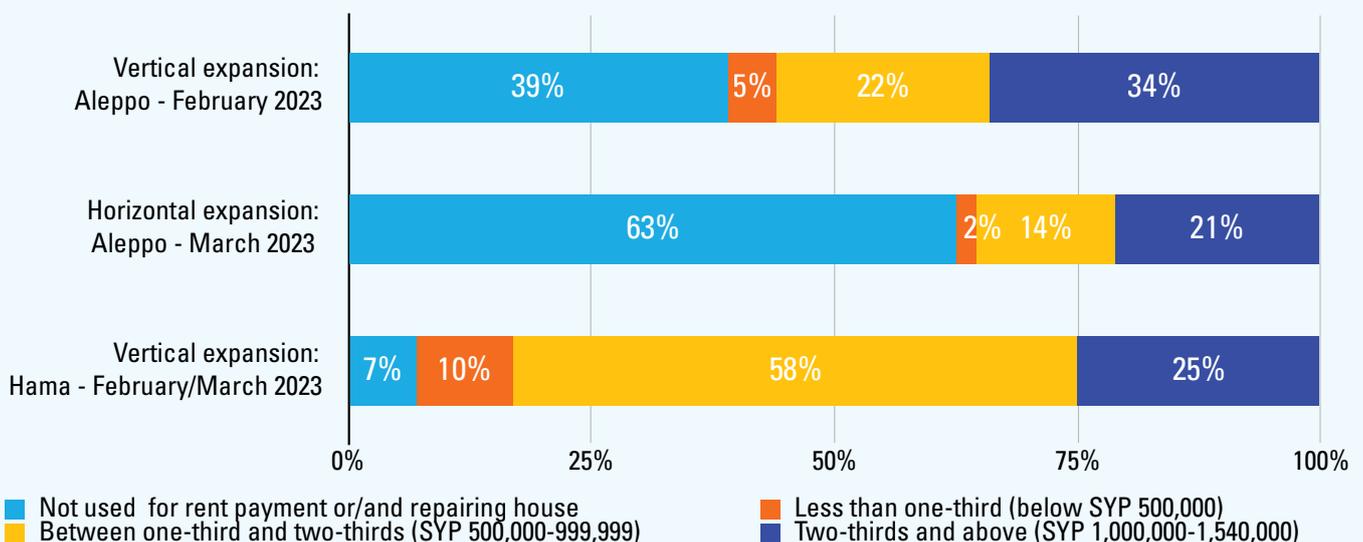
Figure 7: Use of cash for house repairs and rent



There were significant variations in the proportion of families who used cash for shelters between the three groups of surveyed populations in Aleppo and Hama: while 61 per cent used cash for shelters in Aleppo (vertical expansion, February 2023) and 93 per cent used cash for shelters in Hama (vertical expansion, February 2023), only 37 per cent used cash for shelters in Aleppo (horizontal expansion, March 2023) (Figure 8).

All families who used cash for shelters in Aleppo and Hama, either through the vertical or horizontal expansion, spent a significant amount of cash to respond to shelter needs: 34 per cent of families spent more than two-thirds or the entirety of the cash for shelter-related expenses in Aleppo (vertical expansion, February 2023). This was 25 per cent in Hama (vertical expansion, February 2023) and 21 per cent in Aleppo (horizontal expansion, March 2023) (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Use of cash for shelters: comparison between PDM surveys



5 Use of cash for rent was significantly higher among female-headed families than male-headed families

Families headed by women used on average **twice more cash for rent** (20 per cent) than families headed by men (9 per cent). Conversely, families headed by women used on average twice less cash for house repairs (7 per cent) than families headed by men (14 per cent) (Figure 9).

- ➔ **This reflects the greater socio-economic vulnerabilities of female-headed families, who tend to live in rented dwellings more than male-headed families.**
- For example, the [July 2022 survey](#) indicated a much more precarious dwelling situation among female-headed families than male-headed families in Aleppo Governorate. Similar observations were made in Hama Governorate, where the [May 2022 survey](#) indicated that 27 per cent of female-headed families were living in rented accommodations compared to 20 per cent of male-headed families.

There were no other significant differences between cash use among male and female-headed families, except for food, which was smaller among the former.

6 Two-thirds of families used the cash to cover basic needs in three areas or less

On average, families used the cash in **3.1 categories** (i.e. areas in which the cash was spent on). This is relatively similar, albeit slightly lower, than the average observed among families reached through the vertical expansion in [Aleppo](#) (3.3) and [Hama](#) (3.8).

The use of cash was concentrated in fewer categories than among vertical expansion caseloads. Almost two-thirds of families (64 per cent) spent the cash in three categories or less (Figure 10). In comparison, this was only 51 per cent among families reached through the vertical expansion in [Aleppo](#) and 36 per cent among those in [Hama](#) (Figure 11).

- ➔ **This indicates that families who were not benefiting from the programme prior to the earthquake had major unmet needs in specific areas, which they needed to prioritise.**

Figure 9: Use of cash: comparison between male-headed and female-headed families

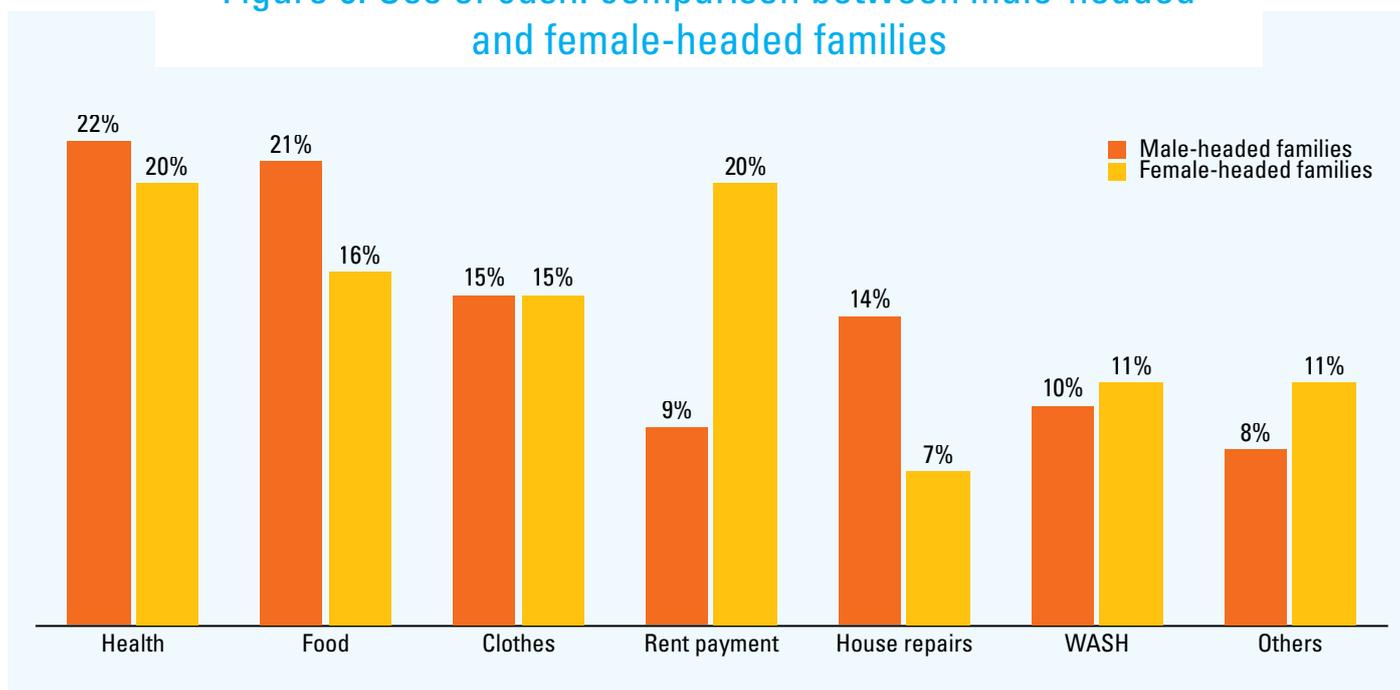


Figure 10: Number of categories the cash assistance was spent on

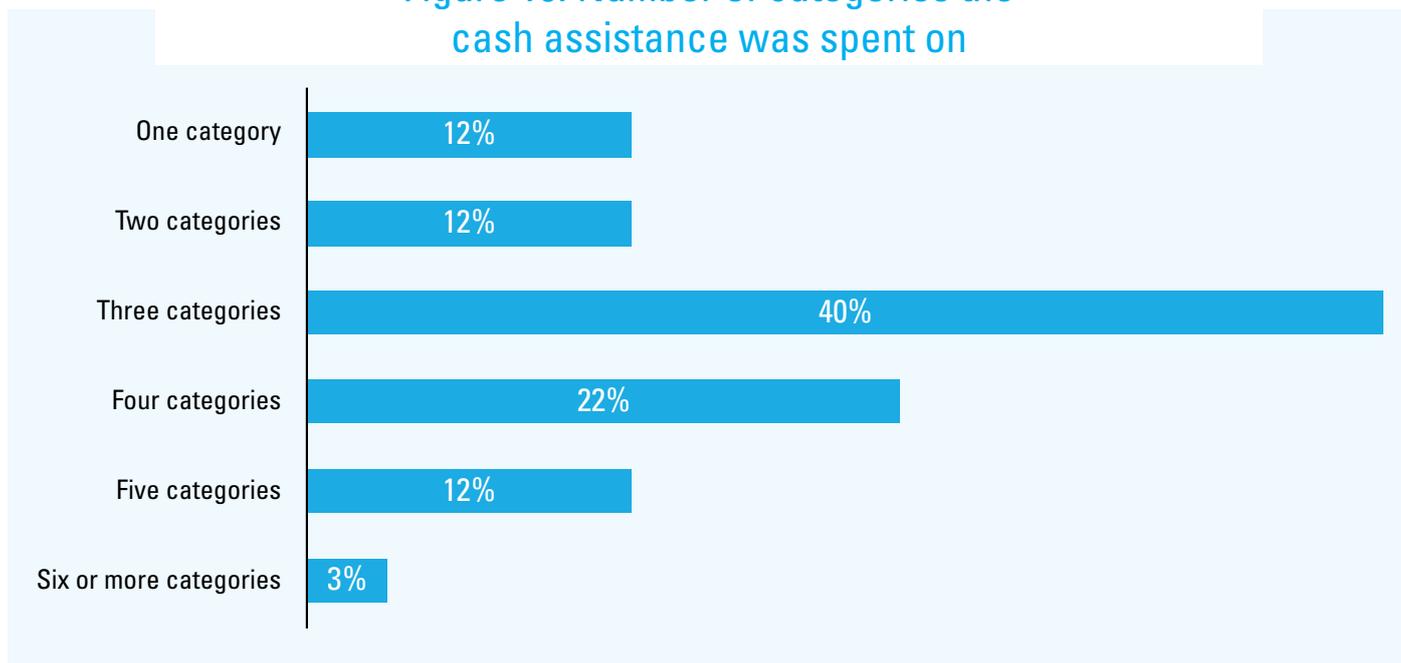
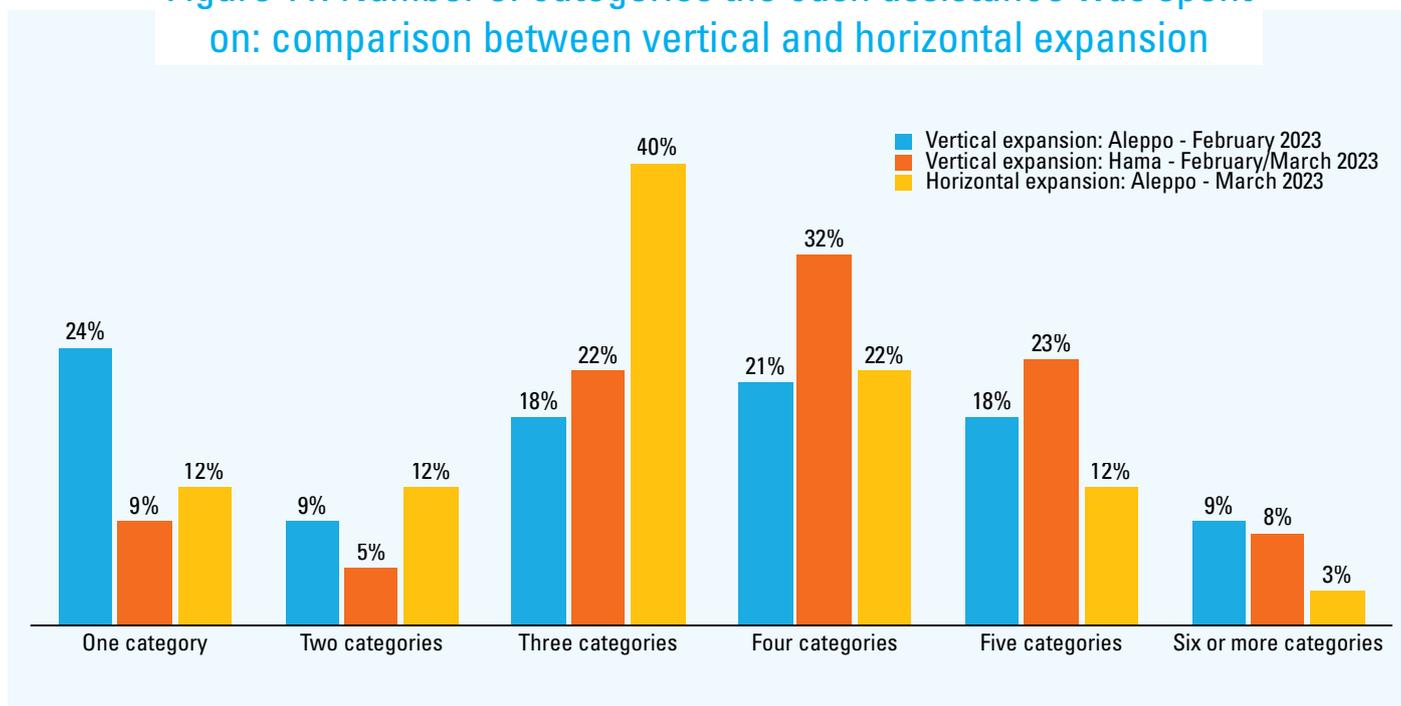


Figure 11: Number of categories the cash assistance was spent on: comparison between vertical and horizontal expansion



7 Most families spent the cash within one week

On average, families spent the cash in 6.9 days. Cash use in the first four days following payment was relatively low (12 per cent) but quickly accelerated on the fifth day after payment (Figure 12).

Cash use was quicker than among families reached through the vertical expansion in [Aleppo](#) one month earlier (7.2 days) but slower than in [Hama](#), where families had spent the cash in 4.9 days (Figure 13).

8 High level of satisfaction with the overall cash response

Ninety-four per cent of the families reported that they were satisfied with the overall cash response. Six per cent reported they were satisfied to “some extent.” None of the families reported they were “not satisfied” (Figure 14).

Figure 12: Speed at which families have used the cash



Figure 13: Speed at which families have used the cash: comparison between vertical and horizontal expansion

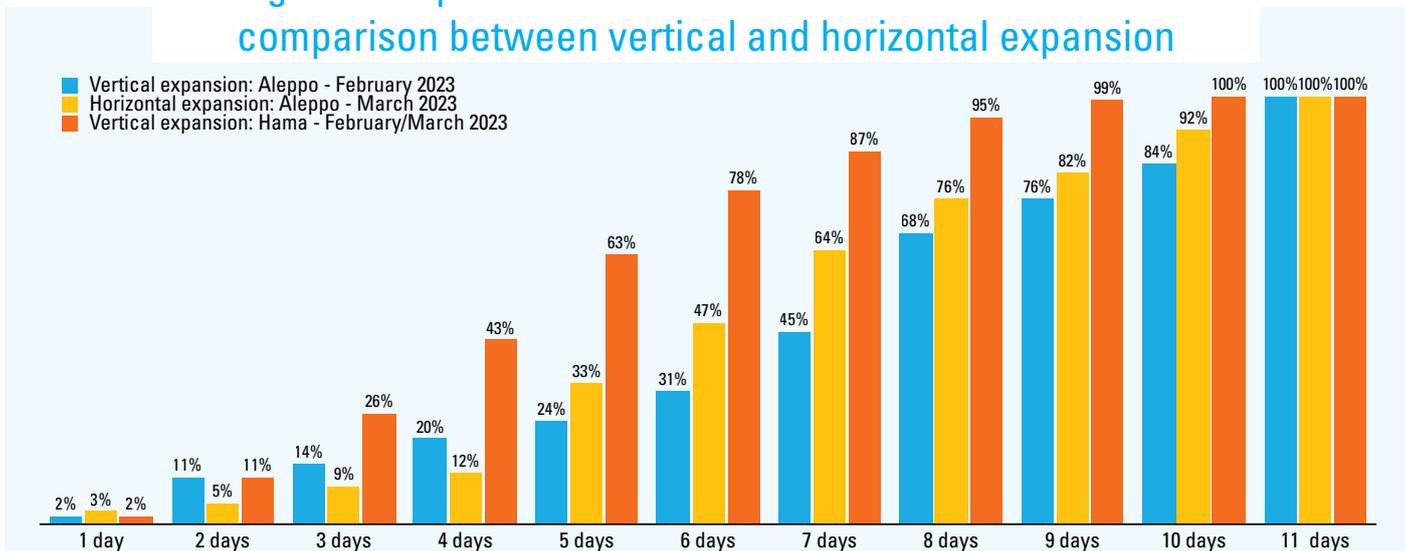
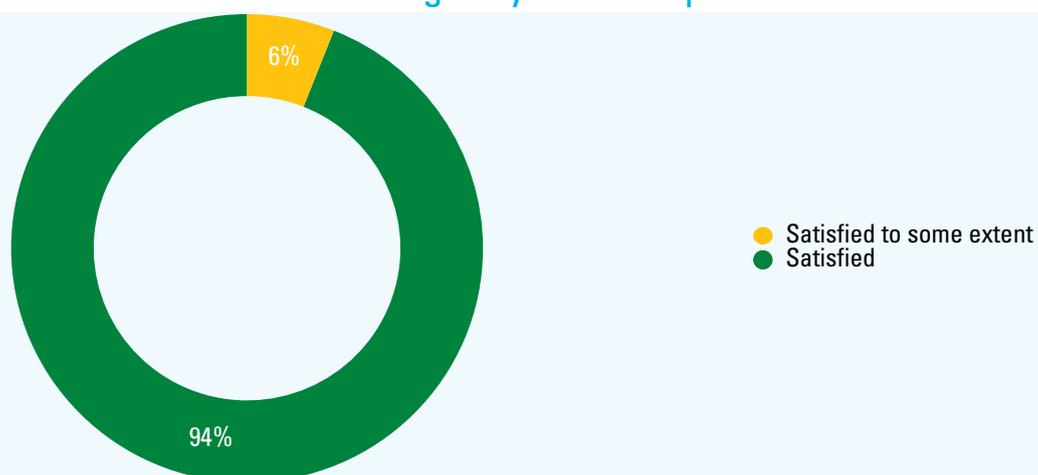


Figure 14: Overall satisfaction with the emergency cash response



4- Expression of thanks

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