

Inclusion of Women in Emergency Shelter (ES) & Non-Food Items (NFI) Programming



ES/NFI Cluster and REACH Afghanistan

06 May 2024

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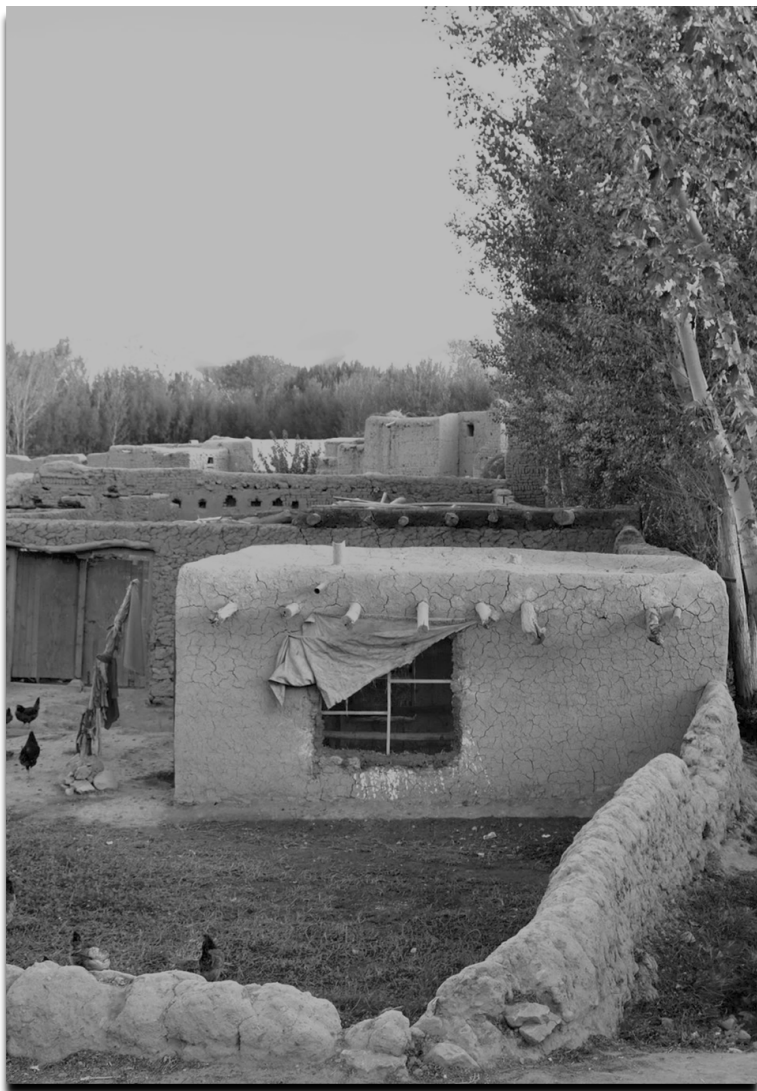
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Objectives

- To understand the **current situation** around the **role of women in shelter construction and repair**, household decision-making, and ES/NFI programming.
- To **identify** the key ES/NFI and winter **needs of women** and understand how they fit into the **current ES-NFI assistance packages** like NFI, winter items, and transitional shelter design.
- To **support** the ES/NFI cluster in **planning and adapting its programming** to better address shelter needs whilst considering the specific needs of women.

Assessment timeline

01

Research Design

REACH designed the research in collaboration with the shelter cluster in November 2023.

02

Data Collection

Between 21 November – 24 December 2023 REACH conducted 20 FGDs across 10 provinces

03

Data Analysis

Analysis was completed using a data analysis saturation grid (DSAG) in February 2024.

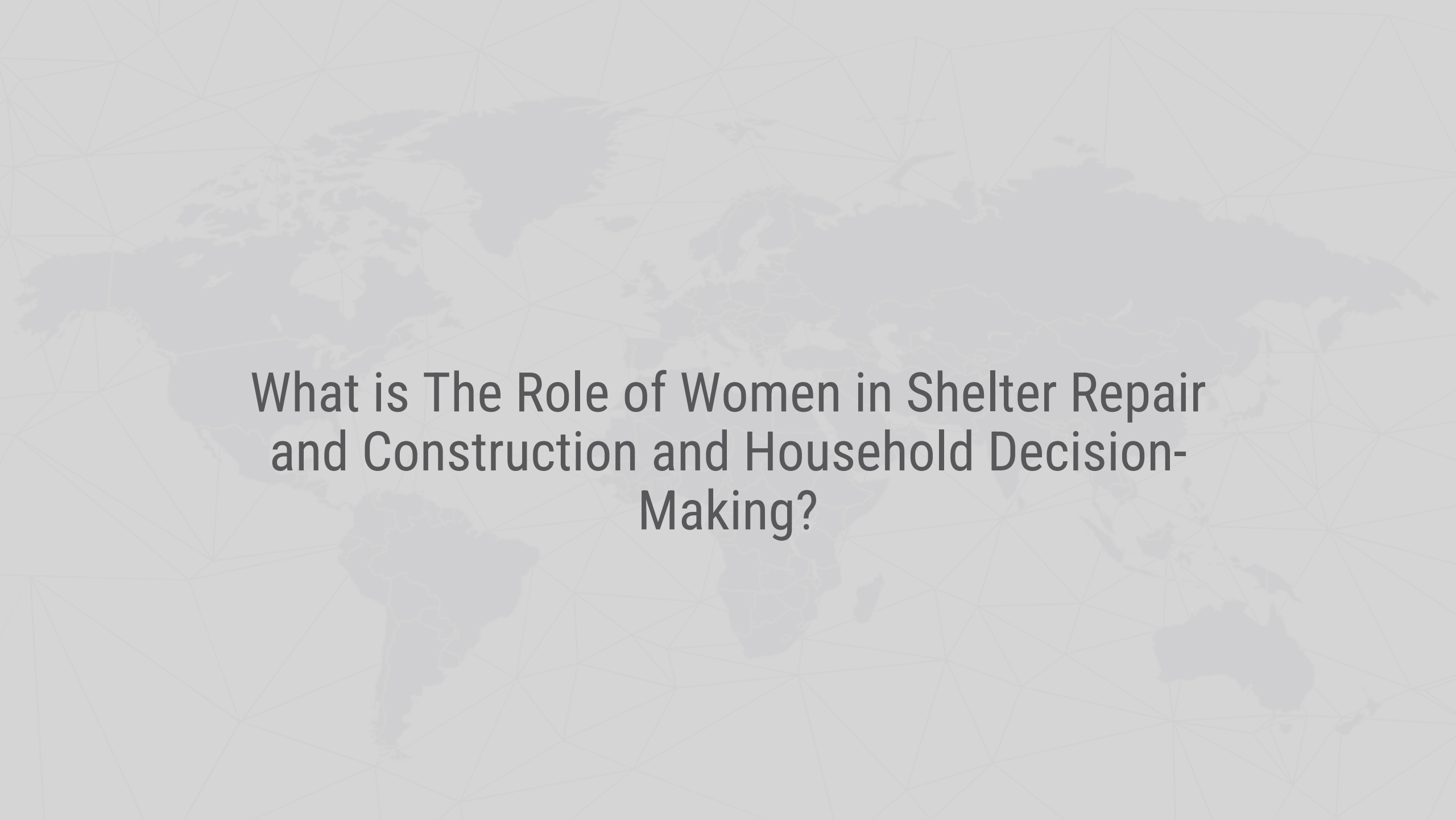
Methodology

Coverage

- The population included **women—both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries**—who are involved in **managing household affairs and/or those in leadership positions**
- **Locations** were chosen based on where it **was safe and culturally accepted to conduct FGDs with women**
- **10 provinces** covered (Kapisa, Bannay, Daykundi, Kunar, Laghman, Badakhshan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Khost, and Zabul)
 - 2 districts in each province
 - 1 FGD per district
 - 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
 - 6-8 participants each

Limitations

- Due to the conservative nature and lack of access to some rural areas of the country, the research team was unable to conduct FGDs with women in these areas.
- Among the women who participated, there were some who were reluctant to share their ideas openly.
- Because this assessment included only women, a comparison between their perspectives and those of men is limited.
- Some survey questions asked about women in the participants' communities while others asked about their personal experiences. As a result, the types of responses were sometimes mixed between providing a personal experience when asked about community or vice versa.



**What is The Role of Women in Shelter Repair
and Construction and Household Decision-
Making?**



Women's Involvement in Shelter Repair and Design

- Participants from **most FGDs** reported women's **involvement** in shelter construction or repair for **economic or social reasons**, sometimes **along with other family members**.*
- The character of this involvement was noted to be **mostly indirect** through **housework and childcare duties**, but **sometimes** also with light **unskilled work**.
- Participants reported that most women **wanted to be included** in shelter repair work.

"Because of the poor economy and a strong sense of cooperation and involvement, [women] help their partners in the construction and repair of shelters. They enthusiastically work with their partners in the building and repair of shelters to have an appropriate place to live in the future."

**More detail included in table on following slide*

Reported Reasons for Women's Involvement in Shelter Repair and Construction

 Economic Reasons	 Social Reasons
Lack of budget to hire labour	Women are interested in construction
Lack of male workforce	Men have other obligations, so women have to work in construction
Lack of skilled labour	There are no men in the household

Women's Participation in Shelter Repair/Construction Decision-Making

- Overall, participants reported that women's involvement in **decision making** is less than that of men.
- Participants reported that women are **mostly involved** in house design and to a **lesser extent** in selecting land.
- Participants from **few** FGDs reported that women are **involved in more technical decision-making**, such as **selecting equipment** and **construction material**.
- Participants from **one** FGD reported **equal** involvement of women in decision-making.

"The women equally with the men select land and design of the houses, but in the case of selecting construction materials, the men have more roles."

A world map is shown in a light gray, semi-transparent style, overlaid on a background of a light gray geometric pattern of interconnected lines forming various polygonal shapes. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean. In the center of the map, the number '02' is displayed in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

02

What did Women Report as Their Household's Key Winter ES/NFI Needs?

Winter NFI Needs

- Participants from **most FGDs** reported that the content of the **standard winter clothing and blanket kit are relevant** to their family needs.
- Participants from **some FGDs reported** that the content of the **standard winter clothing and blanket kit are not in line with the needs of poor households.**
- Participants in **more than half of the FGDs** reported that the quantity of the **winter items are not enough.**

Additional Needed Winter Items

Clothing	Other Food/Non-Food Items
Jackets/coats	Blankets (double-sized)
Winter hijabs (abaya)	Heaters
Shoes for older people	Food
Pants for men	

**At least one beneficiary was included in each FGD*

Transitional Shelter Needs

- Participants from some FGDs reported that **the kitchen does not have enough space for equipment or cupboards** and **internal rooms are too small** or too few for larger households.
- Participants from **some FGDs reported that there is enough space.**
- Participants from **one FGD** suggested that **bricks should be used in constructing the rooms.**
 - Participants recommended that **walls should be plastered from the outside** and **clay should be used inside** because it will keep the room hot in winter and cool in summer.

"Both the space and location for kitchen is not appropriate. As the people of Afghanistan do not have access to electricity and gas, it is better to plan the kitchen outside. The space should be 4 square meters. Moreover, there should be a storeroom with the kitchen to keep wheat flour, oil or other relevant items."

**Not all women had passed through a transitional shelter.*



03

Increasing Women's Involvement in ES/NFI Activities and Resolving Barriers to Accessing Assistance

Increasing Women's Involvement in ES/NFI Activities

- For ES distribution/activities, participants reported that social norms pose a challenge to women's participation in shelter repair and construction, particularly in receiving technical guidance:
 - **needing male guardians; socialization** of women to **devalue their opinions** compared to those of men; different **education levels**.
- Participants reported an interest in **technical shelter repair and construction trainings** in **segregated sessions** with **female trainers** to build-up confidence while enhancing their knowledge.
- For ES/NFI distribution, participants suggested that **household assessments with female enumerators** is the best way of selecting beneficiaries.

"There are professional women but there are not the possibilities of getting professional training... We would be very glad if we are provided the opportunities to stand on our feet and share the knowledge with others for a successful future."

Women Face Economic Challenges and Access Barriers to Reaching Distribution Sites

- Women reported that **transportation cost** was a barrier in **reaching distribution sites**, forcing them to **carry the items** back home. **Participants from fewer FGDs** reported the challenge of **needing a male guardian**.
- Women from some FGDs reported that there were **large crowds and long lines**.
- Women in a few FGDs recommended **involving women in distribution sites** and choosing sites **easily accessible to women**.

"Female employees should be hired. In order not to miss the distribution, we should be informed two days prior to distribution as most of the families are living in faraway areas."

Conclusions



Participants reported that they are **involved in shelter repair and construction** due to **economic and social challenges** faced by families or lack of **skilled/unskilled labour**. However, despite women's reported **desire for increased participation** in more technical activities, even in addition to normal levels of housework, their involvement is reportedly **often not technical** due to a lack of **technical training**, **perceptions of women being physically weaker** and **male opinions being valued more than those of women**.



While the content of standard **winter clothing and blanket kits** was reported to be mostly **relevant**, participants from **more than half of the FGDs** reported needing a higher quantity of **winter items**. Considering the **long distances** reportedly required to **collect heating fuel**, this might provide much needed relief for families unable to travel these distances. Participants also suggested taking into consideration **winter** and **summer** temperatures when selecting **shelter construction materials with good insulation qualities** for transitional shelters as well as **family size** in designing shelter space.



Participants reported that ways to **resolve barriers** to their involvement in ES activities include **segregated technical training with female trainers**. Participants also reported that ways to **increase access to distribution sites** and assistance involve including **women in distribution sites**. In addition, they reported that establishing distribution sites **closer to their settlements** would relieve **transportation costs** and the **need for a male guardian**.



Thank you for your attention



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