

Burkina Faso

Update on the context and situation of children

Burkina Faso is a landlocked, low-income Sub-Saharan African country with limited natural resources. With an average growth rate of 3.05 per cent, the population is estimated at 20.87 million in 2019 (Ministry of Finance, 2009). Ongoing population census will provide updated data.

The GDP growth rate was at 6.1 per cent in 2019 (World Bank), with extractive industry, agriculture, and cotton as key contributors. Inflation increased to 1.6 per cent, remaining below the 3 per cent threshold set by the West African Economic and Monetary Union. An average annual GDP growth rate for 2019-2024 is projected at 6.7 per cent, although it remains to be vulnerable to internal and external shocks.

Ongoing security crisis has become increasingly challenging to UNICEF's programmes, with important implications on child rights. Since January 2019, the Government declared a state of emergency in 14 out of 25 provinces across five regions (Sahel, Nord, Centre-Nord and Est). The incidence of attacks by NSAG has significantly increased this year, reaching 588 incidents with 886 deaths (724 civilians), compared to 256 incidents between 2016-2018.

Due to the security crisis, the country has seen unprecedented increase in internally displaced persons (IDP). As of 9 December 2019, 560,033 IDP were registered (OCHA) compared to 80,000 in January 2019, the largest number among the Sahelian countries. A total of 855,000 children needed humanitarian assistance in 2019 (HAC, UNICEF September 2019).

Every child survives and thrives

Progress towards healthy life and well-being for all children (SDG3) was materialized by the immunization rate and coverage. Routine data records showed that 331,707 out of 330,056 children aged 0-11 months were vaccinated with Penta3 in 2019 and all the health districts have reached 80 per cent of the coverage. No case of wild poliovirus was reported in 2019 and the certification of maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination (MNTE) was maintained year-round.

Despite the progress, the humanitarian crisis has significantly affected the health sector. As of 13 January 2020, 98 health centres are closed and 138 are operating at minimum capacity, affecting 1,250,522 people's access to health services. In Djibo health district, Sahel region, all the 48 health centres are either closed or operating at reduced capacity.

Children of emergency-affected regions are experiencing severe deprivation in nutrition due to the humanitarian crisis, coupled with the ongoing Sahel chronic droughts. A [rapid nutrition survey](#) conducted by UNICEF in October 2019 in six municipalities hosting an important number of IDP in Sahel, Nord, Centre-Nord and Est regions revealed an alarmingly high rate of malnutrition. Global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children aged under five years ranged from 9.3 per cent to 17.2 per cent, compared to the national average of 8.1 per cent (2019 NNS). The prevalence of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) varied from 1.5 per cent to 3.6 per cent. In Barsalogo, a house of 32,751 IDP, both GAM and SAM exceeded WHO's emergency threshold.

Every child learns

The growing insecurity severely constrained the country's efforts towards SDG4. In 2019, 13 teachers were assassinated, several education agents were abducted, and school infrastructures and supplies were destroyed. As of 19 December, 2,087 schools were closed, affecting 330,000 children and 9,264 teachers (Ministry of Education/MoE).

Gross enrolment rate (GER) for primary education decreased by 1.2 points, from 90.7 per cent in 2017/2018 to 88.8 per cent in 2018/2019. The Sahel region, the most affected by school closure, observed a drastic drop by 26.1 per cent (from 53.4 per cent to 27.3 per cent). The primary completion rate has also decreased by 0.9 points during the same period, and by 27.8 per cent in the Sahel region.

While the school year officially started in October, access to education among displaced children remained challenging due to lack of supply side capacity in schools. Despite the Safe school declaration, occupation of 62 schools in the Centre Nord region by security forces remained a concern at the back-to-school. These schools were eventually released through interventions by MoE and UNICEF.

Every child is protected

According to the latest available data, 51.3 per cent of women aged 20-24 years were in union before 18 in 2015 (EMC 2015). The Sahel region had the highest level of child marriage (76.6 per cent) among 13 regions due to traditions and

Burkina Faso

social norms. In the current emergency context, child marriage is reportedly an increased risk for adolescent girls as a strategy to cope with deterioration of already precarious living conditions. Child marriage is also a risk for a girl to be out-of-school or vice versa. [In 2014](#), 51.4 per cent of children and adolescents (6-16 years) were out of school and of those, 52.1 per cent were girls.

Every child lives in safe and clean environment

Approximately 47 per cent of the Burkinabe population practice open defecation (UNICEF/WHO 2017). The country has set out the national road map to end open defecation by 2030 in line with SDG6. Burkina Faso is one of the 39 Sub-Saharan African countries where population growth is outpacing the speed of improvement in sanitation access (UNICEF WCARO). There is an urgent need to accelerate sanitation coverage. With shrinking humanitarian access, UNICEF supported the Government with development of a guide on the Community-led total sanitation in emergency.

Every child has an equitable chance in life

Prevailing insecurity resulted in increased vulnerability of children and women, lagging the progress towards SDG1. Between 2018 and 2019, the state's budget allocation increased for education (from 16.3 to 20.1 per cent) and health (from 9.1 to 10.9 per cent) but decreased for WASH (from 3.9 to 1.8 per cent) (Finance Acts 2018-2019). Increased domestic budget allocation to the Defense and Security by 28.2 per cent could further undermine the Government's investment to social sectors.

Public spending for social protection in 2019 was 1.07 per cent, far from the [CPD](#) target of 5 per cent. Although the social protection system was extended to 457,784 girls and boys against the target of 500,000, efforts must be accelerated to attain the universal coverage, leaving no one behind.

Major contributions and drivers of results

Key result for children (KRC): Stunting

Despite the progress registered since 2003, many children continued to suffer from deprivation in nutrition, a major barrier to the SDG2. The prevalence of stunting has decreased from 35.1 per cent in 2009 to 25.4 per cent in 2019 (national nutrition survey 2019, preliminary results), but no significant decrease was observed since 2018 (25.0 per cent).

To strengthen prevention of stunting, UNICEF-Burkina Faso technically and financially supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) with expansion of the Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) programme in seven out of 13 regions. The CO's supported capacity development of 7,685 community-based health workers (CBHWs) and community volunteers on IYCF. They provided nutrition services and counseling to 558,767 pregnant and lactating women (93 per cent of the annual target) through 22,579 mother-to-mother support groups in 2,401 villages.

As the Chair of the Scaling up nutrition (SUN)'s UN network, UNICEF coordinated the development of an inter-agency [joint project](#) on prevention of stunting in the Est region which will be launched early 2020. UNICEF's role is critical in coordination and implementation of nutrition-specific interventions, while WFP provides treatment of moderate acute malnutrition and WHO supports quality health services, complimented by FAO's interventions in food security.

Joint advocacy efforts between UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO have led to adoption of the National nutrition security policy and setting up the multisectoral nutrition coordination platform under the Presidency. UNICEF advocated to the Government to respect their commitment to progressively increase financial contribution to ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) supplies. However, due to increased domestic budget allocation to security and defense sectors, only US\$ 510,000 out of US\$ 3.26 million initially committed were made available.

KRC: Child marriage

The CO has strongly contributed to the WCAR's [key result for children #6 \(KRC\): ending child marriage \(CM\)](#) by extending its support to 1,460 villages in 2019, a triple of 2017 (300 villages). Using a multisectoral approach (WASH, education and child protection), and jointly with UNFPA, 310,042 adolescent girls received prevention and care services for CM, exceeding the 2019 target by 52 per cent. They have learned lifeskills and sexual and reproductive health, leadership and negotiation skills through adolescent clubs, and are contributing to abandonment of CM. UNICEF and UNFPA facilitated the bi-annual meetings of the multi-sectoral platform for better monitoring and coordination of actions towards the [National strategy for abandoning child marriage 2016-2025](#). Through the actions supported by UNICEF and UNFPA, 1,059 new villages in the Est, Nord, and Centre-Ouest regions have declared to end FGM, CM and violence against children.

Burkina Faso

Launched by the First Lady, Minister of Education and UNICEF in March 2019, 'Don't call me Madam,' a major campaign against CM, has reached more than one million people. Local population, especially adolescents and youth, actively participated in caravans organized by a famous Burkinabe singer, Smarty. The global audience were reached through 51,910 interactions and 45,000 views on YouTube, and 500,000 views on Facebook.

KRC: ending open defecation

UNICEF-Burkina Faso continued to support the scaling-up of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) in three regions: Centre-Ouest, Est and Sahel. The CO's strategic focus remained on advocating for a sanitation policy that is conducive to CLTS. Since January 2019, 499 new communities were triggered, out of which 217 communities declared ODF, exceeding the annual target of 200. Of those, 184 communities (37 per cent) were certified, after having maintained their ODF status at least for 6 months. Estimated 141,854 people (59,154 men, 62,699 women, 11,064 girls and 8,937 boys) now live in newly declared ODF areas, exceeding the KRC target of 130,000.

UNICEF-Burkina Faso played a key advocacy role in bringing the Government to sign the "Sustainability compact" for the Dutch-funded Accelerating Sanitation and Water for all (ASWA) program II in the Est region. The Government committed to mobilize financial resources to ensure the sustainability of WASH infrastructures built through the program at least for 10 years starting 2021.

Advocacy with traditional leaders on KRC

In November 2019, the CO organized a summit with 100 traditional leaders from all the 13 regions. During the two-day workshop, UNICEF presented evidences on the critical contribution of the KRC towards socio-economic development. The leaders signed a Charter as their commitment to sensitize the communities on KRC and put children as priority. The CO plans to organize regular meetings with the traditional leaders to advance the KRC, and progressively introduce other themes such as social cohesion and sustainable peace.

Annual management plan (AMP)

The office's AMP 2019 focused on four cross-cutting priorities in operations and programmes:

- 1. Facilitate respectful and open work environment and promote ethical behaviours:** Six out of eight activities were completed as per the office's work plan for Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) 2019. Sensitization of staff and partners on PSEA was strengthened through communication materials and presentations at all staff meetings, and training of implementing partners. More than 70 per cent of the active NGO partners have been trained by UNICEF on PSEA. The CO sent a letter to the governmental partners through the Ministry of Foreign affairs to inform them of the PSEA protocol.
- 2. Ensure high calibre, talented and diverse staff is recruited and retained through an enabling working environment:** Through technical support from UNICEF-NY, two webinars were organized with local staff on preparing successful job application and interviews. The office-wide learning plan was implemented up to 82 per cent by the end 2019. As a part of the office's greening initiatives, solar energy systems were installed in Dori and Fada-Ngourma offices funded through the Greening Accessibility Fund from the HQs. All printers in the offices are equipped with a double-sided printing system. The CO also distributed UNICEF-branded reusable aluminum water bottles to all staff, encouraging a plastic-free environment.

Lack of office space has become a major challenge, especially in the office in Ouagadougou where the number of staffs has increased from 90 to 127 this year. A committee was set up to re-organize the available office space to accommodate the growing number of staff based on the organizational standard.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was tested in March 2019 and recommendations were implemented. The zonal office-specific BCP is being tested in three sub-offices, to be finalized early 2020. Solar panels were installed in five BCP sites in Ouagadougou to self-sustain the energy to aliment basic computer equipment and Wi-Fi connections.

3) Well-prepared and managed internal audit process: The CO had an external audit in 2018 for which recommendations had been fully implemented by May 2019. An internal audit was conducted in 2019 including three weeks 'on-site visit between October and November. Prior to the audit, a self-assessment exercise was conducted by

Burkina Faso

programmes and Operations. The office is currently waiting for a draft audit's report to develop an action plan to be implemented for a period of 18 months.

4) **The Mid-term review (MTR) and risk-informed programming.** The CO planned to organize a Strategic moment of reflection (SMR) and mid-term review (MTR) this year, in the perspective of a two-year extension of the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2018-2020. However, due to other compelling priorities, this major event was postponed until early 2020. The Terms of Reference for the joint SMR-MTR workshop, during which risk-analysis exercise will be introduced along the UNICEF's guide to risk-informed programming.

UNICEF-Burkina Faso commissioned a climate change risk analysis with focus on WASH. The final report will become available by early February 2020. UNICEF is also conducting a conflict analysis through an institutional contract with an International NGO, Search for Common Ground. In collaboration with the Gender unit of UNICEF NY and WCARO, a Gender programme review was concluded in 2019 through desk review and on-site visit. Evidences from these studies or review will feed into the SMR/MTR/risk-analysis workshop to strengthen the CO's risk-informed programming.

Humanitarian actions

The rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation has required collective and strengthened efforts for the CO to scale up the emergency response. Emergency expertise was deployed through more than 20 surge and support missions in 2019, including capacity to strengthen the sectoral coordination. With the cluster activation in December 2019, the CO ensures a fully dedicated coordinator and Information management specialists, along with the sub-national coordination capacity in the Centre-Nord region for clusters in WASH, education, nutrition and child protection (area of responsibility).

Health: UNICEF contributed to strengthened emergency preparedness and response by participating in national coordination mechanisms, including the Health in emergency sectoral group (cluster since December 2019) led by WHO. According to the epidemiological bulletin of week 52, 1,148 cases of measles including three deaths have been reported in 2019. UNICEF procured 202,100 measles vaccines to support measles vaccination campaigns in IDPs sites and host communities, reaching 37,346 children aged 9 to 59 months in the Sahel region, and 87,669 children aged 9 to 59 months in the Centre-Nord region.

UNICEF has invested in capacity development of community-based actors to deliver health services to children in the zones of insecurity. In Djibo, Gorom and Sebba of the Sahel region, 690 CBHWs were trained on oral administration of vaccines in communities and provided vaccination to 6,159 children. Additionally, 447 traditional birth attendants were trained on maternal and newborn home care and provided postnatal visits to 17,088 pregnant women and 7,975 newborns.

Nutrition: The CO supported the national programme for community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) through supply procurement, supervisions and capacity development. A total of 103,844 severe acute malnutrition (SAM) cases out of 133,066 planned (78 per cent) have received treatment in 2,018 health facilities throughout the country. Performance indicators were above the [Sphere standards](#), with a recovery rate of 91.1 per cent, a mortality rate of 2.1 per cent, and a defaulter rate of 6.8 per cent. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the Nutrition Directorate to develop a [simplified guideline](#) for CMAM, which has been validated for implementation in emergency-affected zones. As the lead for the Nutrition cluster, UNICEF coordinated the development of the [nutrition emergency response plan](#) (2019-2020) among other strategic documents. Through partnership with Save the children and ACF, UNICEF expanded the IYCF promotion and counselling in emergency-affected zones in the Centre-Nord and Est regions and introduced psychosocial support to nursing mothers in the baby-friendly spaces in IDP sites.

Child protection: UNICEF-Burkina Faso provided CP services to 69,460 emergency-affected children including 38,326 girls in the Sahel, Centre-Nord, Nord and Est regions, against the HAC target of 95,000. UNICEF's responses consisted of psychosocial supports, care for unaccompanied children or those separated from family, and identification, documentation, and referral of children survivors of violence and abuse. These interventions were complemented by community awareness activities to prevent violence and family separation, coupled with cash transfer and distribution of emergency kits for the most vulnerable households. As the co-lead of the CP sub-cluster under the Protection cluster led by UNHCR, UNICEF also played a key role in coordination at national and subnational levels.

Education: Through UNICEF's direct support, 1,762 schools have implemented the Safe school approach since 2018 to build resilience in schools. A total of 339,754 children (52 per cent are girls) are studying in schools equipped with emergency preparedness and response plans, 87 per cent of achievement against the annual target for 2019. UNICEF and partners improved access to education for 98,408 children (51,173 girls and 47, 235 boys) in conflict affected-areas through provision of essential teaching and learning materials. Due to the large funding gap in the sector, this result was

Burkina Faso

constrained at 49 per cent of the HAC 2019 target. In addition, 15,835 children have obtained access to education through UNICEF-supported temporary learning spaces or classrooms. A total of 340,590 boys and girls in the Sahel, Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun regions are learning in the classrooms where teachers were trained in psychosocial support, a 90 per cent's achievement against the 2019 target.

WASH: Through UNICEF's technical and financial supports, 54,349 people (including 28,262 women and 29,348 children) gained access to water based on the SPHERE standard in 2019, against the target of 136,000 (HAC 2019). The WASH sector attained 151 per cent of the sectoral target on water (target: 237,562), 50 per cent on sanitation (target: 149,481) and 110 per cent on hygiene (target: 149,481) according to the Humanitarian response plan (OCHA July 2019). However, UNICEF's results have attained only 55 per cent of the target for water, 27 per cent for sanitation and 49 per cent for hygiene, mainly due to a large funding gap against the HAC appeal. Given the persisting insecurity, a [technical note on the operational strategies for WASH in emergency](#) was developed by the WASH cluster under the UNICEF's leadership, which defines the CLTS strategies in emergency-affected zones.

Multi-country programming: Considering the spillover effects of the Mali crisis, the CO together with Mali and Niger offices with eight other UN agencies developed a joint program to support cross-border interventions in the Liptako-Gourma region, in collaboration with the Authority of Liptako-Gourma (ALG). With SIDA and ECHO funding, the joint program is aligned with the priorities of the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, the priority areas of the ALG, and the Swedish government's development cooperation strategy. Initially, UNICEF's contribution was focused on construction of infrastructures. However, given the local context, access constraint and limited budget within the program, the CO decided to focus on CLTS, WASH in schools including MHM, temporary learning spaces and the Safe School approach. As a main lesson learned, the flexibility offered to the CO, negotiated by the Regional office, allowed to propose relevant and realistic interventions in the trans-border region of extreme access constraint.

Gender responsive programming

Girls' secondary education: While the gender parity index in primary school has attained gender equity (1.009 in 2019: Ministry of Education), the national GER at post-primary level remains low and further regressed from 52.0 in 2018 to 50.5 per cent in 2019, with significant gender inequality unfavorable to boys (47.1 per cent for boys v.s. 54.1 per cent for girls). In the Sahel region, the completion rate among girls has decreased from 6.8 per cent to 5.9 per cent and from 10.4 per cent to 7.1 per cent for boys between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. About [21 per cent](#) of girls in the country are obliged to drop out during their menstrual period (UNICEF's study on MHM, 2017). Early marriage and adolescent pregnancies are also barriers for adolescent girls' retention in school.

Through UNICEF's financial and technical support to the Government, 18,450 adolescents of post-primary school (including 13,450 girls) obtained access to education in four targeted regions (Sahel, Est, Centre -Ouest, Boucle du Mouhoun) including those affected by emergency. UNICEF continued to provide scholarship to 1,275 most vulnerable girls and school supplies to facilitate their schooling.

A study conducted by UNICEF in 2018 on the girls' education revealed that incentive measures such as availability of a school canteen, scholarships, support for school supplies, a mean of commuting (e.g. bicycles) have a definite impact on access and retention of girls in school. However, these strategies must be complemented by sensitization of parents and community participation.

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM): UNICEF-Burkina Faso has further expanded the MHM initiative in schools to remove bottlenecks related to girls' education. In 2019, 61,139 school children (30,126 girls and 31,013 boys) in 200 new schools (160 primary schools and 40 post-primary or secondary schools) have introduced the MHM initiatives in the Est, Sahel and Cascades regions. Since 2018, the MHM initiative has been scaled up to 350 schools with UNICEF's support, where at least 40,000 girls (out of the CPD annual target of 50,000) are learning in an enabling environment for continued schooling. Several schools and municipalities have expressed their desire to be included in the MHM initiative. The focus groups conducted with girl members of MHM clubs indicated that the initiative has helped break the taboos and therefore, young girls and their peers are now able to talk about MHM freely.

Child marriage: Each year spent in secondary education helps to reduce the probability of being married before the age of 18 by at least five percentage points (World Bank, 2017^[1]). On the other hand, a girl who marries early is more likely to drop out of school. UNICEF Burkina Faso's contribution has enabled 310,042 adolescent girls to access the interventions to prevent or support girls affected by child marriage or early union. In 2019, 1,059 villages declared abandonment of child marriage and FGM, and are continuously monitored by community-based surveillance committees. Since 2018, 2,559 villages have declared ending child marriage, where 1,300,000 population are living in the protective environment for girls.

Burkina Faso

Cross-cutting themes

Early Childhood Development (ECD): In 2019, UNICEF supported 7,050 children (including 3,595 girls) with access to pre-primary education. Since the beginning of the CPD cycle in 2018, 36,301 (18,876 girls) children obtained access to pre-school education, 99.5 per cent of the CPD target in 2019. Among those, 1,275 children in 17 community-based ECD centers in the Plateau Central region were supported by the multi-country and inter-sectoral project in ECD funded by the Norwegian development agency (NORAD). Within the initiative, a sub-national ECD coordination mechanism was created in the Plateau Central region. A reflection is ongoing on possible integration of the national ECD coordination mechanism in the newly established multi-sectoral nutrition coordination unit in the Presidency.

Children on the move: UNICEF-Burkina Faso in partnership with International organization of migration (IOM) provided technical and financial supports to the Ministry in charge of child protection with implementation of the DFID-funded multi-country program on children on the move. Key results included establishment of seven continuums of care mechanisms (CCMs) in five regions (Sahel, Centre, East, Hauts-Bassins and Cascades) to provide multi-sectoral CP services to children on the move. The CCMs taps into the existing local CP services, while bringing innovations such as one-stop social welfare shop for child-friendly care. For timely detection of vulnerable children, the CCMs are linked to IOM's migrant flow monitoring points.

--

[1] Economic Impacts of Child Marriage, Global Synthesis Report (Conference Edition 2017)

Lessons Learned and Innovations

1. Humanitarian-development nexus programming

Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS)

[A technical note on the operational strategies for WASH in emergency](#) was developed through UNICEF's support to the Government which defines the CLTS strategies in emergency-affected zones. Mobilization of trained village leaders in remote and insecure areas was identified as an alternative strategy to facilitate CLTS in zones of limited accessibility. Targeted subsidy approach, as opposed to its systematic use, was also recommended given the large-scale population flux in host communities with limited access to sanitation.

The Safe School Initiative

UNICEF-Burkina Faso commissioned a comparative analysis of nine schools in Sahel and Nord regions to capture initial results from the Safe school strategy. In the intervention schools, the perception of safety among children and teachers was higher, and further increased by community participation. In a rapid evaluation conducted in 63 "safe" schools, 78 per cent (98/126) of the teachers acknowledged that the Safe school strategy has enabled schools to continue operating. The development of local capacity in psychological care proved of great benefit to communities and some of the teachers who were able to return to the schools.

Accountability of the emergency-affected population

To strengthen accountability towards affected population, 25 municipalities in the Sahel region are testing a digital feedback mechanism on the quality of birth registration services using RapidPro. This system captures feedback on quality services, reported by 536 trained community leaders (including 141 women) on a quarterly basis. The information will be used by local authorities to identify service delivery-related bottlenecks and improve birth registration services. UNICEF is exploring the application of this real-time, participatory reporting system in other zones of limited access, to monitor the humanitarian situation and quality of emergency responses.

2. Fostering innovations

A partnership with scouts for U-report

Through a new partnership with the national scouts' movement, over 545 youth scouts developed their knowledge on MHM, health, education and child rights. With the trained scouts, the CO organized five live chats through the U-Report platform, which facilitated an interactive exchange with 13,127 U-reporters (44 per cent girls) on these topics including sensitive topics such as MHM.

Burkina Faso

EduTrac

UNICEF continued to pilot EduTrac, a RapidPro-based data collection system in 1,275 schools in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions through conducting 14 surveys. The system was developed in 2018 and migrated to the Ministry of Education's server in November 2019. Geographical mapping of closed schools using EduTrac has been a helpful entry point for MoE to collect further data and better understand the situation to plan appropriate responses.

Nudging techniques for handwashing promotion

An action research on handwashing and behavior change through "nudging" techniques was piloted in 10 primary schools in Gourma, Est region. Attractive hand washing stations for children were set up, assuming that they would lure children to wash their hands even in absence of hygiene promotion. Initial observation after installation of these devices showed that 39.5 per cent of students washed their hands after using the toilet, compared to the baseline of 29 per cent.

3. UN working together

Children associated with armed groups and forces

In the growing insecurity, children and adolescents are increasingly exposed to the risk of being associated with armed groups and forces. In October 2019, the Resident coordinator, UNICEF and UNOHCHR had a conference call with the Special representative of the secretary-general for children and armed conflict. Following the call, the Special representative wrote to the President, requesting his support to accelerate the development and signature of a handover protocol of children associated with armed groups and forces (CAAGF). Through UNODC and UNICEF's joint advocacy, the Ministry of Justice organized a workshop to reflect on prevention and protection of CAAGF, resulting in draft national action plan on CAAGF and a handover protocol which are under finalization.

Programme criticality exercise

The UN system in Burkina Faso conduct a Program criticality (PC) exercise, led by UNICEF. The exercise consisted of capacity development of 40 PC focal points from UN agencies, followed by a peer review workshop and validation of the PC results by the UNCT. The UNCT's buy-in to the exercise was key to the success. Involvement of the senior programme staff and security officers from UN agencies helped establish an important link between the Security risk management and the PC assessment.

UNICEF-UNFPA joint programme

During the Design Workshop for the Phase II of the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to accelerate action to End Child Marriage, UNICEF-Burkina Faso shared the experience of "**Using Qualitative Research to inform Programming**". In-depth insights through qualitative research with women, especially *aunts*, played a powerful role in child marriage in the Burkinabe context. Qualitative research also provided insights on community-based actions to address child marriage.

The CO also shared a good practice on "**Guideline for public declaration**" during the Annual meeting of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on elimination of FGM. This guide elaborated in 2017 through UNICEF and UNFPA's joint advocacy and capacity development, is a catalytic reference document to ensure harmonization of public declaration process for the FGM abandonment.

4. Leveraging partnership for children

Since 2017, UNICEF-Burkina Faso has nurtured [a partnership with the gold mining industry](#) through the Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) forum. The revised Mining Code (2017) introduced the new Mining Funds for Local Development (MFLD) to mobilize additional resources for the Local Development Plans (LDP). UNICEF implemented a pilot project of this innovative partnership in two municipalities. The project aims at: 1) developing municipal LDPs that are relevant to local child right priorities; and 2) modeling multi-sectoral interventions for vulnerable children through leveraging funds from the mining industry.

In December 2019, the Chamber of Mines and UNICEF organized a briefing on the pilot and the humanitarian situation, attended by 24 participants including 12 mining companies. UNICEF encouraged the companies to: 1) contribute to monitoring violation of child rights in humanitarian settings; 2) strengthen an inclusive consultation process involving emergency-affected and host populations alike; and 3) enhance collaboration with local authorities, civil society and UNICEF to make a better synergy in addressing the communities' priorities.