Overview
Since early January 2017, the province of Soum in the Sahel region has been affected by successive threats and attacks by the armed extremist group “Ansaroul Islam.” On 3 March 2017 a teacher along with a civilian were murdered by the group in Kourfayel, a village close to Djibo, the capital city of Soum. The attacks targeted schools and police posts and caused a wide spread fear especially among teachers. As a result 100% of schools in Soum and some schools in other provinces were closed for three weeks in March, affecting 72,584 children.

In March/April, military forces of Burkina Faso and Mali with support from the French, conducted a cross border operation against the extremist group. Thanks to the operations, no new attacks targeting schools have been reported since early March. All of the schools previously closed have resumed their classes in April, except 11 schools in Soum). Eight health centers in Soum which were temporarily closed during the crises resumed their services since mid-May 2017. The persistent insecurity in the province, however, has caused population movements. Overall, 1378 persons including 344 women and 724 children have been internally displaced in the province of Soum, mainly in 12 villages in Diguel, Baraboulé and Djibo communes (map). So far, no separated or unaccompanied children have been registered. UNICEF-supported constructions of water and sanitation facilities in schools, villages or health centers in the region have also been disrupted. The recent attack and the temporary kidnapping of a government delegation during the UNICEF-funded field mission for water and sanitation (27 April in Oudalan) could further aggravate the fear of local authorities and contractors.

Situation
1,378 persons (including 344 women and 724 children) are internally displaced with an increased demand for education and health services in host communities.

11 schools remain closed in Soum, continues to affect the education of 891 students (including 434 girls).

Response
538 teachers in Soum screened for mental distress; 115 have received individual / group counseling by 16 psychologists / assistants trained by UNICEF and partners.
41 Ministry of Education staff from all regions were trained as trainers for the Safe School Strategy; 250 teachers in Soum trained on the strategy

Funding available: 223,000 USD
Funding gap: 1,681,400 USD
UNICEF’s response

- The second joint mission to the Sahel/North regions, that took place from 17 to 22 April, highlighted the impact of insecurity on children and their families raising concerns regarding education, health, food security, and psychosocial needs.

- In April, UNICEF launched an emergency response with a focus on psycho-social services for affected teachers in Soum, based on the request from the Ministry of Education. In partnership with Handicap International, UNICEF supported capacity development of 16 national psychologists and social workers on stress management in the context of insecurity. In May, these psychologists conducted a group screening on the psycho-social effects of the conflict on 538 teachers coming from three regions (Sahel, north and center north) who were pre-identified by the Ministry of Education. Of those, 115 of the most affected teachers received specialized psycho-social care through individual and group sessions which will continue up to a few months depending on the case.
With support from UNICEF’s Regional Office, a Training of Trainers on the “Safe School Strategy” was organized with 41 participants (education inspectors, regional education and Ministry of Social Affairs). The trainers were trained on psychosocial support and conflict & disaster risk reduction aiming at equipping teachers with the skills to respond in case of an emergency. The strategy will introduce a “risk analysis and management” concept in schools facilitated by a participatory process. The strategy was subsequently replicated in Djibo through a training with 250 teachers and social assistants, covering 60 schools (10,000 students) in Soum (15% of total teachers in the province).

To date, there has been a good turnout of students for end of semester exams even in the provinces affected by the temporary closure of schools. The final results for the exams are still to be released. UNICEF and the Ministry of Education are working together to better prepare the teachers and schools in affected zones for the new semester that will start in October 2017.

In June, UNICEF provided school kits to 21 schools in the province of Soum that are hosting displaced children.

Next steps

- Support the Ministry of Education with the replication of the “Safe School Strategy” as part of the Quality Child Friendly School Programme with focus on the Sahel region (funded by the Swiss Cooperation Agency)
- Advocate with donors and partners to build the capacity of teachers and health workers to provide psychosocial services and detect early warning signs of children in need of support.
- Support schools that host displaced children and ensure that their capacities are adequate (infrastructure, supplies and additional human resources).
- Set up a SMS-based early warning system to closely monitor the security situation in schools/communities.
- Continue monitoring the situation of displaced population especially children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers to identify their needs such as psycho-social services and non-food items.
- Conduct community dialogues and sensitisation of the population in host communities on child protection, conflict resolution and support to teachers/schools, including out of school adolescents and youths.
- Monitor administrative data at health facilities including the prevalence of epidemic-prone diseases (cholera, meningitis, malaria) and ensure the needs of the displaced population be incorporated in the planning.
- Support construction of two new boreholes in Pahoundé village in Soum that hosts internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to the increased number of population (more than 1228 people).
- Provision of Basic Service Sets to displaced households for transport and water management and strengthen the sensitization of the population in host communities to promote good WASH practices.

Funding gap:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Budget USD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education:</strong> training on psychosocial services and replication of “Safe School Strategy” with 4,432 teachers; and catch-up classes and school kits to support displaced children and host schools</td>
<td>896,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection:</strong> 1) capacity development of 1,095 social workers, adolescents and youth leaders on sustaining peace; 2) Psychosocial supports to 3,000 displaced or out of school children in 17 villages; 3) Life skills and peace building education for adolescents; 4) Sensitization of host communities of IDPs on child rights; 5) Provision of family kits and child protection services to IDPs</td>
<td>465,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH: Construction of water boreholes and provision of water kits for IDPs+ C4D</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up a SMS message-based early warning system in schools and communities</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total funding gap</td>
<td>1,681,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information contact:

Anne H. Vincent  
Representative  
UNICEF Burkina Faso  
Tel: (+226) 25 49 07 40  
Email: avincent@unicef.org

Rinko Kinoshita  
Deputy Representative  
UNICEF Burkina Faso  
Tel: (+226) 25490735  
Email: rkinoshita@unicef.org

Saran Koly  
Communication Specialist  
UNICEF Burkina Faso  
Tel (+226) 25 49 07 48  
Email: skoly@unicef.org