

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. Updated demographic data from the 5th population and housing general census conducted in 2019 indicate that the **population** doubled between 1996 and 2019 to reach 20,487,979 in 2019, with 51.7 per cent of women. In addition, 2 in 3 people of Burkina Faso are less than 25 years old. This shows that the population is relatively young with children under fifteen representing 45.3 per cent of the total population.

The country has strengthened its political stability with the peaceful organization of the presidential and legislative elections in November 2020. This positive political development is nevertheless tainted by the persistence of the security crisis in some regions of the country. The ongoing **security crisis** has become increasingly challenging to UNICEF's programmes, with important implications on child rights in the **whole country**, especially in 6 identified priority regions: Sahel, Nord, Centre-Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Est and Est. As of 31st December 2020, 1,074,993 internally displaced people (IDP) were registered compared with 560,033 in December 2019 (OCHA) and 60.8% of the IDP identified in 2020 are children. Most of them are in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions.

Today, over 2.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance while the country is also confronted with the consequences associated with the occurrence of COVID-19 in March 2020. Children, who represent two-thirds of affected people[1] and half of internally displaced people, have been disproportionately impacted by this crisis. As of 16th December 2020, the total number of cases corresponded to 4,832, including 75 deaths and 3,477 cured in all regions of the country. Under these circumstances, the availability of testing kits cannot be underestimated, and it is promising to improve the surveillance and prevention of the spread of COVID-19

While the country had demonstrated relative economic resilience to the security crisis with an average economic growth exceeding 5.5 per cent between 2016 and 2019 (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2020), the pandemic of COVID19 has seriously undermined the country's economic performance in 2020. Economic growth narrowed from 5.7 per cent in 2019 to 2.8% per cent in 2020. Fiscal space was also affected, pushing the government to revise the initial state budget to increase the public deficit to 5.3 per cent, in order to mitigate the socio-economic effects of the health crisis.

Every child survives and thrives preliminary results from the 2020 National Nutrition Survey (NNS) conducted in October-November 2020 utilizing SMART methodology showed that 1 in 4 children is stunted, around 902,253 children under 5 years old and at national level and the stunting is significantly higher in Sahel region with a prevalence of 43.1%. The prevalence of stunting was 25% in 2018 and 24.4% in 2019.

Infant and young child feeding practices have improved, as the rate of early initiation of breastfeeding during the first hour of life raised from 59.1% in 2019 to 63.4% in 2020. In the same vein, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding raised from 59% to 64.3% during the same reporting period. In addition, factors offsetting efforts to improve the nutritional status of children include internal displacement of populations due to insecurity, limited access to livelihoods, health care and nutrition services, and the outbreak of epidemics – such as measles – in some regions. Furthermore, 82 in 1000 live births die before the age of 5 years. This shows why life-saving interventions are still relevant in Burkina Faso.

Every child learns: Education is one of the sectors most severely affected by COVID-19 while **Children's access to quality education continued** to be severely mired by **security threats**. Consequently, all the schools in the country (more than 20,000) were closed for several weeks to stop

local transmission of COVID 19, affecting 5,130,730 children of one term of classes from March 16th, 2020. The gross enrolment rate declined for the third consecutive year by 2.2 points between 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. The primary school completion rate also declined by 3.1 percentage points, from 27.8% in 2017/2018 to 18.8% in 2018/2019 and then to 16.9% in 2019-2020. Only 22% of children displaced by insecurity are reenrolled.

Every child is protected: Available situation reports of the humanitarian crisis have unanimously revealed that there is an increase in risks and numerous cases of child marriage, especially in Sahel region. Affected families admitted using child marriage as a means of protecting girls from heightened precariousness, violence and other forms of ill-treatment of armed groups against women. In 2020, Burkina Faso is classified as a “situation of concern” with immediate effect in the mandate of the SRSR-CAAC (A/74/845–S/2020/525). Against this backdrop, Burkina Faso is now required to submit a quarterly report that is identified as a monitoring reporting mechanism (MRM) on grave violations of children in armed conflicts.

Every child lives in safe and clean environment: approximately 47% of the population still practice open defecation (against the CPD target of 40%) according to the Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) 2019.[2] The Annual Sector Performance Review Report 2018[3] shows that a total of 4,468,907 people out of the total population had improved access to sanitation at national level. This report shows that there is an urgent need to accelerate and to scale-up the sanitation coverage at national level before the end of the year 2022.

Every child has an equitable chance in life: In Burkina Faso, the rate of child monetary poverty stands at 77.7%, while 42.1% of children are living in extremely poor households. In addition, a public expenditure review undertaken by the government in 2020 with UNICEF’s support showed that the government is sensitive to addressing child deprivation by allocating 27 per cent of state budget to education sector.

[1]Idem 1

[2] **Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017: Special focus on inequalities.** New York: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization, 2019. https://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2019-full-report.pdf

[3] Annual Sector Performance Report 2018 (Partial report), Ministry of Water and Sanitation, December 2018.

Major contributions and drivers of results

KEY RESULT FOR CHILDREN (KRC2) / PREVENTION OF STUNTING

The humanitarian crisis experienced by the country is slowing down the improvement in the reduction of stunting. To prevent further degradation of the nutrition status of children, the CO engaged in multi-stakeholders programming at scale to intensify service delivery in the targeted regions.

To accelerate and improve the rate of exclusive breastfeeding up to **to 80% by 2025** in Burkina Faso, UNICEF entered into partnership with a NGO “Alive and Thrive”. Together, the Ministry of Health (MoH) was provided with technical and financial support for the conception and implementation of the national initiative of “Stronger with Breastmilk Only”. The launch of this campaign took place in June 2020 in the presence of the national nutrition champion (Laarle Naba), the Minister of Health, as well as UNICEF and WHO representatives, with participation of 3,000 people via Zoom and Facebook.

From a multisectoral perspective, UNICEF advocacy efforts have resulted in the adoption of the National Nutrition Security Policy in June 2020 by the government. This action has contributed to mobilise forces and win support from decision-makers for the cause of children. For example, the national budget line for nutrition was increased to 1,510,000 US dollars in 2020 allowing the purchase of 30,000 boxes of ready to use therapeutic food for children affected by malnutrition. As of 31 December, 89,513 severely acute malnourished (SAM) children (46,547 girls and 42,966 boys), were admitted and treated in the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) programme. This represents an increase of 140.76 per cent compared to the previous year target of 63,591. Most of these children (60%) are from the five crisis- affected regions.

In collaboration with multiple stakeholders, UNICEF Burkina Faso strengthened the capacity of MoH to expand the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) programme in 7 out of 13 regions. A total of 545,877 pregnant and lactating mothers organized in 26,024 mother-to-mothers support groups (including a total of 20 mothers in each group) had participated in monthly sessions to promote appropriate infant and young child feeding practices. These monthly sessions of mother peer support groups are a good opportunity to share positive experiences among mothers, and to learn from each other on good practices related to infant feeding. Moreover, 122,484 children from 6 to 23 months, received micronutrient powders to improve complementary feeding. UNICEF also supported the two rounds of the national Vitamin A Supplementation (VAS), deworming and screening of acute malnutrition, which benefited 3,546,615 children aged 6- 59 months (108% of coverage).

KRC6 / CHILD MARRIAGE (CM)

970 new villages have been provided with services for child marriage in the Est, Nord, and Centre regions. This is a result of **multisectoral interventions** between education, health and child protection, which include life skills and sexual and reproductive health, leadership and negotiation skills. Consequently, 87,285 adolescent girls (118% of annual target) received prevention and care services for Child Marriage. In addition, the musician Smarty, who was appointed National Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF in Burkina Faso on 26th June 2020, travelled across the country to contribute to raise the awareness of the population on Child Marriage, in particular with his flagship song **Ombre de la Nuit**[1], continuing the major campaign against CM “Don’t call me Madam”.

The booklet Child marriage, understand to better act[2] was published by UNICEF and distributed to more than 6,200 child protection actors and to adolescent girls. **335,202 people (182,706 women and girls) supported the abandonment of FGM and CM through community discussions and awareness campaigns**, which reached more than 3,000,000 persons via mass media, social networks and a press caravan.

KRC8 / ENDING OPEN DEFECATION

In 2020, UNICEF Burkina Faso Country Office continued to support the demand-based approach to improve population’s access to sanitation services through community-led total sanitation (CLTS) in Centre-Ouest, Est, Centre-Nord and Sahel **in the perspective of the triple nexus-humanitarian-development and peace**. As a result, 294 new communities were **triggered** (147 per cent of annual target), 258 communities (129 per cent of annual target) were **declared** Open Defecation Free (ODF) and 338 communities including some communities previously declared ODF in 2019 were **certified** ODF.

According to post-ODF monitoring conducted by the provincial committees and ODF evaluation in the Centre-Ouest and Est regions, a total of 120 communities (out of 261) have maintained their ODF status 12 months after ODF declaration.

Estimated 420,756 people (80,785 men, 87,517 women, 131,276 girls and 121,178 boys) representing 323% of the CPD target now live in newly declared ODF areas. Strengthened capacity of implementing partners over years and the active participation of the local Government helped achieve these results.

In addition, UNICEF Community-led total sanitation in emergency (CLTS) validated by the cluster was piloted in the Centre-Nord this year. 27 IDP sites (out of 40) were triggered, reaching nearly 6,659 people (**2,304 girls and 1,001 boys**). Evaluations for ODF certifications for these sites will be finalized in 2021

KEY DRIVERS OF THE ANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)

Institutionalization of integrated Community Case Management (iCCM): The country office used community-based approaches as an accelerator of Key Results for children (KRCs). More than 17,000 community health workers (CBHWs) were involved in immunization activities as part of the outreach strategy. They were especially deployed for polio campaigns that reached over 3,000,000 children in 2020. In the crisis-affected areas, 122 of the 133 health structures were closed or were functioning at a minimum and the transfer of vaccination tasks from health facilities to CBHW allowed the continuity of services wherever the immunization service was disrupted. To date, 4,000 children have been vaccinated with Penta 3 and more than 5,000 vaccinated against measles in the Sahel region. In addition, the CBHWs run curative services for the integrated management of childhood illnesses with an emphasis on the deadliest illnesses. From January to September 2020, 186,657 children under 5 years of age were treated by community health workers for malaria (76,862 treated,) diarrhea (46,095 treated) and pneumonia (74,996 treated); 38,101 cases were referred for comprehensive care.

Youth participation, empowerment and social cohesion: In promoting social cohesion UNICEF supported active participation of young and adolescents through the training of 790 institutional and community actors and 1,134 community leaders including 303 women on the culture of peace and social cohesion in the Sahel and North regions. Community dialogues, social mediations and local awareness-raising sessions carried out in these regions reached 15,047 people (8,562 men and 6,485 women). In addition, 4,850 adolescents (2,310 girls) organized in 276 youth clubs benefited from daily life skills sessions. 450 adolescents and unemployed young people (185 girls) were placed in vocational training or received support for income-generating activities. In addition, U-Report partners were deployed in the response against COVID-19. 5 volunteers have been working full time to reply on real time questions about COVID-19. This was accompanied by the launch of a chatbot to help youth understand the pandemic. UNICEF reached over 58,442 youth throughout the 13 regions of Burkina Faso. U-report has 60,440 registered young people and 11% of the registered ones are permanently active on the platform.

Promotion of Ethics and Fraud Policies as well as Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is ensured within the office and among the implementing partners: Staff and partners are aware on the requirements of PSEA through communication materials and training. 75% of staff including newly recruited staff attended training on PSEA while 43% were trained on ethics and anti-fraud. All implementing partners (IPs) participated in events and trainings on PSEA, HACT, Ethics and Fraud while 75% of CSOs implementing PCAs or SSFAs signed commitments on PSEA.

Enhanced efficiency in Programme Implementation: a market survey was conducted to identify the most reliable vendors and providers of services. This has resulted in the identification of 70 new valuable suppliers based. A new supplier data base was established for the Implementation of the Cash transfer programmes.

HUMANITARIAN ACTIONS/RESPONSE

The rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation has required collective and strengthened efforts for the CO to scale up the emergency response **including the rapid response mechanism (RRM) in the perspective of the triple nexus-humanitarian-development and peace**. UNICEF strengthened its cluster leadership role in WASH, Education, and Child protection throughout the reporting year and its field presence was strengthened by increasing UNICEF staff capacity in Dori (Sahel region), Kaya (Centre-Nord region) and Fada (Est region). Additionally, one staff was deployed in the UN common office in Ouahigouya (Nord region) to monitor the humanitarian situation in the region, to maintain close collaboration with partners in order to initiate relevant actions for children. To alleviate the suffering of vulnerable families, UNICEF in partnership with the Burkinabe Red Cross and ORANGE money have joined forces to provide \$182 (in three tranches) unconditional cash to 4,000 displaced families in Koungoussi and Bourzanga in the Centre-Nord region. To mitigate the risks associated with the flooding crisis and COVID-19, UNICEF established a partnership with CONASUR for the distribution of 2,000 tarpaulins and 400 mosquito nets to 7,000 IDPs victims of floods in the Centre-Nord region, and the provision of 50 tablets to strengthen the capacities of CONASUR for the registration of IDPs. In addition to kits and NFI in the Sahel region, UNICEF distributed four tents (24square meters) to the General Hospital in Kaya to support preparedness to COVID 19 pandemic and three tents to the health department of Matiakoali in the Est region to increase their bed-capacity due to increased displacement in the area. Also, 13,500 additional mosquito nets were provided to partners for emergency response.

Health: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF supported the government in coordination, surveillance, risk communication, prevention and control of infection, management of cases and data, provision of supplies. This support has enabled 386,831 women and children to receive timely health care services in 2020. For example, 47,181 children under 5 were provided with curative services including measles vaccines. In addition, 291,894 children and women benefited from essential health care including malaria prevention, and 31,000 women and children received long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs).

Nutrition: 47,351 children suffering from SAM were treated in the 5 regions emergency regions representing 60 per cent of the total SAM children treated in the country. A total of 160,238 pregnant and Lactating women received messages on good infant and young child feeding practices in the same regions, and 1,609,044 children were supplemented with vitamin A during the first round.

Education: UNICEF responded to a twofold crisis: Security and COVID-19. The establishment of radio education programme created an enabling environment for 215,960 children, including 104,213 girls to pursue their education in crisis-affected areas.

Due to COVID-19, schools were closed from March to August 2020 to contain the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak affecting 5,130,730 children. UNICEF, in partnership with nine international and national non-governmental organizations and the government authorities supported the enrolment of 232,946 children (113,400 girls) and provided appropriate essential learning services to them. At least 104,826 out-of-school children (OOSCs) (51,364 girls) had access to learning opportunities. Thus, this action has contributed to a reduction in the national workload of more than 2 million OOSCs.

Child protection: UNICEF supported the provision of protection services to 217,759 children (112,113 girls) affected by humanitarian emergencies and COVID-19 pandemic, including 1,973 children with disabilities; and 552 unaccompanied and separated children were reunified with their families. CP humanitarian cash-transfer-plus initiative reached 44,582 children from 12,915 households.

WASH: UNICEF reached 477,142 people – 148,868 girls and 137,416 boys – with emergency WASH

services in the five priority regions (Centre-Nord, North, Sahel, Est and Boucle du Mouhoun). Approximately 2,121 people with disabilities benefited from hygiene kits and 1,220 people from latrine construction. Through COVID-19 response, the CO also continued to lead the WASH cluster, contributing significantly to the routine humanitarian programme and further providing 159,006 people with critical WASH supplies and 160 Health Care Facilities (HCFs).

GENDER RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Child marriage: 87,285 adolescent girls enjoyed improved access to social services enabling them to prevent child marriage or early union. 46,255 adolescent boys were trained on positive masculinities and are now contributing to the abandonment of CM.

Menstrual hygiene management (MHM): the CO reached 36,893 girls in 2020 with MHM programme. From 2018 to June 2020, a total of 65,519 girls against a target of 50,000 were reached with the MHM interventions (131%). Moreover, the CO successfully celebrated the global menstrual hygiene day in the presence of the Ambassador of Canada for Burkina Faso and the Ministers of Education and Health, during which the Government expressed his commitment towards MHM promotion. This event reached 205,000 people through social media.

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcP7Qb8qPC8>

[2] Child marriage, understand to better act https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jtpk-GumzknbJy_LIxL3jIB3WUu0oBSf/view?usp=sharing

UN Collaboration and Other Partnerships

Polio Eradication Initiative: UNICEF and WHO have joined forces to support the national Polio Eradication Campaign in crisis-affected regions. Additionally, UNICEF strengthened its partnership with GAVI, USAID/ CDC, and the Global Fund, with the main objective of leveraging resources for children in response to COVID-19 epidemic. The H4 + (joint coordination framework continues to collaborate for supporting the health sector.

UN Regional hubs are established and functional to implement the UN S.G planning Directive. The leading of the WASH, Education, Child protection and nutrition clusters by UNICEF in response to the humanitarian crisis as well as the SUN-UN network constituted federative frameworks for collaboration within the UN agencies. UNICEF has led the design and implementation of the UN Business Operating Strategy (BOS) within the UNCT. BOS is now available online for all UNCT members because of UNICEF leadership. UNICEF has also chaired the UN Gender group within the UNCT in 2020.

The United Nations system and Joint Programming and Resources Mobilization in the Est Region in the perspective of the triple nexus-development-peace: In 2020, UNICEF led the joint UN programme for the prevention of malnutrition in Est region and has mobilised funds on behalf of other UN Agencies (WFP, WHO, FAO and UNFPA).

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage is intended to support the Government to achieve the national goal of accelerating the elimination of child marriage in all its forms in Burkina Faso in 2025. In 2020, the national platform, including the civil society and coordinated by the two agencies, held the annual review of the joint programme to take stock of the results and to define the way forward.

The Other partnership includes the work with the gold mining industry through the Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) Forum has been established since 2017. In parallel, UNICEF has been implementing a pilot project of the innovative tripartite initiative in two municipalities. The aim of this tripartite collaboration – with the mining sector and the Government/local authorities – is to: 1) implement multi-sectoral actions to tackle child rights issues; and 2) advocate inclusion of these actions in the Municipal Development Plans (MDPs), as well as in the companies' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plans to leverage sustainable resources for children. UNICEF also proactively participates in the technical and financial partner's group dedicated to Governance and Local Administration.

Lessons Learned and Innovations

Lessons learned

Continuity of services in the context of COVID-19 and beyond (as part of Stay and Deliver[1]): the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 demonstrated that other ways of working can be adopted, such as E-meetings, teleworking, implementation of activities with small groups, etc. to achieve planned results for children while integrating prevention measures (social distancing ect..). Similarly, remote work modality constitutes a solution to the increasingly difficult access to the most hard-to-reach areas of the country.

The community approach is a means of mitigating risks associated with multiple crises for service delivery: the institutionalized community platform with 17,800 Community-Based Health Workers was an opportunity to ensure continuity of nutrition services despite COVID-19 limitations,

by delegation of tasks in areas where health centres are closed. The strategy of working with local surveyors during the nutrition survey had allowed to collect nutrition data in insecure areas and reduced movement of people from one place to another during COVID-19 context. The experience started between the NGO “Alima” and UNICEF in Barsalogo health district demonstrated that implementation of simplified approaches for prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition in health districts where health centres are closed is promising to improve the coverage of the CMAM programme.

The adoption of differentiated approach to the implementation and monitoring of activities can generate efficiency gains in targeted regions: Based on the profiles of each region, COVID19 has shown that it is possible to generate efficiency gains by properly categorizing activities according to whether they can be carried out effectively face-to-face or remotely.

A weak health sector carries a systemic risk that prevents UNICEF’s efforts from winning support for the cause of the children: COVID19 has revealed the significant risks that are associated with a precarious health system for national socio-economic progress. Any efforts to boost economic recovery would be futile if significant investments are not made to strengthen the health system capacities to contain epidemics in the future in Burkina Faso.

Innovations

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA): in order to sustain the post-ODF status of communities, two implementing partners (PLAN in the Est region and APS in the Centre-Ouest region) are testing VSLA systems. Project teams are providing women with technical and management skills to put in place VSLA in their communities. Women in each VSLA are trained and granted with revolving funds to invest for the improvement of their sanitation facilities towards standardized durable latrines. This experience has recently been launched and the results will be monitored and documented in 2021.

Nudging techniques for handwashing promotion/Innovations for WinS: a project on handwashing promotion through “Nudging” was piloted in the Est region in 2019. The technique relies on behavioural economics[2], where subtle changes in the environment are introduced while allowing people to make individual choices without affecting their freedom of action. At the end of the project, the children’s knowledge and attitude on handwashing during key moments improved from 69.34% to 92.27%, while handwashing practice improved by 22.10% after using the toilet. To make this technique accessible to all, a manual[3] was developed and distributed to schools and other key actors. **This promising strategy for handwashing promotion in schools was highly applauded at regional level.** UNICEF scaled up the project to additional 50 schools in Est and Centre-Ouest regions after the COVID-19 outburst for additional data generation to inform the sector about the innovative approach. More results will be available in the first trimester of 2021.

RapidPro for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): to strengthen the accountability towards affected populations, 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.

Mobile Journalism (MoJo): 18 youth from emergency areas were selected and trained on MoJo to create video human interest stories. The aim is to show the reality of young Burkinabè, using their own voice and views, and in areas difficult to access due to the security situation, including the 6 priority

regions.

U-Partners and COVID-19: U-partners were deployed in the response against COVID-19. 5 volunteers have been working full time to reply on real time questions about COVID-19. This was accompanied by the launch of a chatbot to help youth understand the pandemic. UNICEF reached over 58,442 youth throughout the 13 regions of Burkina Faso.

U-Report chatbots: throughout the year, 5 chatbots were launched through U-Report on different topics (COVID-19, immunization, nutrition, climate, menstrual hygiene) and 7 SMS-based live chats were organized with youth. Considering that young people demonstrated their interest in seeking and sharing information, the CO is planning to strengthen the initiative in the coming years, by supporting an existing real-time information centre for students, which is based at the Ministry of Education.

mHealth COVID-19: during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to launch a new version of data management system (mHealth) specific to COVID-19. This solution was used by over 100,000 people to check by themselves if they were developing COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days. The mHealth COVID-19 is being used by the CO's team in charge of COVID-19 response to follow COVID-19 subject contact.

[1] Stay and Deliver: the 2011 concept on policy and operations in highly insecure environments provides advices and recommendations to practitioners on critical issues, such as risk management, responsible partnerships, adherence to humanitarian principles, acceptance and negotiations with relevant actors.

[2] Quigley M. (2013). Nudging for health: on public policy and designing choice architecture. *Medical law review*, 21(4), 588–621. <https://doi.org/10.1093/medlaw/fwt022>

[3] Project Coup de pousse, manual
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iFWS232Fdmvovkvx_md9vjqIt4T4d4Kv/view?usp=sharing