

Burkina Faso

Update on the context and situation of children

Burkina Faso faces a serious multidimensional child rights crisis. This crisis is driven by combination of several key factors including (i) armed violence/insecurity; (ii) weak governance; (iii) demographic pressures; (iv) climate change; and (v) health crises (including disease outbreaks and the COVID-19 pandemic), which make Burkina Faso more vulnerable, with significant consequences on its path towards sustainable development, lasting peace, and upholding of child rights.

The humanitarian situation continues to worsen with over 1.8 million people internal displaced persons registered, of which over 58.44 per cent are children. It is increasingly difficult and costly to reach the most vulnerable communities in need of humanitarian assistance. Two military coups in January and September 2022 have further worsened political instability. Burkina Faso's population is estimated at 22.4 million people, of which 52 per cent are children under the age of 18. The needs of this young population are significant[1], however national systems remain weak and are unable to provide essential services to meet the growing demands, harness its demographic dividend and economic potential. Access to healthcare in eight out of 13 regions has been seriously affected by insecurity, with 202 health facilities closed and 430 facilities operating at minimum capacity, depriving access to healthcare for 2,435,579 million people[2], resulting in a serious health and nutrition crisis which disproportionately affects children. The under-five mortality rate remains stable at 87.8 per 1,000 live births. The total population affected by food insecurity increased from 2,867,061 people in 2021 to 3,453,000 in 2022[3], due to various factors including climate shocks and drought. This has resulted in a 10 per cent reduction in national food production and a continuous increase in food prices. The education crisis is dire with 6,253 schools closed in 2022 (24 per cent of schools nationwide) depriving over 1 million of access to education. This is in addition to the 2.6 million children already out of school before the crisis, which means that 1 in 2 children are currently out of school. Consequently, indicators for education continue their downward trend. The gross enrollment rate for primary education decreased from 86.1 per cent (87.3 per cent for girls,) in 2021 to 85.8 per cent (86.4 per cent for girls) in 2022. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education (MENAPLN) to invest in alternative strategies such as the Radio Education Programme to ensure that children continue learning. Burkina Faso's child protection crisis is worsened by pre-existing structural vulnerabilities due to negative social norms and cultural practices. Before the security crisis, one in four children were victims of at least one form of violence, with one in two girls (20-24 years old) married before the age of 18. To respond to this situation, UNICEF has accelerated both fixed and mobile child protection strategies to ensure that more vulnerable children access psychosocial and mental health services. There is a serious water and sanitation (WASH) crisis. Over 3 million people[4] are in urgent need of access to adequate WASH services, and more than 500,000 people are at high risk of water scarcity in the Sahel, Centre-Nord, Nord, and Est regions. This situation has been further worsened by attacks on water points and sabotage of electricity pylons in many towns, with 58 incidents recorded in 2022, compared to eight in 2021 and two in 2020, cutting off water for around 830,000 people, including 465,000 children. Despite these challenges, UNICEF has increased its support to some short- and medium-term solutions to alleviate the suffering of the most affected populations in those enclaved areas. Young people and adolescents are particularly exposed to exploitation, violence, child marriage, dropping out of school, and recruitment by armed groups. According to a U-Report poll, 70 per cent of U-Reporters in Burkina Faso think they are not adequately consulted in decision making and would like to have more opportunities to be engaged in the development of their communities. UNICEF has therefore expanded partnerships with young people, especially U-reporters to engage them in the creation of local solutions to unmet social needs. [1]The demographic figure is characterized by The estimated population, based on the 2019 national census data, is 22.4 million people in 2022 with : (i) more than half (52 per cent) that are children (U18) ; (ii) more than 3 out of 4 people (78 per cent) are

under 35 years of age (youth & children) ; (iii) 1 out of 3 people live in poverty on less than 1 \$ a day ; (iv) 7 out of 10 Burkinabe children aged 0-17 are deprived of access to 3 social services essentials for survival and development; (v) 1 out of 11 children die before celebrating their 5th birthday ; (vi) 1 out of 3 deaths of children under 5 years of age is a neonatal death ; (vii) 2 out of 5 children die from 3 main killer diseases malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea ; (viii) More than 2 out of 3 death (71 per cent) caused by these 3 killer diseases occur in the community ; (ix) 1 out of 2 deaths of children under 5 years of age is due to malnutrition ; (x) More than 1 out of 3 children of primary school age do not attend primary education and at least 9 into pre-school children lack access to early childhood education ; (xi) 2 out of 3 women of childbearing age have been victims of GBV and FGM ; (xii) 1 out of 2 women aged 20-24 is married before the age of 18; (xiii) 1 out of 4 children under 5 years of age are not registered at birth.[2]Ministry of Health[3] Based on the results of the Harmonized Framework (HF) analysis of food insecurity[4]WASH Cluster/OCHA

Major contributions and drivers of results

Investing in local actors and community-based platforms to accelerate, boost and facilitate the institutionalization of the KRC 1, 2, 6,7 and 8; and to ensure the continuity of the humanitarian action/response in enclaved areas:

The activation of UNICEF's Level 2 Emergency Procedures provided an opportunity to accelerate the delivery of services for children and communities based on the AMP key strategic pillars: Triple nexus, localization with multisectoral child centered services, and youth engagement. UNICEF expanded its field presence to include virtual offices in regions without permanent field presence to support the timely implementation and monitoring of programmes. In 2022, UNICEF invested in community-based responses and capabilities to ensure the provision of integrated packages of multisectoral child-centred services, including in hard-to-reach areas. This entailed putting communities at the centre of contextualized and localized services for children, transferring knowledge and capacities to local actors including young people, making them agents of change and making communities more resilient. Against this backdrop, 595 people from local and community-based organizations had access to from capacity building initiatives on humanitarian early warning systems and multisectoral assessments. Through the rapid response and resilience (3RC) approach, humanitarian assistance was provided to 196,356 people living in remote and hard to reach areas. At the policy engagement level, the Government adopted the decree on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes signed by the President of Burkina Faso (**KRC2**). UNICEF supported national counterparts to develop and validate the National Guidance on the Interoperability Mechanism between the health and civil registration services to improve birth and death registration, implementing the Interoperability Protocol signed by the Ministers in charge of Territorial Administration and Health in 2021 (**KRC7**). As a result, 1,246 civil servants at municipality, provincial and regional levels from the 13 regions were oriented on this guidance. Due to the collaboration between three sectors, Civil Registration, Social Action and Education, 102,058 children including 53,543 girls, had their births registered and received birth certificates. At the service delivery level, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to organize two national rounds of Vitamin A supplementation (VAS) coupled with deworming and screening of acute malnutrition. In June 2022, 3,628,850 children aged 6 to 59 months old received the first dose of Vitamin A (101 per cent of target) and were screened for acute malnutrition (**KRC2**). Nine hundred and five new villages supported by UNICEF declared their commitment to end child marriage (CM), female genital mutilation and violence against children. In addition, traditional and religious leaders renewed their commitment to changing social norms for the abandonment of CM (**KRC6**). Furthermore, UNICEF supported the Government to develop an orientation note and a national road map for open defecation free (ODF) acceleration, taking in account community led total sanitation (CLTS) in emergencies. An estimated 1,064,638 people (553,612 women and 551,026 men) are now living in areas declared as ODF because of UNICEF's direct contribution (**KRC8**). **Expanding immunization and nutrition services in crisis-affected regions:** UNICEF

remained a major partner in maintaining the achievements in **vaccination coverage and systemic gains**, especially in the regions impacted by the disruption of services and the closure of health facilities due to insecurity. In 2022, 4,200,000 children aged 0-5 years were vaccinated against polio and 820,664 children aged 0 to 11 months were vaccinated with three Pentavalent vaccines. Burkina Faso recorded one case of environmental poliovirus and 72 cases of AFP caused by type 2 derived poliovirus since 2019. Despite widespread insecurity a national vaccination campaign was organized during which 19,344 vaccinators (mostly community health workers and youth) conducted household visits. The distribution of vaccines in the vaccination sites faced challenges such as poor road access in several districts which are only accessible by humanitarian flights and local logistics. UNICEF supported the management of acute malnutrition, and 103,525 severely acute malnourished children under 5 years old were treated representing 68 per cent of the annual target, with a recovery rate of 92 per cent.

Testing behavioral science techniques in Maternal nutrition and child health programming/Behavioral Insights (BI): A qualitative analysis using the BI approach was conducted to identify social and psychological barriers and specific behaviors affecting maternal nutrition programmes. A mapping of major behavioral patterns was completed to identify social norms and misconceptions that need to be addressed. This led to the identification of key behavioral interventions and key stakeholders to target for behavior change, namely pregnant women, husbands, mothers-in-law, and health workers etc., which informed the adaptation of communication materials to address misconceptions and to influence policy change. The involvement of local actors in the design of the BI approach was instrumental in influencing adherence to prenatal consultations by pregnant women to facilitate the introduction of multiple micronutrient supplementation (MMS). Training sessions were organized to build the capacity of health workers to implement the BI approach and **48,715** pregnant women (100 per cent of target) received MMS in the two health districts.

Facilitating continued access to child-friendly education with emphasis on out-of-school children: The number of out-of-school children (OOSC) who participated in UNICEF-supported education programmes (early learning, primary or secondary) increased from 185,627 (91,208 girls) in 2021 to 271,464 (137,231 girls) in 2022. UNICEF ensured access to continued education through radio programmes for 695,475 children (414,602 girls; 60 per cent of target). UNICEF handed over 18 post primary schools, 204 classrooms and 119 temporary learning spaces to the MENAPLN; procured and distributed 64,676 school kits for children as part of the ‘Back to School’ campaign; and 2,610 schools became Quality Child Friendly Schools (26 per cent of public schools). Together with the education cluster partners, UNICEF convened and coordinated partnerships with communities, national and international organizations, UN agencies, and the MENAPLN to create education solutions for an increasing number of OOSC in crisis-affected regions based on a continuum from emergency response to enrollment into formal public education, in line with the triple nexus approach. During the school break, more than 15,000 OOSC and de-schooled children were identified and enrolled in **a four-month catch-up programme which enabled them to gain a one level of learning, using a condensed version of the national Education in Emergency (EiE) curriculum.** The MENAPLN provided access to teachers and 60 public schools, and the World Food Programme came on board as a key partner for emergency school feeding activities, providing daily meals for children, supporting learning continuity especially in localities where the food is a major challenge for families. In addition, UNICEF supported these children with school kits under the Back-to-School campaign.

Supporting good practices for the triple nexus by integrating the humanitarian action into development while establishing a set of solutions to short, medium, and long-term vulnerabilities of populations: In partnership with the government and other partners, UNICEF invested in innovative programmatic models with synergies, complementarities and coherence between humanitarian and development action to address short-term and long-term vulnerabilities of children, IDPs and other vulnerable groups. For example, an estimated 464,323 people (**278,600 children**) in humanitarian contexts were provided with access to safe water, compared to 197,421 in 2021. This is attributable to the support provided to the National Water Utility (ONEA) to increase their production capacity, the operationalization of the triple nexus and the localized integrated package of interventions through community platforms in the Centre-Nord region, which accounted for 41 per cent (192,212 people) of the total achievements. UNICEF Burkina Faso played a key role in

advocating with technical and financial partners to redirect development funds to emergency interventions in the Sahel region following multiple attacks on WASH infrastructure. UNICEF Burkina Faso also contributed to the establishment of a permanent technical secretary in charge of the coordination of the triple nexus, within the Ministry of Environment, Water and Sanitation. Although this function is yet to be operational in part due to delays related to various political changes in 2022, it is now part of the Ministry's organizational structure and constitutes a major achievement in the process of institutionalizing the triple nexus approach. **Establishing fixed and mobile child friendly spaces (CFS) and supporting mental health and psychosocial support services from a multisectoral perspective:** Both fixed and mobile CFS were strengthened to ensure the screening and identification of children in need of protection services and to facilitate an integrated case management approach (including household visits, referral of children, identification of sick and malnourished children, children in need of birth certificates and education). This approach involved putting communities including young people at the centre of integrated and localized services for children, transferring knowledge and capacities to local actors by reducing disruptions to essential services for children. In 2022, 220,191 people benefitted from psychosocial support, including 201,848 children (110,282 girls), 18,343 adults (11,893 women) and 1,922 children living with disabilities. UNICEF implemented the mobile child protection strategy to ensure the continuity of child protection services in humanitarian settings. Overall, 202,757 children received mental health and psychosocial support services, of which two-thirds were reached through this mobile strategy. **Exploring the value of cross border collaboration:** To reduce the common vulnerabilities of the population in the villages situated in border areas between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, UNICEF and UNDP implemented cross-country collaboration under the "Strengthening the governance of border areas to consolidate social cohesion and prevent conflicts" project. In response to the immediate needs expressed by the population, UNICEF supported priority basic social services, ensured the provision of holistic assistance to 137 abused or exploited children, and engaged 1,934 adolescents (including 772 women) as peace ambassadors (through 38 youth/adolescent clubs), contributing to the consolidation of peace and social cohesion within communities. **Supporting legal policy instruments to prevent grave violations of children's rights:** In September 2022 following almost three years of negotiations with government entities and other key partners, the United Nations and the Government of Burkina Faso signed a Handover Protocol for the release and transfer of children encountered during military operations to social services. **Investing in Young people as social change agents:** UNICEF accelerated the mainstreaming and engagement of youth and adolescents in programme delivery. Specific results included: (i) the training of 30 U-Reporters who provided psychosocial and mental health support to children in distress in the Sahel region; (ii) 2,500 young people in the Centre region led community sensitization activities to promote child immunization and birth registration benefitting more than 12,000 children; (iii) 15 young people were empowered and equipped with tricycles to regularly deliver clean water to 1,000 IDPs in the Centre-Nord region; (iv) 300 U-Reporters led the Back to School campaign in six regions reaching around 45,000 people; (v) 6,374 young people in the Est and Plateau Central regions played a key role in the delivery of exclusive breastfeeding, immunization and COVID-19 prevention services, through the Facebook Chatbot established by U-Reporters; (vi) A youth-led Caravan "*Faso Jeunes Caravan*" brought together more than 60,000 young people in six regions who were given access to trainings (e.g. factchecking/digital management, leadership, business management), vaccination (COVID-19, Hepatitis A), sensitization (e.g. WASH, reproductive health, child rights, social cohesion), citizenships action, concerts and sports activities. **Investing in social protection system and measures in Burkina Faso to attract more public investments in equitable and inclusive development:** Following the adoption of the decree creating the Single Social Register for vulnerable people in 2021, a Technical Secretariat was established to oversee its operationalization in collaboration with all key stakeholders. UNICEF supported the process of developing the new National Social Protection Strategy with the aim of strengthening the national social protection systems. To make local governance more responsive to child rights issues, UNICEF supported the implementation of social accountability and citizen control mechanisms in 80 municipalities. These mechanisms are progressively contributing to creating institutional ownership and responsiveness in local development planning and monitoring for children,

including public financing for children. Evidence from the midline evaluation of the child sensitive social protection project highlighted that the cash component has largely been successfully implemented despite initial challenges associated with the identification and community agreement on the eligibility of selected households. Nine out of 10 (90.5 per cent) targeted households received cash transfers, including 2,959 children under five and 9,316 children under 18. Cash transfers have potentially improved women's empowerment and children's wellbeing, food security, consumption and investment in economic activities. The proportion of targeted households owning any livestock improved by 9.1 per cent and the likelihood of households to purchase any new agricultural inputs over the past 12 months increased by 37 per cent. **Increasing gender transformative programming:** Progress was made towards addressing social norms and gender roles through men and young people's involvement in maternal health and nutrition services. Men's clubs were established in targeted communities to actively engage men by leveraging their decision-making power to positively influence the nutrition of pregnant and lactating women, through several initiatives including the provision MMS and the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding. Young people led community sensitizations on breastfeeding and are managing an interactive Facebook chatbot on breastfeeding. One of the major outcomes has been the improved ability of women to decide for themselves how and when to access health facilities without being restricted by their husbands or family members. Another innovative approach in WASH was the CLTS/VSLA programme. More than 2,800 women were economically empowered, generating more than FCFA 50,000,000 in credit schemes which has helped strengthen women's decision-making position on sanitation issues. **Strengthening supply function to deliver results for children in crisis-affected regions:** In 2022, one of the key contributions of UNICEF's supply function in Burkina Faso was ensuring the continuity of the delivery of humanitarian action by providing WASH installations, drugs, non-food items (NFIs) and nutrition supplies to affected households and children across the country despite a volatile and rapidly deteriorating security context. The overall value of supplies and services procured amounted to US\$62.6 million including (US\$9.7 million for services). The value of procurement services provided by UNICEF Burkina Faso in 2022 for partners was estimated at US\$36,425,785.18. This was mainly for vaccines, cold chain equipment and COVID-19 response supplies. The World Bank procured more than US\$9,518,664.01 in COVID-19 response supplies, hospital and cold chain equipment through UNICEF's procurement services mechanism. **Promoting staff wellbeing and staff development as part of KRCs 11 and 12:** Staff well-being was improved through the extensive use of flexible working arrangements by staff members to match their personal and professional needs. Promoting a speak up culture was part of the main agenda during the staff retreat held in early April 2022 where they expressed their views. Furthermore, the country office made concerted efforts to support career development goals and to promote internal candidates. As a result, 23 staff benefited from promotions in 2022, including eight female staff. This is a 92 per cent increase compared to 2021. National staff accounted for 79 per cent (18) of these promotions, including three general service staff. Five national officers were promoted to international professional category.

UN Collaboration

UNICEF strengthened its partnerships with other UN agencies through the implementation of joint UN initiatives in three regions: the Sahel (PADI; Education), Est (AMI; Nutrition) and Centre-Nord (PURC, WASH). This is in line with the UN Secretary General's Planning Directive, which called for more field-based synergic actions through five convergence areas in Burkina Faso. An estimated 160,000 children were reached by the PADI programme in the Sahel and 79,766 children benefited from the AMI programme in the Est region in 2022. The Interagency Emergency Response Team (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP) was another successful UN partnership. Through this joint operation, 70,905 displaced and host communities, including people with disabilities, were supported with essential household items to cover their urgent needs. Through the UN Country Team (UNCT), UNICEF supported advocacy for the adoption of the SECTO for national staff assigned to hardship locations who are not eligible for R&R. SECTO was subsequently adopted by UN agencies and approved in August 2022 by the Resident Coordinator. This was one of the most significant achievements of the UNCT as it demonstrated commitment to alleviate the stress and anxiety of national staff working in field offices, especially for those serving in the toughest duty stations with serious security and access constraints.

Other Partnerships UNICEF's partnerships with 3RC local partners played a critical role in terms of providing lifesaving humanitarian action and strengthening the capacities of other NGOs. In the Est region, UNICEF's partnership with the *Association pour le Développement des Communautés Villageoises* on remote third-party programme monitoring helped to ensure the quality of integrated multisectoral interventions in hard-to-reach areas. In the Sahel Region, thanks to UNICEF's support, a local NGO SERACOM developed its capacity to coach other community-based NGOs on humanitarian programming and emergency response. In the Centre-Nord region, two local NGOs (APIJN and ACPDE) are now the main actors in humanitarian situation monitoring and response. UNICEF Burkina Faso partnered with the '*Réseau d'Initiatives des Journalistes*' and Faso Check to sensitize journalists, digital influencers and young people on the situation of children and youth in the country and to promote UNICEF's response to address key issues affecting them. This resulted in the coverage of UNICEF events and programmes on health and nutrition, protection, education, and WASH, generating over 25 media reports (TV, press, radio, online), reaching at least 10 million people. A strategic alliance was developed with the Coris Bank/Assurances to promote skills for life and skills for work. Free trainings on business management were provided for 500 young people during the "*Faso Jeunes Caravan*" across six regions. A partnership with the National Volunteering Programme and youth networks helped to mobilize and engage more than 2,500 young volunteers to promote routine immunization, COVID-19 vaccination, birth registration and other basic social services. More than 100,000 households were visited, and the status of vaccination and birth registration for 12,000 children was monitored by youth.

Lessons Learned

National-level coordination remains essential in converging partners around shared-value actions to boost progress for the most vulnerable children and women across sectors. This is also critical in terms of creating opportunities to advocate for more investments in the social dimensions of the SDGs within the relevant national sectoral strategies and plans. The use of Community Health Workers (CHWs) and young people was instrumental in ensuring the continuity of immunization, nutrition, and birth registration services in crisis-affected regions in a context marked by COVID-19 and limited humanitarian space. This has contributed to improving the quality of healthcare services from a multisectoral perspective. CHWs have played a critical role in mobilizing men to provide support to pregnant women for their care in health facilities, but above all, they have worked to transform gender roles and norms to enable women to decide for themselves when and how to demand healthcare services without being restricted by their husbands or family members. CHWs therefore remained the cornerstone of population resilience by ensuring access to health services in a context marred by the closure of many health facilities. The implementation of CLTS in emergency in IDP sites, host communities and peri-urban areas facilitated social cohesion and peace building. The empowerment of local artisans in conjunction with communal focal points facilitated the acceleration of the implementation of WASH activities in insecure areas, as well as water trucking by tricycle/animal traction, and the integration of women and young people in training on handpump maintenance in hard-to-reach areas. The integrated package of interventions and the remote programming approach boosts UNICEF's equity agenda as it enables the organization to reach more vulnerable children in hard-to-reach and enclaved areas. The engagement of local actors resulted in improved synergy between local authorities and communities regarding the issue of access to equitable essential services by the most vulnerable people. More specifically, community engagement with active and dedicated young people helps accelerate the localization and nexus agenda as it brings more local solutions to the evolving humanitarian context. Social Innovations The introduction of MMS into antenatal care services for pregnant women, which was initiated in two health districts demonstrated improved adherence of women and enabled good coverage of services, compared to iron folate supplementation. From the field perspective, MMS is a learning by doing initiative. It is considered as a social innovation that makes ANC community-based platforms more gender-responsive using women's feedback. The deterioration of the security situation has reduced access to the formal education system, which requires urgent measures to scale up alternative education models based on the potential of digital technology to provide solutions to the needs of isolated children who have remained in crisis affected areas. The Radio Education Programme implemented by UNICEF has therefore been instrumental in providing an educational routine for out of school children while they wait for a return to normalcy. Given the protracted nature of the humanitarian crisis, it is essential to adapt this programme curriculum to make it a more relevant alternative to independent learning in the future. Another successful example of innovative programming was the partnership between UNICEF, WFP, MENAPLN and EDUCO which provided catch-up classes (including school feeding) for 15,000 OOSC children/dropouts during the summer vacation, allowing them to gain a one level of learning with the opportunity to be re-integrated in the education system at the start of the new school year.