

**"It is easy to rebuild buildings. But souls also need to be healed for Casamance to be at peace."**

Marguerite Colu Kémi, President of the Women of Kabonketoor, a UNICEF-supported organization whose members bravely helped carve out peace in Casamance.



Casamance is a priority area for UNICEF interventions in Senegal. In collaboration with the government, UN partner agencies, NGOs and civil society partners, UNICEF helps strengthen the foundation for lasting peace in the region. The UNICEF sub-office was established in Ziguinchor, to provide support for education, health, stress management, conflict and mine prevention activities.

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# Casamance

## Rebuilding & Healing

Ziguinchor Casamance Kolda  
Sedhiou

UNICEF Senegal





# Context



The impact of conflict is particularly difficult for children, who have had their schooling interrupted. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education with special education programmes in areas affected by conflict.

## Situation in Casamance

Years of conflict have ravaged villages, infrastructure and basic utilities throughout Casamance. This has restricted humanitarian and development aid and undermined the ability of people to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

With peace in sight, tens of thousands of displaced people are now returning. However, mines are still scattered throughout villages, preventing people from accessing their fields and homes for restoration. Many have fallen victim to antipersonnel mines, especially children.

Faced with unique challenges of reconstruction, UNICEF has adopted an exceptional programme to help children and families in Casamance rebuild their lives.

# Protection

## UNICEF Focus

- Mine risk education
- Support to mine victims
- Support to returnee families
- Psychosocial stress counselling
- Human rights training
- Conflict prevention
- Protecting children from exploitation, abuse and violence

## Building a Culture of Peace

UNICEF provides assistance to women's and youth groups to promote peace, by providing training to teachers, health personnel and community leaders on conflict prevention, counselling and trauma management techniques.

## Mine Risk Education

More than 749 mine victims have been reported and more than 90,000 people are directly affected by the presence of mines in Casamance. UNICEF carries

out mine risk education in schools and communities and supports the construction of billboards to raise awareness among villagers on areas at risk. The number of accidents in Casamance has dropped significantly since mine awareness trainings started.

## Psychosocial Stress Counselling

Supporting stress management is an important part of UNICEF's work in Casamance. Students, teachers, adults and youth need coping mechanisms to support each other in order to rebuild productive and happy lives.

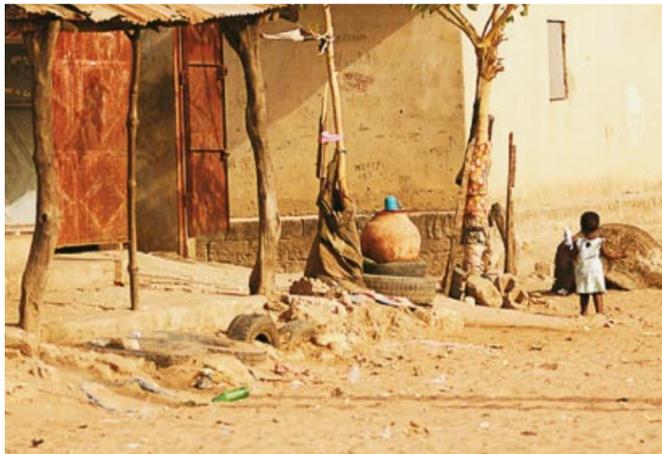
## Assistance to Returnees

Intermittent violence, landmines, small arms, and destroyed infrastructure (schools, health centres and access to the fields) make reconstruction difficult for returnees. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) require food and income assistance as they transition back to normality.

## Protecting Children from Exploitation, Abuse and Violence

UNICEF is raising awareness and supports actions that promote and protect child rights, including prevention of worst forms of child labour, female genital cutting (FGC) and sexual abuse and exploitation.

Generations are affected by psychological distress following the war and continued mine accidents.



Children's prosthetics limbs are very expensive, because they need to be replaced frequently as the child grows.

## How much does it cost?

- Mine risk training for 400 students: US\$ 200
- Leg prosthetics: US\$ 280 (children's prosthetic limbs must be adjusted every 6 months to accommodate growth)
- Material costs to rebuild a returnee family's home: US\$ 1,500



UNICEF polio and measles immunization campaigns reach more than 98% of the children.



The closure of health centres during the conflict, plus the shortage in equipment and personnel and difficulty of access, has led to a much higher infant mortality rate than in other parts of the country.

# Health

## UNICEF Focus

- Immunization: cold chain, vaccines and training
- Social mobilization for HIV/AIDS and STDs
- Salt iodization, promotion and consumption
- Malaria prevention
- Reproductive health and emergency obstetrics care
- Community-based care for malnutrition
- Water and sanitation

## Community-based Care

UNICEF trains community health workers and equips local health centres to treat the most common deadly illnesses (acute respiratory infections (ARI), malaria and diarrhoeal disease) to prevent child death in the villages.

25% of children under the age of 5 in Casamance are underweight. UNICEF supports out-patient nutritional therapy to combat malnutrition.

Since 2008, UNICEF distributes Plumpy'nut in Senegal for severely malnourished children, a 'miracle food', which can be given at home by the caregiver. With this community approach, malnutrition has been reduced nationally from 22% to 17%.

## How much does it cost?

- Complete vaccination for a child under the age of 1: US\$ 20

# Education

## UNICEF Focus

- Comprehensive ELP package for schools
- Improving the quality of education
- Social mobilization to send children to schools
- Life skills

## Essential Learning Package (ELP)

35% of public schools in Ziguinchor, Sedhiou and Kolda have received UNICEF's ELP, which combines nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene access, as well as teacher training and facility upgrades. By 2010, UNICEF aims to reach 50% of the schools in Casamance with the ELP.

## Daaras (Koranic Schools)

UNICEF supports activities to improve the living conditions for Koranic students, 'Talibés', who are often sent out on the streets to beg. UNICEF supports the training of teachers and the development of a curriculum adapted for Daaras to improve the quality of education in Koranic schools.

## Stress and Conflict Management Training for Students

UNICEF supports a special programme to help children cope with the conflict and its effects.

## Improving Girls' Access to Education

UNICEF promotes activities and awareness campaigns to eliminate the gender gap between boys and girls in primary school. The advocacy activities are paying off: the girl enrolment ratio in Kolda increased from 38% in 2000 to 46% in 2008 and from 44% to 47% in Ziguinchor in the same period.

Dysfunctional schools and lack of available teachers have added to the psychological stress that students and their teachers are experiencing.



Since 1991, the net enrolment ratio in the region of Ziguinchor rose from 80.4 to 96.9% and from 24.4% to 83.7% in Kolda.



## How much does it cost?

- Implementing full ELP package: US\$ 25,000 per school