

TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S FUTURES

**Amplifying humanitarian impact
in the Central Sahel**

Building a future for every child amid the nexus of conflict and climate

The Sahel, a beautiful word meaning coast or shore in Arabic, is geographically the transitional zone between the Sahara Desert in the north, and the humid and more tropical savannas of North-Central Africa below. This ancient region, more than 12,000 years old, played an important role in developing civilizations, trade and religion.

Today though, the Sahel is transitional for other reasons. Rather than a single conflict, the region is home to a multiplicity of overlapping conflict systems involving a large array of state and non-state actors. The Sahel is also highly exposed to droughts, flooding, rainfall variability and sandstorms with long-term climate trends indicating a gradual increase in regional temperatures. In the Central Sahel countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, children are especially at risk of the combined negative impacts of conflict and climate change.

This double vulnerability experienced by millions of people across the central region of the Sahel, creates its own kind of transition; the violence that forces displacement and destroys infrastructure such as water supplies, health care and education services, the loss of land for herding and agricultural communities caused by soil erosion and desertification and the increased competition for resources, combined with years of subsequent food insecurity.

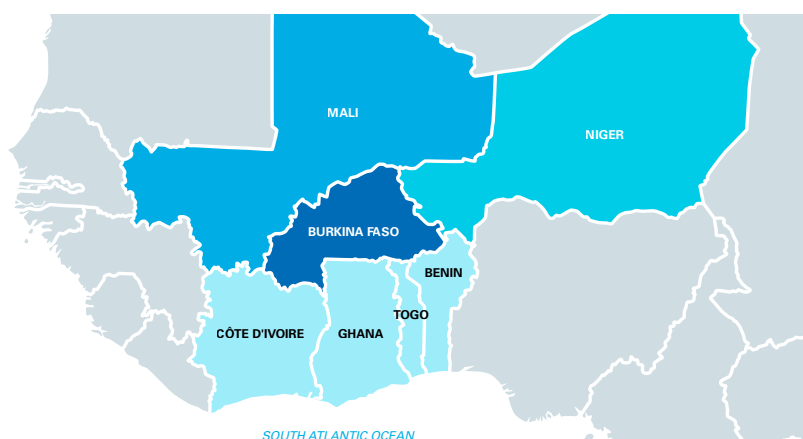
For millions of Sahelians, the transitional nature of their home, no longer refers only to its location between desert and savanna, but to their way of life and the tenuous line each person, each child walks every day just to stay alive.

In one of the most overlooked crises in the world, children are facing dangers and risks that no child should have to experience, including being subjected to sexual violence, forcibly conscripted into fighting and being killed or maimed by unexploded remnants of war. Years of brutal conflict, political instability, water scarcity and the subsequent extreme poverty, widespread malnutrition, and disease outbreaks, in the Central Sahel, are robbing children of the joys and innocence that usually define childhood.

In 2024, this central region enters into its twelfth year of armed conflict and violence since non-state groups seized territory in northern Mali following a military coup. For more than a decade, this conflict has expanded from a microcosm of violence in Mali, across borders and into Burkina Faso and Niger. The conflict's impact on women and children in particular, continues to be devastating. Incidents of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), targeted violence against children, exploitation, trafficking, forced recruitment and early marriage continue to rise significantly.

The number of schools closed due to attacks has increased by 50 per cent in one year, affecting one quarter of all schools in Burkina Faso alone and impacting the learning of more than 1 million children.

THE CENTRAL SAHEL AND NEIGHBOURING COASTAL COUNTRIES



As the crisis in the Central Sahel continues to deepen, children and adolescents in the neighbouring coastal countries, especially in the northern regions of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo are facing the humanitarian consequences of the crisis spillover. Basic services are becoming overburdened, with schools and health facilities closing or functioning at minimum capacity. Simultaneously people are attempting to cope with public health emergencies and climate-related disasters such as floods.

This upending of children's lives and the violation of their fundamental right to a safe, healthy life, their right to education, is in its essence, an attack on what should be the untouchable cornerstones of childhood.

Today, more than 19 million people, including **10.5 million children across the Central Sahel are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance**. The spill-over effects of this complex crisis into **neighbouring coastal countries** – particularly Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo – are also creating additional needs, with 6.1 million people, including **3 million children, requiring humanitarian support**. This geographical spread is causing regional destabilization that has far reaching and long-term consequences for both today's and tomorrow's generations of children.

The Humanitarian Situation: Facts & Figures

CENTRAL SAHEL

10.5 million

children displaced and need humanitarian aid

- 3.4 million in Burkina Faso
- 4.7 million in Mali
- 2.4 million in Niger

Nearly 2 million

children are deprived of education because of conflict

- Burkina Faso: 6,149 schools closed, affecting 1 million + schoolchildren
- Mali: 1,743 schools non-operational, affecting 522,000 schoolchildren
- Niger: 987 schools shut, affecting 444,290 schoolchildren

7 million people

have lost access to water and sanitation due to conflict and climate disasters such as floods

- 3.2 million people in Burkina Faso
- 2.3 million in Mali
- 1.5 million in Niger

Over 880,000

children under 5 suffer from acute malnutrition

- 172,133 severely wasted children in Burkina Faso
- 275,700 severely wasted children in Mali
- 436,348 severely wasted children in Niger

Grave violations

against children rose by 85 per cent

in Central Sahel in 2023 because of increasing attacks by armed groups. The recruitment and use of children, and killing and maiming, together increased by more than 130 per cent in the last quarter of 2023.

NEIGHBOURING COASTAL COUNTRIES

3 million children

need humanitarian assistance in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo

- 1.1 million people need health care assistance
- 1.4 million children need education support
- 2.4 million children need protection services
- 738,000 people need nutrition support
- 5.6 million people lack access to safe water

Your support is needed to save and transform children's lives

Sadly, the complexity, longevity, extreme violence and climate vulnerabilities that characterize the Central Sahel situation, make it hard to understand, witness and know where to make a difference. As one of the most under-reported and under-funded humanitarian emergencies globally, 13.5 million affected children are literally relying on the willingness of others to keep their eyes open to their suffering and to step forward with support. In 2023 alone UNICEF's appeal for its life-saving work in the Central Sahel, ended the year still short of \$329.7 million. Whilst UNICEF was still able to protect and assist millions of children, families and communities across the Central Sahel, such a significant shortfall in funding also meant that difficult choices had to be made in terms of ensuring minimum programme delivery.

Many more lives could have been saved and transformed with greater financial support.

UNICEF impact in the Central Sahel in 2023



Education

270,783

Children accessed formal or non-formal education, including early learning (26% IR*)

476,983

Children received individual learning materials (17% IR)



Child Protection

324,069

Children, adolescents and caregivers accessed community-based mental health and psychosocial support (29% IR)

187,138

Women, girls and boys accessed gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions (29% IR)

2,549

Unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified (34% IR)

593

Children who had exited armed forces or groups provided with protection or reintegration support in Mali and Niger (27% IR)



Health and Nutrition

608,312

Women and children accessed primary health care in UNICEF supported facilities (94% IR)

522,918

Children vaccinated against measles (33% IR)

745,345

Children between 6 months and 5 years of age with severe wasting admitted for treatment (91% IR)



WASH

545,016

People accessed a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs (39% IR)

162,752

People accessed appropriate sanitation services (17% IR)

337,878

People reached with critical WASH supplies (51% IR)



Social Protection

9,665

Households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and/or funding (69% IR)

499

Households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers (6% IR)

*IR refers to implementation rate against planned 2023 targets noting low levels of funding were part of what impacted

The Sahel doesn't have to remain a forgotten crisis



Issa second from right with his uncle Mohamed and his cousins.

Together with multiple and diverse support and contributions, momentum can be created. Momentum that not only saves lives but lifts an entire generation of children out of an abyss of violence and offers them protection, health and education, both saving lives and potentially creating the future leaders of the Central Sahel region. A single life can be completely changed for the better with the smallest amount of support. Imagine the positive impact that can be created when multiple individuals, organizations and partners step up to make a difference.

Lives truly can be transformed, as is the case for Issa who at just 10-years-old is an example of courage and resilience. Despite Issa having already endured horrors beyond his years, he remains hopeful for his future. In 2022 this young boy from Seytenga in northern Burkina Faso, experienced the terrible loss of his father who was abducted by armed men only to be found dead just a few days later. Issa's life was further shattered by a vicious massacre in Seytenga, killing 80 people and displacing thousands more. Burdened with grief, Issa and his remaining family headed for the town of Dori, 40 km away, trying to find safety. But tragedy struck again on route as a mine explosion killed Issa's pregnant aunt and nearly him too. Issa's voice trembles as he remembers the moment.

“ We were passing the police when our cart ran over a mine. Everything exploded. I was thrown very far. It was horrible.”

says Issa

Following this traumatic incident, Issa developed a hearing problem and had severe pain in his ears. Issa and his family arrived in Dori in the northeastern part of the country and settled on an empty plot of land. Thanks to the awareness campaign conducted during the **'Back To School' initiative organized by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF and its partners**, Issa was enrolled in the local school where his hardships came to light. He received treatment for his ears and mental and psychosocial support started to mend his physical and emotional wounds.

Today, Issa cheerfully envisions a bright future in Dori. "I am well taken care of here," beams Issa. "When I grow up, I would like to become a civil servant." His dream soars high in his new home, untouched by the shadows of his past.

The time is now

Ten million children in the Central Sahel need humanitarian assistance amid spiralling conflict and punishing climate extremes.

Almost no child is safe in an environment where children are increasingly caught up in armed conflict, and the intensification in military clashes puts their lives and futures in extreme jeopardy. As tactics sink to brutal new lows, **children are being directly targeted by armed groups** who operate across vast swathes of Mali and Burkina Faso, and increasingly in Niger.

In the last three months of 2023, grave violations against children in the central Sahel region surged dramatically, skyrocketing by more than 70 per cent compared with the previous quarter. The majority of cases were the recruitment and use of children and killing and maiming – which all together increased by more than 130 per cent when comparing the same two last quarters of 2023.

Emblematic of the dire situation, several hundred people were reported killed in Burkina Faso, with reports that more than 220 civilians, including 56 children, were killed in attacks reportedly carried out by the military in two villages on a single day in late February. This unacceptable violence against children in a region also grossly impacted by climate change, means the time for action is now.

Waiting until tomorrow is not an option for the children of the Central Sahel.

The momentum to make a difference

Despite the commitment and generosity of existing donors, a more robust and diverse portfolio of supporters is required to ensure UNICEF can implement its 2024 plans and ambitions to positively impact the lives of more than 3 million children and their families, schools and teachers in the Central Sahel.

UNICEF's mission in the Central Sahel is to transform the lives of children facing war, poverty, and environmental crises.

UNICEF has a large operational footprint in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, with roughly 580 staff members working across the three national offices and 12 sub-offices, including in some of the most volatile areas. UNICEF uses people centric, risk-informed and preventive approaches to programming, that put children, their families and communities at the centre of its work. We bring about change by empowering people and communities affected by conflict and climate change to actively forge solutions and foster peace, strengthening the link between humanitarian aid, peace and sustainable development.

Investing in health, nutrition, WASH, education, child and social protection across the region, not only addresses immediate needs but is also a pathway towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals of reducing poverty, ensuring peace, and fostering prosperity. This multidisciplinary approach also gives children the best chance of not only surviving in this complex region but of developing strengthened resilience and maintaining hope for a peaceful and bright future.

With the crisis in the Central Sahel extending into the southern, neighbouring, coastal countries, impacting northern Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Togo and causing 3 million children to be in urgent need of humanitarian aid, UNICEF's strategy for the southern spillover of the crisis, similarly focuses on emergency preparedness and response, strengthening local capacities, and building community resilience.

UNICEF Amplifying its Impact in 2024

Full funding of UNICEF's 2024 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal in the Central Sahel would enable the organization to make a significant difference to children's lives and transform their futures.



Education

- 1,445,742 children accessing **formal or non-formal education** including early learning
- 2,150,678 children receiving **individual learning materials**
- 4,600 **teachers and facilitators trained** in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support



Child Protection

- 1,307,283 children, adolescents and caregivers accessing **community-based mental health and psychosocial support**
- 676,100 women, girls and boys accessing **gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions**
- 23,400 **unaccompanied and separated children** provided with alternative care and/or reunified
- 38,268 children provided with **landmine or other explosive weapons prevention** and/or survivor assistance interventions in **Mali**
- 700 children who have exited **armed forces or groups** provided with protection or reintegration support in **Mali**



Health and Nutrition

- 811,720 children and women **accessing primary health care** in UNICEF supported facilities
- 816,859 children between 6 months and 5 years of age with **severe wasting admitted for treatment**
- 2,689,205 children **vaccinated against measles**
- 1 million children under the age of 14 **vaccinated against diphtheria in Niger**



WASH

- 1,562,700 people accessing **a sufficient quantity and quality of water** for drinking and domestic needs
- 980,000 people accessing **appropriate sanitation services**
- 1,336,000 people reached with **critical WASH supplies**



Social Protection

- 367,671 households reached with **cash transfers through an existing government system** where UNICEF provided technical assistance and/or funding

Girls who cycle together, stay in school together – UNICEF on Education



The girls travel with their bicycles to go to school in Manantali, which increases both their safety and their ability to continue accessing education.

At 17, Moussamadi is studying in 9th grade in Manantali, her home, 5 km from this bustling town, in a village where she lives with her family. She has a knack for science, finding joy in physics and chemistry. Before she had a bicycle, getting to school was tough. She used to walk every day and had to cross a river, which meant that she often didn't get to school on time. "We had to wait for the canoe until 7 a.m. to cross the river. We'd arrive late and the teacher had already started the class. It was hard to miss part of the lesson."

Her bike doesn't just get her to school on time, it also lets her go home during breaks, which gives her more freedom and riding a bicycle is both quick and safe and reduces the risk of traveling alone.

“Now, with the bike, I’m no longer late and I’m more motivated,”

says Moussamadi

“Cycling allows girls to travel quickly and safely to attend classes. Indeed, when the children couldn't leave with the walking group from the village, they sometimes had to give up going to class to avoid making the trip alone.”

UNICEF and partner NGO Fandeema have empowered Moussamadi and her peers Néné and Sadio with bicycles to support educational progression. The trio use the bikes on weekends for errands as well which also benefits their families.

When they first got the bikes, Néné and Sadio knew how to ride, but Moussamadi didn't. She learned quickly with her younger brother's help. Her family is supportive, and her father fixes her bike if it breaks down.

Finishing Grade 9 is important for children in Mali. In 2023, 18.3 per cent of children were out of school. More girls are finishing primary school now, about 55 per cent, compared to 56 per cent of boys.

Moussamadi, Néné, and Sadio are among the **294 girls benefiting from bicycles via UNICEF support** that facilitates access to education for girls and other children who live far from school.

UNICEF's 'Improving Access to Quality Education for Children in the Sahel' programme illustrates our commitment to ensuring that crisis-affected children have access to a quality education, underscoring the indispensable nature of learning in fostering resilience, durable peace and developing young leaders for the future.

In Burkina Faso, UNICEF is pioneering adaptive learning channels such as the Radio Education Programme, leveraging the broad reach of the radio to facilitate learning even in the most crisis affected areas.

In Mali, UNICEF successfully advocated for the reopening of schools in 2023, restoring access to education for children who desperately need it.

In Niger, UNICEF's efforts include the distribution of learning materials, the establishment of temporary learning spaces for internally displaced schoolchildren, and a focus on inclusivity by supporting skills development for adolescents. In the neighbouring, coastal countries that are also impacted, UNICEF's Safe Schools approach provides crisis-affected children with access to quality education, in a protective environment by incorporating physical safety measures, psychosocial support, and community engagement to ensure the children's well-being and educational continuity.



Help UNICEF secure a brighter and safer future for schoolchildren like Moussamadi

- \$32.4 million in Mali will make sure 1.1 million children receive individual learning materials, train 2,500 teachers and facilitators in pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support, and enable 300,000 children to access formal or informal education.



Now that Moussamadi Keita has a bicycle she can get to school on time and partipate fully.

Keeping the lights on for children everywhere – UNICEF protecting children



The Central Sahel is facing **a crisis where women and girls experience increasing gender-based violence**, including sexual assault, and **children are forcibly recruited by armed factions** where their suffering is unending. As community structures crumble due to the conflict, vital child protection services vanish, leaving children and women without the means to keep themselves safe.

To support these vulnerable children, women and their families, UNICEF focuses on providing mental health and psychosocial support, mine risk awareness and education, access to safe spaces in displacement sites, and services aimed at both preventing and addressing the impacts of gender-based violence.

Together with partners, **UNICEF provides children released from armed groups, or who have suffered other violations of their rights, with intensive, months-long care, and support for reintegration back to their families and communities**. Separated and unaccompanied children are reunited with their families or provided with suitable and safe alternative care.

Barou's story is a testament to the success of such interventions, showing how **educational and vocational training can enable children to rebuild their lives**.

In Burkina Faso, UNICEF trains security personnel on the monitoring and reporting mechanism for grave violations against children and in handover protocols to swiftly transfer children associated with armed forces and armed groups into their safe custody.

In **Mali**, due to the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission, and the temporary suspension of the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service, **UNICEF has taken on the responsibility of scaling up mine risk education and will work on explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)** with an aim to reach both children at school and in the community. In collaboration with the Teaching Academy, **UNICEF partners raise awareness among**

teachers who in turn do the same among children in schools, and children in the community will be reached through Child Friendly Spaces.

In Niger, community-based mental health and psychosocial support, including individual and group support through safe spaces, mobile teams and work with community leaders, helps to raise awareness of child protection risks and identity and refer children with protection needs.

In the neighbouring coastal countries, UNICEF provides vital mental health support, gender-based violence mitigation, prevention and response interventions, and secure channels for reporting sexual exploitation. Traumatized or at-risk displaced and refugee children receive personalized case management for their recovery.



With your help, UNICEF can support more children like Barou to overcome the trauma of war and to rebuild their lives.

- \$345,000 in Niger will enable up to 390,000 women, girls and boys to access gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and /or response support.
- In Mali approximately \$2.8 million will support 700 children who have exited armed forces and groups with protection and reintegration support and ensure 2,400 unaccompanied and separated children receive alternative care and/or are reunified with their families.



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Sie Kambou, UNICEF Child Protection Specialist, attends a play session in the child-friendly space at the Diaba site for internally displaced persons in the central region of Mopti, Mali.

Leveraging local capacity to save lives – UNICEF in Health and Nutrition



Altinè with her young son Abdrahamane who received life-saving nutrition support from the government of Mali and UNICEF.

When 20-month-old Abdrahamane developed symptoms of malnutrition, his mother, Altinè, sought help from Dr. Diarra at an internally displaced persons' site in Bamako, [Mali](#). The family, originally from the Mopti region, had fled armed conflict and Abdrahamane received immediate care at the on-site ambulatory nutritional rehabilitation unit. He was diagnosed as moderately malnourished and received Plumpy Nut, a ready-to-use therapeutic food, part of a simplified malnutrition management approach piloted by the Mali government and supported by UNICEF. Over six weeks, Abdrahamane's condition improved, much to his mother's relief: "Now my son feels better, and I'm very happy that my child is safe and sound."

The approach allows health workers of ALIMA/AMCP-SP, a partner NGO to UNICEF, to treat moderate malnutrition early. Prevention efforts include education by Mama Yeleen, one of several UNICEF supported mothers' groups where women learn about hygiene, nutrition, and using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes to detect malnutrition.

The story of Abdrahamane's recovery illustrates the impactful work UNICEF is doing to combat malnutrition in [Mali](#), **leveraging community engagement and simplified treatment protocols**. An impressive 98 per cent of health centres now offer services for acute malnutrition treatment that adhere to international standards.

In [Burkina Faso](#), in addition to providing therapeutic foods for acutely malnourished children, **UNICEF helps prevent stunting in children by supporting mothers' groups that provide nutrition counselling**.

In [Niger](#), UNICEF continues to broaden access to health and immunization services for diseases such as measles and diphtheria by **supporting over 150 mobile health clinics in hard-to-reach areas, including training health workers and providing medicine and emergency supplies**. The mobile teams are also involved in identifying and referring severely malnourished children for treatment.

UNICEF's efforts in the neighbouring coastal countries target child health through measles vaccinations, screening for wasting and treatment for acute malnutrition, along with strengthening resilience through counselling mothers and caregivers on effective infant and young child feeding practices.



Support UNICEF to help vulnerable children like Abdrahamane grow and thrive

- Approximately \$4.2 million will enable UNICEF to provide health care services to half a million pregnant women across the Sahel, including insecticide treated anti-malarial bed nets, provision of multiple micro-nutrient supplementary medicines and family support planning services - interventions essential for preventing the mother-to-be and the baby from high risk disease and malnutrition.

Water washing away the worries – UNICEF on WASH action



Now that water is available in the village of Tacha Adoua, 25-year-old Ramatou Amadou no longer needs to walk for three hours a day to fetch water, nor does her father have to purchase a water carrying donkey as part of her dowry.

The village Tacha Adoua of Niger is a small collection of homes, 60 km from the regional capital Tahoua. The landscape is dry, sprinkled with sand and sparse vegetation, and a relentless sun hammers down with temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius. Humans and animals alike search for shade.

For years, the arduous pursuit of water defined the villagers' daily lives. However, a significant change occurred in 2021 when, as part of a UNICEF-WFP initiative, five villages including Tacha Adoua, home to 7,600 people, received water access.

Yassin Mahamadou, a 45-year-old local woman, explains that fetching water was a time consuming task usually done by women and children.

"In the past...every morning, we would leave the village with our donkeys to go to the lake and fill our jerrycans. Going back and forth, would take us three or four hours."

The process was so time intensive that little time was left for other things, like washing clothes. The availability of clean clothes for children going to school was considered a luxury. But now, thanks to the new water fountains, villagers can easily get water from a local source just 100 metres away, saving time and effort.

Marriage traditions have evolved as a result; women no longer need a donkey to fetch water as part of their dowry.

"Before I could get married, my father had to buy a donkey to fetch water to include in the dowry. No woman could get married without a donkey. Now, that is not a condition anymore," says another villager, 25-year-old Ramatou Amadou.

The consistent lack of water also meant children often missed school to help collect it. But now, with the improved water situation, **children attend school regularly and show better academic performance**.

"Every morning when I was on my way to work, I would see children from my school on their way to get water. I knew that it would be at least two hours until they showed up in class. Now there are no absences anymore and the test results have improved," says the headmaster.

The introduction of latrines to every family's yard represents a paradigm shift in sanitation practices. Despite challenges such as flooding, the community is committed to using and maintaining these facilities.

Moving away from open defecation has been critical for public health, especially for children.

"We did not want anyone seeing us so we would walk behind that hill," said 10-year-old Mohamed Ibrahim, pointing to a hill a kilometre away. In addition to the 14 km to get water every day, he would also need to walk 2 km just to go to the bathroom. "Only at night we would go less far, because it is dark at night, and no one could see us."

This commitment to using latrines, along with better water access, has noticeably improved the health of the community. Local nurse Hama Soumana reports fewer cases of diarrhoea and better overall child health. She credits this to the ***trifecta of water access, hygiene education, and a shift away from open defecation.*** The health centre is benefiting too, now that it has its own water source, making it easier for staff and patients alike, and reducing the need for visiting families to bring water with them.

The heart of this transformation is a 10-metre-high water tower that stores 100,000 litres, with a fence surrounding it, a pump house, and solar panels to pump water up from deep underground. A network of pipes delivers water to fountains, troughs, schools, and the health centre. A water management committee ensures the water supply is maintained and used wisely, keeping this life-changing resource flowing smoothly for the villages it serves.

The story of Tacha Adoua is just one example of how ***targeted water and sanitation interventions, led and managed by local communities, can drastically improve daily life and community health, safety and capacity in vulnerable regions.*** Similar initiatives have been taking place in other parts of Niger and across Mali and Burkina Faso, where ***UNICEF supports vulnerable communities to overcome significant challenges posed by water scarcity, climate change, and conflict driven instability.***

In ***Burkina Faso***, UNICEF is strengthening the ***capacity of water utility authorities to deliver safe drinking water*** in urban areas.

In Mali, UNICEF is providing drinking water at the community level through the rehabilitation and construction of ***climate-resilient water supply systems*** that use solar panels to run boreholes and water towers in dry sandy areas.

In Niger, UNICEF WASH interventions strengthen the resilience of crisis-impacted people, including women and girls, and include hygiene promotion practices, constructing latrines, drilling boreholes and connecting them to water supply systems, as well as providing tailored cholera prevention efforts.

In the neighbouring, coastal countries, UNICEF's emergency WASH interventions are integrated with health, nutrition, education, and child protection by providing safe drinking water and essential sanitation services in child-friendly spaces and learning facilities.



Join UNICEF in supporting more villages like Tacha Adoua by providing accessible clean water

- Just over \$15.6 million will provide more than half a million people in Mali with sufficient safe, clean water for their drinking and domestic needs, provide 50,000 people with access to sanitation services and deliver WASH supplies to 336,000 people.



Cash as a stabilizer at the nexus of conflict and climate – UNICEF on Social Protection



Naimatou, who has a business selling wafers in Konobougou in the Ségou region of Mali, has benefited from the UNICEF supported cash transfer programme which has enabled her to expand her wafer-selling business, build a brick house, and send her grandchildren to school.

As rainfall becomes more erratic and intense, it causes both floods and droughts that reduce crop yields and contaminate scarce water supplies in a part of the world where tens of millions of people rely on pastoralism or farming for their livelihood. Heightened urban expansion, shrinks the amount of available grazing land, disrupts livestock migration routes and hinders groundwater replenishment, dramatically impacting people's ability to maintain their way of life and livelihood. And the situation is only aggravated by violence from armed groups.

These deep vulnerabilities caused by the combination of conflict and climate shocks mean families struggle to improve their living conditions.

UNICEF has been using humanitarian cash transfers in the region to provide a financial lifeline to vulnerable families in need of immediate support. These cash transfers help families buy food, water, and other essentials to improve their well-being and prevent child hunger. As complex emergencies morph into longer-term development situations, UNICEF is shifting from short-term cash transfers to supporting government social protection systems to provide longer-term support to the most affected families.

In a country like Burkina Faso, social protection programmes are vital for mitigating the adverse effects of political instability, extreme weather and disease outbreaks on families, and so UNICEF supports government funded social protection systems and cash transfers that target the most vulnerable households with children. In neighbouring **Mali, UNICEF addresses vulnerabilities with a multi-sector approach focusing on cash transfers and strengthening the social protection system.**

In Niger, UNICEF is helping the government implement a drought cash programme for households with children living in the five drought-prone regions. In the neighbouring coastal countries, UNICEF ensures technical support to government social protection programmes, that provide new or additional **social assistance to people who are displaced** and refugee and returnee families who have children, in the form of cash or non-food items.



Your generous resources will directly support vulnerable families with essential financial support needed to look after their children and keep them safe and well.

- In Burkina Faso just \$161,378 is needed for 140,671 households to access cash and in kind social assistance.

Funding needs

In the Central Sahel and its four neighbouring countries to the south, a region rich with history and brimming with potential despite its challenges, there exists a unique opportunity for more people and more organizations to make a difference and contribute meaningfully to the lives of children and families who are eager to build a brighter future – if given the chance.

Creating a momentum of giving and a critical mass of support from a diverse portfolio of donors and partners is vital to ensure that the targeted and needs based response that UNICEF offers in the Central Sahel region can reach its targets and most importantly, create an environment where children and families are able to transform the cycle of violence and natural disaster, leverage their existing capacities and building resilience and a sense of hope for the future.

Your support not only saves and protects the lives of millions of children across the Central Sahel but it enables children to dream again and feel that a different and more positive future is possible for them.

UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeals for 2024

Sector	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger	Coastal Countries
Education	\$54.8 million	\$32.5 million	\$24 million	\$15.4 million
Child protection	\$57.7 million	\$25.3 million	\$11.5 million	\$7.1 million
Health	\$22.2 million	\$14 million	\$12.5 million	\$6.2 million
Nutrition	\$37.5 million	\$33.3 million	\$34.5 million	\$7.6 million
WASH	\$64 million	\$15.6 million	\$9 million	\$13.1 million
Social protection	\$0.1 million	\$1 million	\$4 million	\$5.2 million
Cross-sectoral	\$2.7 million	\$8.8 million	\$4.7 million	\$10.7 million
Emergency preparedness	n/a	\$3 million	n/a	\$2.1 million
Rapid Response Mechanism	n/a	n/a	\$7.8 million	\$1 million
Cluster Coordination	n/a	n/a	\$1.6 million	n/a
TOTALS	\$239 million	\$133.5 million	\$109.6 million	\$68.4 million

¹ UNICEF Burkina Faso HAC 2024; UNICEF Mali HAC 2024; UNICEF Niger HAC 2024; and UNICEF HAC response in coastal countries linked to the Central Sahel crisis spillover 2024.

