

1. CONTEXT

The current violence, marked by armed attacks by radical groups and acts of banditry in Burkina Faso, is leading to an increase in internal displacement and a deterioration in the already very limited access to basic social services in the humanitarian regions including (Sahel, North, Centre North, East, Centre East, Boucle du Mouhoun). As of March 31, 2023, there were **2,062,534 internally** displaced persons (IDPs).¹ Nearly 58.50% of these IDPs are children.

Limited access to or absence of basic services (schools, health facilities, social services), insecurity and population movement have also weakened community protection mechanisms. Forced population displacement and the presence of unidentified armed groups represent 46% of identified threats, followed by armed conflict and attacks.²

The child protection situation deteriorated significantly in 2022.³ Children, who account for over 61% of IDPs, are exposed to risks, including family separation, gender-based violence, psychosocial distress, high risk of sexual assault, child marriage, dropping out of school, recruitment by armed groups and child trafficking. At the end of February 2023, 6,134 schools were closed in Burkina Faso, an increase of 44% since May 2022 (4,258).⁴

In responding to the above challenges, in IRC Burkina Faso is leveraging its long-standing expertise in child protection to provide assistance to child victims of conflict, by improving access to a comprehensive service offering.

2. OUR RESPONSE

IRC's approach is to ensure that children can receive individualized care and protection without stigma or discrimination.

IRC Burkina Faso uses a community-based approach combined with an individual approach that engages children (girls and boys), parents, communities and rights-holders in identifying, preventing and responding to risks of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

BRIGHTER FUTURES

Brighter Futures is an integrated child protection and nutrition intervention that aims to improve the development, behavior and safety of children at risk of malnutrition or receiving treatment for acute malnutrition in humanitarian settings. It aims to reduce maternal stress, provide a peer support network and improve mother-child relationships through attentive care and early learning. Caregiver Matter (CM) groups are run in static health clinics. They consist of 12 sessions with the parents of children in the clinics, to help them stimulate their children's learning and development through play.

Through this approach, caregivers of moderately or severely malnourished children are supported through the Caregiver Matter (CM) program.



SUPPORT FOR ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS (SAFE):

SAFE is a protection and psychosocial support intervention that aims to develop adolescents'

knowledge, skills and awareness, so that they can increase their own safety, resilience and well-being. To foster a supportive and caring family environment, SAFE also involves and empowers parents/guardians, given their role as key adults in the lives of adolescents.

To date, 1,187 teenagers (325 girls aged 10 to 14, 325 girls aged 15 to 19, 248 boys aged 10 to 14 and 289 boys aged 15 to 19) and 635 parents (350 tutors and 285 mentors) have taken part in the various sessions organized in the North, East and Sahel regions.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND AWARENESS-RAISING

In situations of humanitarian crisis and displacement, the capacities of community structures are often reduced, while children are confronted with various protection risks. To help

¹ Registration of Internally Displaced Persons in Burkina Faso Conasur March 31, 2023

² Protection monitoring report CPAoR BF December 2022

³ file:///C:/Users/eleonoram/Downloads/cpaor_bfa_etat_de_la_reponse_protection_de_l'enfant_au_31_juillet_2022-2.pdf

⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/burkinafaso/communiqués-de-presse/le-burkina-faso-abrite-pres-de-la-moitié-des-écoles-fermées>

raise awareness of child protection issues and promote respect for children's rights, IRC supports the government through its technical department, the *Direction Générale de l'Action Sociale*, in implementing advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives. This work is carried out in the villages by the child protection units representing the Directorate General of Social Action at local level. IRC, in collaboration with the protection units, also organizes community dialogues with representatives of different social strata to facilitate their involvement and commitment to actions to protect their communities. The awareness-raising sessions enabled IRC to reach 29,801 people, including 18,676 children (10,153 girls and 8,523 boys) and 11,125 adults (7,114 women and 4,011 men). Topics covered included child protection, in particular child marriage, family separation, child labor, female genital mutilation and birth registration.

CASE MANAGEMENT

In Burkina Faso, child protection stakeholders working within the Child Protection Working Group (Groupe de Travail pour la Protection de l'Enfant - GTPE) launched an initiative in 2011 to strengthen the child protection system. One of the achievements of this initiative was the case management approach. The adoption of this approach has led to the harmonization of case management tools and their systematic use by case managers.

In June 2020, at national level, the tools were revised to comply with new inter-agency guidelines and take into account the humanitarian context the country is experiencing.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHILD PROTECTION STAKEHOLDERS :

In order to respond effectively to children's protection needs, IRC makes capacity building a priority in its interventions.

To this end, training sessions are organized for child protection actors and partners. The aim is to strengthen the knowledge of players at all levels, in order to increase access to quality services.

The various capacity-building sessions reached 470 child protection actors, including 240 women and 230 men in the North, East and Sahel regions.

In 2023, IRC helped organize a training session on the Brighter Futures approach. This training was co-facilitated with the regional directorate of social action for the Nord region. Participants in the training were state partners and IRC staff. A total of 24 people took part, including 18 men.

IRC works in collaboration with state structures. For example, IRC participates in consultation frameworks such as the child protection network in each locality, which is chaired by the Procureur du Faso (public prosecutor) at the Tribunal de Grande Instance (district court) in the area concerned.

As part of data management and sharing, CPIMS+ version 1.6 and 1.7 has been deployed in several areas of the country, but some of IRC's intervention zones are not yet covered. IRC intends to deploy CPIMS+ version 2.0 from 2024. This version is currently being implemented with the training of trainers, of which an IRC staff was organized in February 2023.

To date, IRC has recorded a total of 665 cases, including 360 girls and 305 boys admitted to case management, who have been documented with an in-depth assessment. Children in the case management process are victims of various types of abuse. These include physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Child victims of exploitation (economic and sexual), neglect.



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN :

Mental health and psychosocial support activities for children are organized within Safe Healing and Learning Spaces (SHLS) and other safe learning spaces for adolescents. EAEs provide a safe and protective environment for children to thrive in emergency contexts.

SHLS activities take place in two intervention strategies: static and mobile. These safe, stimulating settings welcome children aged 3-10 and adolescents. The main activities carried out are physical development activities, creative activities, learning activities, civic and social activities, social cohesion sessions, information and awareness-raising activities on child protection issues. To date, 26,792 children, including 14,113 girls and 12,679 boys, have benefited from psychosocial support in the North, East and Sahel regions.

3. DONORS



For more information on IRC's global child protection work visit <https://childprotectionpractitioners.org>.