



Two girls are all smiles at a UNICEF-supported school in the PK3 camp for internally displaced persons in Bria, Haute-Kotto prefecture, northeast Central African Republic.

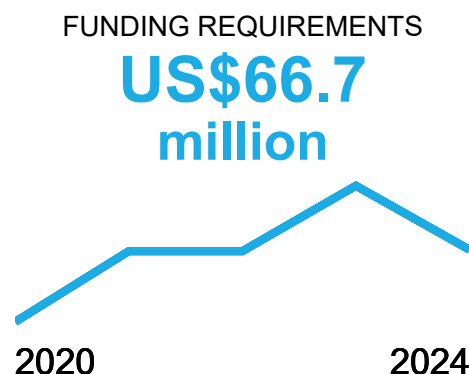
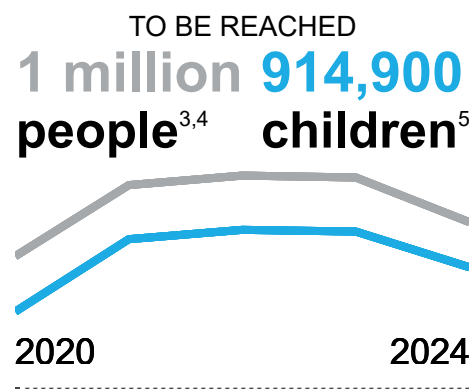
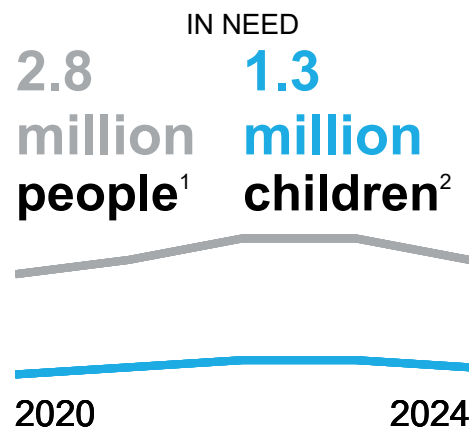
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Humanitarian Action for Children

Central African Republic

HIGHLIGHTS

- Violence, population movements and natural disasters continue to weigh heavily on the children of the Central African Republic. Despite some decrease in insecurity and conflict-related violence, 2.8 million people (nearly half of the country's population) will require humanitarian assistance in 2024. This includes 1.3 million children.
- UNICEF's will prioritize life-saving, multisectoral interventions strongly focused on internally displaced and returnee children and those in communities affected by shocks, in alignment with the inter-agency response strategy for the country. UNICEF will address humanitarian needs through humanitarian and development interventions – including a focus on durable solutions to displacement.
- UNICEF is appealing for \$66.7 million to meet the critical humanitarian needs of 1 million of the most vulnerable children and their families.



KEY PLANNED TARGETS



764,891
children screened for wasting



350,000
people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse



250,000
people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water



180,000
Vulnerable people recently affected by shocks benefiting from life-saving multi-sectoral interventions.

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic remains concerning. Violence, displacement, natural disasters continue to affect people, particularly those in the most vulnerable areas. Between October 2022 and September 2023, more than 224,195 individuals experienced at least one shock that triggered the need for a humanitarian response.⁷ These were linked primarily to violence (67 per cent) and natural disasters (16 per cent).⁸

Internal displacement persists, and as of August 2023, 488,866 internally displaced persons were reported in the country.⁹ While 25 per cent fewer than in 2022, numbers remain high, and the needs of displaced populations significant. Coupled with this, in April 2023, the country experienced an influx of refugees and returnees, including 23,570 people fleeing conflict in the Sudan and 37,400 coming from Chad.¹⁰ These movements have amplified humanitarian needs; they have put pressure on already fragile areas.

Humanitarian access remains a significant concern, especially in the western part of the country, due to ongoing attacks and the presence of explosive devices.⁶

Recurring epidemics are expected to take their toll on children in 2024 – this on top of an infant mortality rate that is already the fifth-highest globally.¹¹ Unsafe water usage contributes to the fourth-highest mortality rate related to water in Africa, and 2.2 million people¹² will require humanitarian WASH assistance, including more than 1 million children. All these circumstances impact children's nutrition status: the number of children under 5 years of age with severe wasting is projected to reach 45,473 in 2024.¹³

Approximately 850,852 children will require humanitarian protection interventions.¹⁴ Documented child rights violations decreased from 925 in 2021 to 773 in 2022,¹⁵ but cases of documented child recruitment increased from 329 in 2021 to 443 in 2022.¹⁶ And documented incidents of sexual and other gender-based violence leapt from 11,592 in 2021¹⁷ to 23,644 in 2022 (including 4,256 children).¹⁸ The proportion of children among victims of sexual violence rose from 35 per cent in 2022 to 43 per cent in the first half of 2023.¹⁹

Child marriage is widespread: 61 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married or in union before age 18.²⁰ In humanitarian contexts, child marriage is often used by families as a negative coping strategy due to declining income. And child marriage and early pregnancy, along with insecurity and the need to travel long distances to school, are the main factors that lead girls to drop out of school; only 38 per cent of girls reach secondary school.²¹ In 2024, around 1.2 million children will require education support.²²

Adequate and timely assistance can prevent millions of children from facing the harms and risks emerging from the vulnerable context in which they live.

SECTOR NEEDS²³



1.4 million people in need of nutrition assistance



851,000 children in need of protection services



1.2 million children in need of education support



2.2 million people lack access to safe water

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Before his life was turned upside down, Charles*, now 17, lived peacefully with his family in Cotonaf in Bouar, western Central African Republic. Charles used to go to school. Things were going well until an armed group settled behind his house and began harassing him to join them. Under pressure, Charles could not escape for long and was eventually forced to join the group, where he became their errand boy.

Life in the armed group was very difficult for Charles: "When I was there, they filled my head with bad ideas. They gave me drugs and I changed," he recalls.

*Name changed.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Despite leaving an armed group in the Central African Republic, Charles, 17, still feels lonely and struggles with his full reintegration. He says he is haunted by memories of that period.

In 2024, UNICEF will prioritize child-centred, life-saving interventions and risk reduction to support displaced people, returnees and host communities affected by shocks.

The UNICEF-led Rapid Response Mechanism will gather alerts, assess needs and provide critical, multisectoral life-saving interventions, including WASH, health and nutrition services, along with humanitarian cash transfers. The Rapid Response Mechanism will expand its focus on children and their families by providing complementary interventions in child protection, mental health and psychosocial support and education, where needed and feasible.

The WASH sector strategy aims at improving the health, education and nutritional status of internally displaced people and host communities affected by shocks. Short-term assistance in WASH will promote prevention of water-borne diseases through hygiene, in areas at risk of outbreaks.

UNICEF will deliver emergency education interventions, incorporating psychosocial support, distribution of teaching and learning materials and teacher training. Following the emergency response, UNICEF will introduce a broader set of interventions to enhance the community's capacity to respond to future shocks. This expanded approach will integrate protection and WASH activities into the education response, as well as community engagement.

UNICEF will prioritize malnutrition prevention and the early detection of child wasting, expanding preventive measures nationwide. Primary health care interventions will serve as the entry point for a broader intervention to support mothers and children that will encompass nutrition services, mental health and psychosocial support and the use of social protection platforms.

Given the increased use of explosive devices in the country, UNICEF will enhance community mine risk education.

UNICEF will also continue to support the expansion of mechanisms to identify, demobilize and reintegrate children associated with armed forces and armed groups. Gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and survivor assistance interventions will also be prioritized alongside protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The strategy for social and behaviour change and accountability to affected populations focuses on empowering communities to take greater ownership of the aid delivery process. This will be achieved by establishing and enhancing community platforms, developing community-led feedback and complaint mechanisms and reinforcing humanitarian information services.

Multipurpose cash transfer responses will be integrated into programmes.

UNICEF will continue to ensure coordination and leadership of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility and the Nutrition, WASH and Education Clusters, as well as inter-agency efforts on accountability to affected populations.

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/car/situation-reports>



Health and HIV/AIDS

- **181,686** children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose
- **291,035** children 0-59 months vaccinated against polio²⁸
- **283,750** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities²⁹
- **968** pregnant and lactating women living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy



Nutrition

- **764,891** children 6-59 months screened for wasting
- **45,473** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **368,918** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling³⁰
- **620,077** children 6-59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **80,000** children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support³¹
- **50,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **350,000** people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- **700** children who have exited an armed force and groups provided with protection or reintegration support³²
- **600** unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified



Education

- **100,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **150,000** children receiving individual learning materials³³
- **1,000** teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **250,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **100,000** people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- **20,000** women and girls accessing menstrual hygiene management services
- **250,000** people reached with handwashing behaviour-change programmes



Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)

- **10,000** households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers (including for social protection and other sectors)³⁴
- **4,000,000** affected people (children, caregivers, community members) reached with timely and life-saving information on how and where to access available services³⁵
- **100,000** people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms
- **40,000** people engaged in reflective dialogue through social media and digital platforms
- **10,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms



Rapid response mechanism

- **180,000** Vulnerable people recently affected by shocks benefiting from life-saving multi-sectoral interventions.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2024

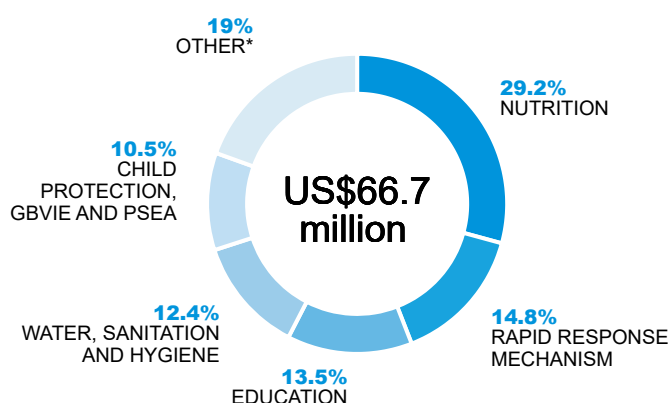
In 2024, UNICEF is requesting \$66.7 million to meet the critical humanitarian needs of 1 million vulnerable people in the Central African Republic – more than 90 per cent of them children. Funding requested is 11 per cent less than 2023 appeal due to a slight reduction in the number of children in need. This appeal dovetails with UNICEF’s broader efforts to promote an effective link between humanitarian interventions and development activities, including durable solutions to displacement.

In 2024, the UNICEF programme will reach the most vulnerable children and their caregivers with comprehensive live-saving, multisectoral assistance encompassing health, nutrition, WASH, education and protection interventions. UNICEF’s strong field presence and its reliable partnership network will further support an effective response through a more localized approach.

Nearly 30 per cent of the funding requested will be used for emergency nutritional support, including for ready-to-use therapeutic food for children who are severely wasted and for the delivery of preventive interventions. UNICEF is the main provider of ready-to-use therapeutic food in the country.

Considering the country’s fragilities, the fluid security context and the continued high level of displacement, UNICEF appeals for flexible or softly earmarked funding to enable immediate and strategic response wherever shocks occur and where children’s needs are greatest.

Without sufficient and timely funding, nearly 1 million children could go without access to essential services, including life-saving interventions.



Sector	2024 requirements (US\$)
Health and HIV/AIDS	6,500,000
Nutrition	19,500,000 ³⁶
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	7,000,000 ³⁷
Education	9,000,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	8,300,000
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	4,500,000 ³⁸
Rapid Response Mechanism	9,900,000
Cluster coordination	2,000,000
Total	66,700,000

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Health and HIV/AIDS (9.7%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (6.7%), Cluster coordination (3.0%).

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ENDNOTES

1. Provisional figures from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA, Central African Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024 (draft).
2. Ibid. Provisional figures.
3. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest-coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 764,900 children aged 6–59 months screened for wasting; and 150,000 children to be reached with individual learning materials in crisis-affected areas. This also includes 54 per cent of people to be reached with water (135,000), corresponding to the estimated number of adult beneficiaries of the activity with the largest target. This figure includes 51 per cent women/girls and 15 per cent people/children with disabilities.
4. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
5. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest-coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 764,900 children aged 6–59 months screened for wasting; and 150,000 children to be reached with individual learning materials in crisis-affected areas. As the latter activity usually does not concern children of pre-school age in crisis-affected areas, the two targets are not expected to overlap. This total includes 51 per cent girls and 15 per cent children with disabilities. The gender and disability breakdown is based on Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.
6. As of 8 August 2023, 24 people, including 19 civilians, had lost their lives in 54 incidents involving explosive devices, 7 more than in 2022 for the same number of incidents. OCHA, Protection of Civilians Report, 8–21 August 2023.
7. According to the Rapid Response Mechanism database, the main categories of shocks triggering humanitarian responses are violence, population movements and natural disasters.
8. Ibid.
9. OCHA, August 2023.
10. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), October 2023.
11. OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024 (draft).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Country task force on monitoring and reporting, Central African Republic, annual reports for 2021 and 2022.
16. Ibid.
17. Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), annual report 2021.
18. GBVIMS annual report 2022.
19. GBVIMS mid-year report 2023.
20. United Nations Population Fund, World Population Dashboard: Central African Republic, overview, available at <www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/CF>.
21. Joint Education Need Assessment, 2023.
22. OCHA, Central African Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024 (draft).
23. Ibid.
24. This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.
25. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster coordination for the WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. All cluster coordinator costs are included in sectoral programme budgets.
26. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.
27. Beyond the UNICEF targets for these interventions, other humanitarian partners are expected to reach the remaining children/families in need.
28. This target decreased compared with 2023 because of a change in geographic coverage (with nine health districts prioritized in 2024).
29. The targets increased in alignment with UNICEF's strategy of reaching children living in areas that face Integrated Food Security Acute Malnutrition (IPC AMN) Phase Classification 3 or 4 (child wasting). Children participating in a nutrition intervention will receive an integrated primary health care package.
30. The decrease is in accordance with the trend observed by the cluster and is equivalent to 80 per cent of the national people in need number. A discrepancy between the UNICEF and the cluster targets is due to the fact that the cluster aims to concentrate the entire package of activities, including prevention interventions, solely in IPC AMN phase 3 and 4 areas, UNICEF intends to expand its preventive package of activities nationwide.
31. The target was adjusted downwards to align with UNICEF's current capacity, considering that fewer than 100,000 children were reached in 2022. Additionally, it takes into account the anticipated decrease in the number of people in need for the Child Protection Cluster, which is expected to drop from 1.1 million in 2023 to approximately 900,000 in 2024.
32. Reintegration actions for children associated with armed forces and armed groups will prioritize children released from armed groups in 2024 and those who left armed groups in 2023. The target of 700 such children is based on data from the annual report 2022 of the country's MRM task force (773 children documented in 2022, including 443 children recruited during the reporting year).
33. Decreased in line with cluster projections for 2024.
34. This includes 5,000 households benefiting through the Rapid Response Mechanism and 5,000 households receiving cash through other humanitarian cash transfers. The overall number is an increase compared with 2023.
35. The population targeted is higher than the total number of people/children to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.
36. Although the number of children receiving treatment for wasting will decrease, the malnutrition prevention package will be expanded. Furthermore, unit costs have been adjusted to account for price increases, particularly in transport costs, which have risen due to challenges in reaching remote and inaccessible areas (where transport costs are notably high). Additionally, this budget line item includes support for a national SMART survey.
37. This includes \$2.5 million for addressing gender-based violence in emergencies and for interventions linked to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
38. This includes \$1.5 million for social and behavioural change and \$3 million for multisectoral humanitarian cash. It does not include the budget requirement for the 5,000 households receiving humanitarian cash transfers through the Rapid Response Mechanism.