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for every child

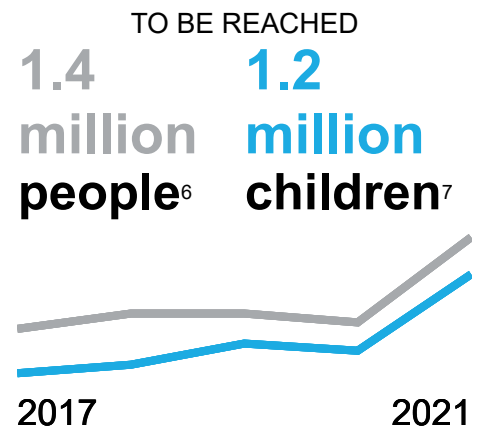
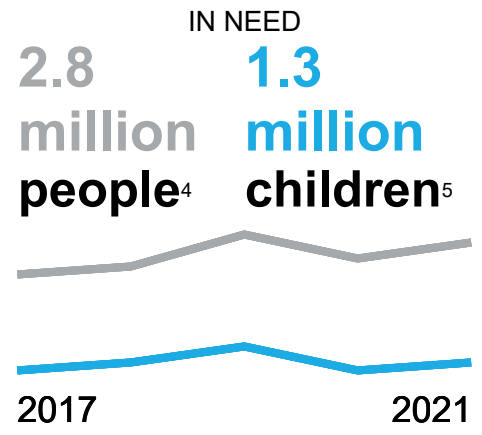
Humanitarian Action for Children

Students Octavie and Geraldine, both 17, are photographed at a UNICEF-supported primary school in the conflict-affected town of Paoua.

Central African Republic

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Central African Republic is one of the worst places in the world to be a child,¹ and the situation is deteriorating. Due to the combined effects of enduring violence and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, 2.8 million people,² including 1.3 million children,³ will need humanitarian assistance in the Central African Republic in 2021.
- The Rapid Response Mechanism will spearhead UNICEF's response in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and essential household items. Complementary interventions in nutrition, health and child protection will ensure a holistic first response to new emergencies. To respond to COVID-19, UNICEF will support the safe return of 907,000 students to 1,500 schools, expand access to clean water in underserved areas, and tackle the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic on children, including through expanded severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment.
- UNICEF requires US\$75.7 million to meet the needs of vulnerable children in the Central African Republic in 2021.



KEY PLANNED TARGETS



400,000
people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water



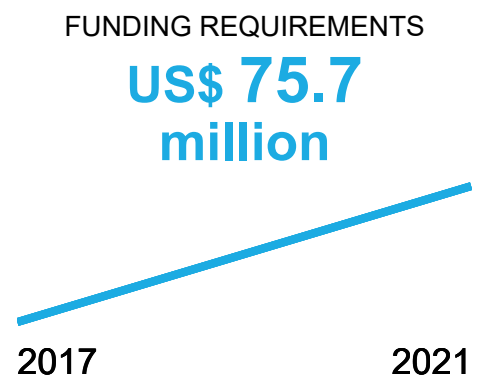
2,000
children released from armed forces/groups reintegrated or provided with services



592,000
children accessing educational services



3 million
people reached through messaging on access to services



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

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The Central African Republic is one of the worst places in the world to be a child,⁹ and the situation is deteriorating. Due to the combined effects of violence, COVID-19 and structural fragility,⁸ an estimated 2.8 million people – 57 per cent of the population – will need humanitarian assistance in the Central African Republic in 2021.¹⁰ This includes 1.3 million children and 430,000 people with disabilities.¹¹ Some 1.9 million people, or 39 per cent of the population, will experience acute vulnerabilities that threaten their survival.¹²

Despite the February 2019 peace agreement signed between the Government and 14 armed groups, the security situation in the country remains precarious. Fueled by significant outbursts of violence in several regions, internal displacement is at its highest level in three years.¹³ There are 658,000 people uprooted from their homes.¹⁴ One in five Central Africans is displaced by conflict.¹⁵

While the Central African Republic has registered relatively few COVID-19 cases, thanks to early prevention and response measures and the country's relative isolation, the pandemic is still active, and the impact of mitigation measure on the socio-economic situation has been severe. By the end of March, nearly 3,700 schools were closed, disrupting the learning of more than 1.4 million pre-primary through secondary students.¹⁶ The school reopening process has been slow, particularly in areas affected by violence. The pandemic has also impacted the health system, which was already facing ineffective financing, insufficient supply of medicines, and limited access to essential services. Low levels of immunization may give rise to new epidemic outbreaks.

The economic slowdown and rising food prices have had a significant impact on the well-being of Central Africans, with 81 per cent of households reporting negative effects.¹⁷ Children are likely to experience the worst impacts. The number of children under 5 years in need of SAM treatment is expected to rise by 25 per cent due to the pandemic, to 62,300.¹⁸

Children in the Central African Republic are also affected by other epidemics, including measles and polio, and the Ebola outbreak affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains a threat. The prevalence and impact of natural disasters, particularly flooding, are expected to increase.¹⁹ The country has the second highest mortality rate related to the use of unsafe water in Africa; and 51 per cent of the population will be in critical need of access to water in 2021.²⁰ Incidents of gender-based violence have also increased during the pandemic, including in Bangui, where cases have doubled.²¹ Some 900,000 children will need protection in 2021.²² The humanitarian response in the Central African Republic has been chronically underfunded. In the context of such high and escalating needs, urgent assistance is more important than ever. Without it, an entire generation is at risk.

SECTOR NEEDS



Nutrition

62,327 children under 5 years are acutely malnourished²³



Water, sanitation and hygiene

2.5 million people lack access to safe water²⁴



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

920,000 children need protection services^{25,26}



Education

1.3 million children are out of school²⁷

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Sosthène is one of the thousands of Central African children who had to drop out of school because of the conflict.

Through the Paoua Accelerated Learning Centre, which is supported by UNICEF, Sosthène has had a second chance to access education. The centre can accommodate 160 learners in three classrooms and has four qualified teachers. It targets children who have dropped out of school or have never enrolled. According to Rémy, who runs the centre, of the 60,000 children in Paoua and the surrounding villages, more than 30 per cent did not attend school at all last year.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Sosthène, a student at the UNICEF-supported Accelerated Learning Centre in Paoua.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In 2021, UNICEF will prioritize child-centred, life-saving interventions and risk reduction to support displaced, returning and host community people in the Central African Republic who have been impacted by the enduring crisis, recurring epidemics and natural disasters, while maintaining a strong focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. The humanitarian response will rely on close collaboration with partners in the country's most troubled areas, the use of pre-positioned supplies and UNICEF's network of four field offices.

The Rapid Response Mechanism led by UNICEF will carry out multi-sector assessments on new crises, share the results with the humanitarian community, and provide essential household items and critical WASH services to vulnerable children and families newly affected by shocks. By maintaining strong coordination with external actors, the Rapid Response Mechanism will expand its role as the entry point for complementary UNICEF responses, including the use of mobile teams for child protection, health and nutrition assistance. This approach will enable the delivery of a more comprehensive, higher impact first response, while ensuring that needs continue to be met over the longer term.

UNICEF will support the Government to respond to COVID-19, including by supporting the safe return to school, particularly in crisis-affected areas; mobilizing communities for prevention; developing sustainable WASH infrastructure in underserved areas; and mitigating the pandemic's impact on the most vulnerable children. COVID-19 mitigation efforts will include preventing related child protection risks, expanding SAM treatment and preventive interventions focusing on optimal nutrition practices while scaling up multi-purpose cash programming, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.²⁸ COVID-19 prevention measures will be further mainstreamed into UNICEF's programming.

The protection needs of children will remain central to UNICEF's humanitarian response in the Central African Republic. UNICEF will support efforts to release children from armed groups; reunify separated or unaccompanied children with their families; and provide appropriate psychosocial support to children affected by conflict. Gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and survivor assistance interventions will also be prioritized. UNICEF will mobilize partners to address preventable childhood illnesses, malaria, HIV and malnutrition, and will contribute to providing out-of-school children with access to safe learning spaces and quality education, including through radio programmes.

Finally, UNICEF will work with line ministries to reinforce government capacities for humanitarian coordination and response, and will continue to lead the child protection working group and the nutrition, WASH and education clusters. UNICEF will also mainstream the principles of accountability to affected populations across the response.

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports:

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/car/situation-reports>

2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS



Nutrition

- **49,862** children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment
- **164,828** primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- **647,226** children aged 6 to 59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation every six months



Health

- **638,981** children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio
- **107,028** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- **1,980** health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control
- **399,853** children under 10 years vaccinated against measles



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **400,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene
- **200,000** people accessing appropriately designed and managed latrines
- **400,000** people reached with handwashing behaviour change programmes



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **120,000** children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- **6,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions
- **2,000** children released from armed forces and groups reintegrated with their families/communities or provided with adequate care and services



Education

- **592,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **532,120** children receiving individual learning materials
- **1,500** schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)



Social protection and cash transfers²⁹

- **9,000** households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors



C4D, community engagement and AAP

- **3,000,000** people reached with messages on access to services³⁰
- **700,000** people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change
- **25,000** people who shared their concerns and asked questions/clarifications to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms



Rapid Response Mechanism

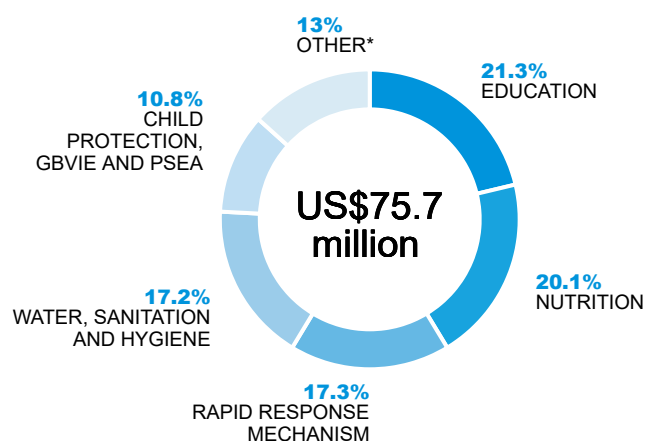
- **235,000** vulnerable people newly affected by the crisis rapidly provided with essential household items

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is requesting US\$75.7 million³¹ to meet the humanitarian needs of children in the Central African Republic in 2021. The significant increase in the funding request since 2020 is due to the integration of COVID-19 response requirements for 2021, which will remain a major focus.

In line with inter-agency planning trends, UNICEF's targets and budget requirements for education and WASH have nearly doubled compared with the 2020 appeal. This reflects a strong focus on these sectors as part of the COVID-19 response, particularly to support the safe return of more than 592,000 students to 1,500 schools, expand access to clean water in underserved areas and intensify community engagement. Likewise, the negative consequences of conflict and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on food security will leave more children in need of SAM treatment and more families in need of humanitarian cash transfers.

Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the continuing crisis and provide critical life-saving assistance to conflict-affected displaced people, returnees and host communities.



*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Health and HIV and AIDS (5.0%), C4D, community engagement and AAP (3.2%), Social protection and cash transfers (3.2%), Cluster coordination (2.0%).

Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
Nutrition	15,200,000
Health and HIV and AIDS	3,800,000 ³²
Water, sanitation and hygiene	13,000,000
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	8,200,000 ³³
Education	16,100,000
Social protection and cash transfers	2,400,000
C4D, community engagement and AAP	2,400,000
Rapid Response Mechanism	13,100,000
Cluster coordination	1,500,000
Total	75,700,000

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ENDNOTES

1. Twelve per cent of children in the Central African Republic die before the age of 5. World Bank, 'The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human capital in the time of COVID-19', World Bank, September 2020.
2. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Central African Republic: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview' (draft), OCHA, 2020.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 638,981 children under 5 years to be reached through the national polio campaign in the regions where UNICEF will lead; and 592,000 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 (216,000), corresponding to the estimated number of adult beneficiaries of the activity with the largest target. This includes an estimated 609,000 boys, 621,000 girls, 106,000 men and 110,000 women. Of these, an estimated 217,000 are living with disabilities, based on data provided by the Office for the Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 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.
7. This was calculated using the rounded sum of the highest coverage programme targets for children to be reached: 638,981 children under 5 years to be reached through the national polio campaign in the regions where UNICEF will lead; and 592,000 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 includes an estimated 609,000 boys, 621,000 girls and 184,500 children with disabilities (15 per cent), based on data provided by OCHA.
8. The Central African Republic ranks 188 out of 189 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2019 Human Development Index.
9. Twelve per cent of children in the Central African Republic die before the age of 5. World Bank, 'The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human capital in the time of COVID-19', World Bank, September 2020.
10. 'Central African Republic: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview'.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2020.
14. OCHA, July 2020.
15. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), August 2020.
16. Central African Republic Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Statistical Yearbook, 2019.
17. REACH, Central African Republic Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, September 2020.
18. 'Central African Republic: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview'.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).
26. 'Central African Republic: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview'.
27. Ibid.
28. The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.
29. This includes 3,000 households to be reached by the Rapid Response Mechanism; 4,000 to be reached by dedicated humanitarian cash transfer projects; and 2,000 to be reached through cash-in-nutrition projects.
30. The population targeted is higher than the total number of people/children to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.
31. Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency needs and planning documents.
32. Immunization campaigns originally planned for 2020 were postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19 with the available funds.
33. This includes US\$5.8 million for child protection interventions; US\$1.66 million to assist women and children survivors of gender-based violence; and US\$840,000 for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse interventions. The funding requirement for child protection has decreased because the focus of the programme has shifted to psychosocial support for children, which has a comparatively low unit cost.