Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan

for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and host communities

January
December
2024

Ghana Planned Response

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UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

WFP World Food Programme

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Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan
Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and host communities

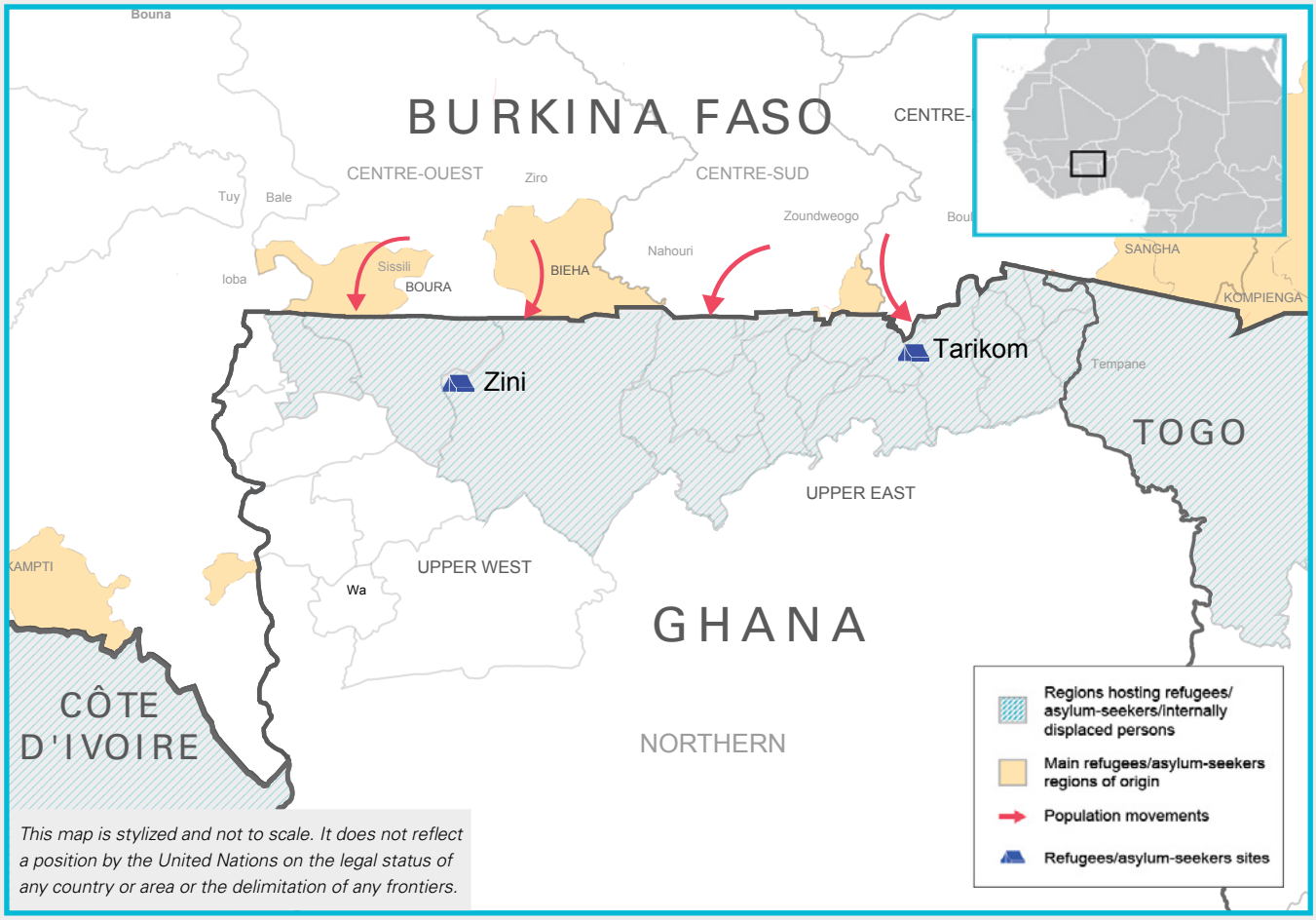
Ghana

KEY FIGURES

28,000
Projected refugee populations/asylum seekers

100,000
Host-community members to be reached

25,5 USD (millions)
Financial requirements



Population Groups in Affected Regions (Upper East & Upper West)

Population	31 December 2023	2024 Joint Response Plan (Population to be reached)
Refugee Population	15,000	28,000
Internally displaced persons	-	-
Host communities	225,749	100,000
Total	240,749	128,000

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Sapelliga, Ghana. February 9th, 2023: Family of five fleeing from Burkina Faso settle at a Camp in Sapelliga.

Country Overview

Part 1: Current Situation

With the deterioration of the situation in Burkina Faso, over 15,000 asylum seekers are estimated to have crossed the border into the Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana. The numbers of new arrivals from Burkina Faso will likely continue to rise as the security situation deteriorates.

The arrival of asylum seekers puts pressure on host communities' resources, services and food systems. The northern region of Ghana is one of the poorest and most underdeveloped parts of the country, with weak infrastructure and roads, inadequate services including education, health, and WASH. This crisis is taking place during a particularly volatile period, which sees the country grappling with its worst economic crisis in a generation, record-high levels of food insecurity.

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Sapelliga, Ghana. February 9th, 2023: Families fleeing from Burkina Faso settle at a Camp in Sapelliga.

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In February 2023, the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) and UNHCR jointly convened a High-Level Consultative Dialogue with key government stakeholders to develop a response strategy for the Upper East and Upper West regions that included the host communities. It adopted conclusions which included the need for the Government to secure land for reception centres and settlements in the two regions, and the need to better support the regional authorities. The Regional Ministers in collaboration with district assemblies and local chiefs identified two locations for the refugees and asylum seekers to be received and settled: Tarikom (Upper East Region) and Zini (Upper West Region).

The Ghana Asylum Policy has promoted the integration of refugees and asylum-seekers in national services from the start of the emergency. Once registered and documented, asylum-seekers have access to education, health, and other national services almost at par with the host population. Therefore, those settled in makeshift settlements along the borders have been instructed by the government to move further inland to the established reception centres for their registration and documentation, so they have access to national services. Within this backdrop and given the enabling policy environment for integration of refugees in national services, the overarching goal for Ghana is to enhance the absorption capacity of existing national services and to reinforce the existing ones for host communities. The target for the enhancement of these services therefore would be those districts hosting asylum seekers, as well as the border communities which are ordinarily the first responders to an influx.

The primary focus of the Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan for Ghana is therefore i) to support the establishment and running of the reception centres and settlements; and ii) to simultaneously enhance the absorption capacity of services and food assistance for the most food insecure and vulnerable in the host communities to enable integration and peaceful co-existence. Support will be in the sectors of protection, education, health and nutrition, WASH, food security and social services.

The **Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan for Ghana** is aligned with Ghana's National Development Plan, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Global Compact on Refugees.

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Sapelliga, Ghana. February 9th, 2023: Girls from Galaka JHS cheer on their Boy's football team in a match to promote peace in the community.

Needs and vulnerabilities

UN agencies and partners have conducted multisectoral needs and protection assessments in the Upper East and Upper West that have shown that protection, shelter, food, health, water, and sanitation are among the most urgent assistance needs for asylum seekers and their hosts.

Protection

Asylum seekers that relocate from the border areas to the reception centres are registered and provided with documentation. Ghana has mandated for asylum-seekers to move to the reception centres for security reasons, and registration outside of the reception centres is currently not authorized.

Case profiling of over 1,000 people in the Tarikom Reception Centre and host communities in 2023 identified protection risks and vulnerabilities such as unaccompanied and separated children, child marriage and children without birth registration/certificate that require professional case management support. Some 60% of new arrivals are women and girls, which raises important considerations related to gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The precarious financial situation of the new arrivals exacerbates vulnerabilities for children and adolescents. Sexual exploitation and abuse and GBV reporting and mitigation mechanisms need further strengthening at the community level. 72% of households reported being worried about running out of food; and almost 70% are worried about accessing healthy and nutritious food due to a lack of money or resources.

At Ghana's northern borders, important mixed migration flows have been detected by the authorities. This complex population movement includes refuges, asylum-seekers, economic migrants, nomadic persons (such as herders), trafficked persons, smuggled migrants, rejected asylum seekers and unaccompanied and separated migrant children. The numbers and type of migrants remain unclear, and thus even more difficult to provide the necessary assistance.

Basic services (Health, WASH and education)

A Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) conducted by UNICEF in eleven border districts has highlighted that community infrastructure capacity is straining to absorb affected persons – including children – within communities. Access to drinking water and handwashing varies across communities and facilities.

16.8% of health facilities have access to pipe-borne water; 50.4% have separate toilets in functioning condition. The VCA highlights that on average, only 36.7% of communities have water sources that can serve additional population and 34.8% of communities have toilet infrastructure that can serve an additional influx of persons. The VCA highlighted stretched education resources at district level to meet increased need. Several communities were identified with overpopulated classrooms, poor access to learning resources, and WASH facilities.

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Sapelliga, Ghana. February 9th, 2023: Boy washes hands with the help of a mechanised borehole at Sapelliga JHS.

Food security

Preliminary findings from the November 2023 *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) analysis reveal alarming trends in food insecurity in Ghana. An estimated 2.2 million people are projected to face food insecurity during the June-August 2024 planting season, marking a 62% increase from the 2023 figures. Among them, 92,000 are expected to be in the "emergency" level, experiencing severe consumption deficits and relying on irreversible coping mechanisms – a 28% increase from 2023.

In the Upper East and Upper West regions, which account for approximately 12% of the food insecure population, an estimated 253,203 people are projected to face food insecurity during the 2024 lean season. Despite representing only 7% of Ghana's population, these regions are significantly affected due to an influx of Burkinabe asylum seekers, straining communal resources. Of the food insecure individuals, 48,261 are projected to be in IPC/CH Phase 4, constituting nearly 20% of the affected population in both regions and 52% of all Ghanaians projected to experience IPC/CH Phase 4. Urgent and scaled-up humanitarian response is crucial to address deepening vulnerabilities.

The World Food Programme conducted a cross-functional assessment in April 2023, which was followed by a UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Emergencies (IAWGE) multi-sectoral assessment in July 2023 where approximately 70% of households surveyed were found to have inadequate diets, with a higher proportion of households hosting asylum seekers (82%) reporting inadequate diets compared to those (64%) who were not hosting asylum seekers at the time[1]. Many host communities were reported to have depleted food stocks and were resorting to negative coping mechanisms, including skipping meals, reducing portions (including those for children), and in extreme cases, foraging for food.

Shelter and Core Relief Items

Asylum-seekers that relocate to the reception centres and are later moved to the settlement are housed in emergency shelters made out of temporary materials such as plastic tarpaulins. Due to the harsh conditions, there is a need for the asylum-seekers to transition to durable shelters made from local materials. This is a priority for the authorities to have this completed in 2024.

While host communities resolved to share their non-food items with the asylum seekers, other communities purchased new ones to be able to accommodate the needs of asylum seekers who came almost without any personal belongings. It includes blankets, mattresses, mosquito nets, buckets, mats, cooking utensils and clothes. These solidarity efforts ultimately have an impact on the resources of the host communities. Core relief Items have been distributed at the level of the reception centres and settlement, and this assistance need to be maintained for new arrivals.

Livelihoods and economic inclusion

Host communities in Upper East and Upper West regions primarily consist of small-scale farmers who rely on crops like beans, groundnuts, maize, millet, and sorghum as their primary sources of food. These communities face recurrent shocks due to climate events and extreme weather, resulting in reduced harvests and a struggle to maintain an adequate food supply necessary for healthy and productive lives. Some segments of the population engage in mixed farming and livestock rearing to support their livelihoods.

1 Final Report of the multi-sector Rapid Assessment in the asylum seekers hosting communities.
Link: Final Report on Multsectoral Rapid Assessment of Host Communities of Asylum Seekers (25.08.23).pdf

Part 2- Response Strategy

The Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan is an interagency response tool for an immediate and resilience-based response to the influx from Burkina Faso and its impact on host communities. It is focused on asylum-seekers and host communities receiving these new arrivals. The geographic area prioritized is the northern region of Ghana.

While strengthening the protection environment, the response is designed to bridge the gap between the initial humanitarian needs and development needs in the north, to enable asylum seekers to integrate into national services, and to improve access to basic services for host communities. Increasing access to social and basic services for vulnerable populations both from asylum-seeker and host communities will decrease their vulnerability, and reinforce their capacity to absorb new arrivals and be able to cope with external shocks and crises. This contributes to building more resilient and shock-responsive systems and reinforcing social cohesion among communities.

The response strategy will be structured around four strategic pillars:

Analysis: Evaluation and monitoring Partners will build capacity for data collection, processing, analysis and visualization, enabling more harmonized and rapid inter-agency planning and decision-making.

Assistance: A common response to emergency situations for faster and more efficient assistance. The partners will pool their human and material resources to ensure that in the event of a sudden shock, the humanitarian community can quickly assist the authorities with specific assistance support.

Prevention: Community Integration and Resilience. Communities and local authorities are on the front line of responding to the influx as a result of the situation in the central Sahel. Partners will ensure that they have the capacity and training to identify early risks, take steps to mitigate them, and reduce the strain that an increased influx of people puts on access to existing basic social services.

Protection: Ensure that all community members are included in an enhanced protection environment. The protection of individuals and communities will remain at the heart of partners' response to the influx as a result of the Sahel crisis, ensuring that initiatives are implemented to preserve the well-being and resilience of those affected. The response that will be implemented aims to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights of displaced persons, to ensure assistance for immediate essential needs and improved access to basic social services, and to strengthen social cohesion, resilience, and self-sufficiency.

1. Analysis: Data Collection and Analysis

To address the needs of populations and oversee the response, first-hand data collection and analysis need to be improved and articulated among all different actors within the existing national systems.

Concerning asylum-seekers, data collection on arrivals is an ongoing process, with various agencies collaborating in data collection and sharing. The GRB with, the support of UNHCR, leads the process, providing estimated numbers of new arrivals, registering asylum seekers using biometrical technology, and collecting information on living conditions, vulnerabilities and protection risks. The analysis of asylum-seeker data will be accomplished in line with relevant protocols by key stakeholders for informational purposes. The Inter Agency Working Group for Emergencies can support the analysis.

IOM will work in coordination with UNHCR and the Ghana Refugee Board on border monitoring and capacity building, including support to border security officials with border management surveillance equipment and other tools to enhance the collection of data. IOM will implement the Solutions and Mobility Index (SMI) to identify root causes of fragility through data to address protracted displacement. The SMI provides data on stability, peace, development, recovery, and reintegration dynamics.

WFP and UNHCR currently have a global Data Sharing Agreement in place that facilitates the seamless exchange of data on asylum-seekers for programmatic information regarding assistance provided.

WFP currently collaborates with the government to monitor food security, nutrition, and market conditions through the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System (FSNMS), providing nationwide data at sub-national levels. WFP and its partners intend to expand these monitoring systems to include communities

hosting asylum-seekers. This expansion will be complemented by tailored near-real-time food security monitoring systems, such as HungerMapLive[2] monitoring, to enhance the timely availability and accessibility of critical data for a holistic understanding of the food security and nutrition situation.

UNICEF works with authorities to enter all child protection and GBV cases into the Primero-based Social Welfare Information Management System (SWIMS) to facilitate professional case management and referrals to services by trained district social workers. Complementing the National Education Management Information System (EMIS) data, UNICEF strengthens daily school attendance registration and monitoring using real-time tools including the National Mobile School Report Card (mSRC), a national digital school data platform to track daily enrolment, teacher strengths and access to learning resources.

Partners will contribute to the GRANIT coastal countries monitoring tool coordinated by OCHA, IOM and REACH by ensuring the quality of the information collected and the analyses that can be carried out through the sectoral working groups[3].

These combined efforts will facilitate the prompt identification of areas where humanitarian, development, and peace actors can collaborate and complement each other through joint programming to address evolving needs. The focus will be on maximizing impact, efficiency, and inclusivity, with particular attention to women, youth, and people living with disabilities..

2. Assistance: Coordinated Immediate Humanitarian Response

UN agencies in Ghana will pursue efforts to better articulate and coordinate the humanitarian response needed in case of arrival of new populations due to the arrival of refugees and asylum-seekers from the central Sahel. For this purpose, national-level coordination will be done by GRB supported by UNHCR. The Inter-Agency Working Group for Emergencies (IAWGE) will also support these efforts. Monthly coordination meetings, chaired by UNHCR, are held at the regional level in Upper West and Upper East regions with the participation of other partners and authorities. Joint missions and joint emergency response teams will be organized as needed to ensure the complementarity of the response and the multisectoral approach based on the mandates and expertise of each actor.

WFP
Bansi, Ghana.
8th November 2023: During focus group discussions, WFP staff probe into the type of help needed in Bansi community.

Emergency shelter and core relief items

The Ghana Refugee Board manages the shelters in the reception centres and in the settlements. At the level of the two sites, Tarikom and Zine, the situation in terms of emergency shelters is as follow:

- Tarikom: 510 emergency shelters constructed in the reception centre and 250 in the settlement, compared to 800 planned
- Zini: 200 emergency shelters under construction in the reception centre and 400 in the settlement

In 2024, emergency shelters in the settlements will be upgraded to semi-permanent shelters using available local materials, namely mud bricks. The plan is to construct 1,600 semi-permanent shelters both in Tarikom and Zini. A community-based approach will be adopted wherein asylum-seekers will be provided with shelter construction materials and supported when necessary to construct their shelter. To ensure participatory approach, asylum-seekers will build their own kitchen while GRB, UNHCR and its implementing partners will provide technical support during the construction process.

Arrivals at the reception centres will continue to receive core relief item kits (CRIss). The standard kit includes a sleeping mat, kitchen set, jerrycan 10L, bucket 14L, blanket and sanitary towel and soap. Additionally, lifesaving WASH supplies will be provided to asylum-seekers in affected communities, including dignity and hygiene kits, water purification tablets and latrine slabs for building the temporary latrines, which will be complemented with hygiene sessions.

2 The **HungerMapLIVE** is an integrated global hunger monitoring system that collects, processes, and displays real-time information on key food security metrics, conflict, weather events, and other drivers of food insecurity - all in real-time and in one place. The HungerMapLive is available and can be accessed: https://hungermap.wfp.org/ Accessed 25 October 2023.

3 Outil de veille multirisques pour les pays côtiers d'Afrique de l'Ouest: Bénin - Côte d'Ivoire - Ghana - Togo (GRANIT) (Au 31 juillet 2023) | OCHA (unocha.org)

Food and multi-purpose cash assistance (CBT)

At the reception centre and settlement site in Tarikom, hot meals are currently provided by Caritas In 2024, this approach will be modified at the settlement level. Asylum-seekers who move to the settlement sites will be provided with food assistance by WFP, in close coordination with UNHCR and GRB, using the most appropriate method based upon the availability of multi-purpose cash assistance or vouchers (based on market and other assessments).

Furthermore, WFP has been assisting vulnerable host communities by delivering cash-based assistance through financial service providers, primarily Mobile Money Limited, via mobile money transfers. This method will continue for the intended action targeting host community populations, as it has proven highly effective, yielding valuable insights and best practices, which will be applied in the current proposed intervention.

The recent inter-agency needs assessment report has highlighted significant challenges in host communities' food access, even in functional markets. Assessments will be also conducted in asylum-seeker reception centres and settlement sites to explore alternative transfer methods in cases where cash assistance may not be feasible. These efforts will ensure that agencies adapt assistance to the specific needs and circumstances of the affected populations, promoting more efficient and effective support to those in need. For the moment, the concluded assessments results revealed that cash assistance has been found to be feasible and is the preferred approach for the targeted host community populations. Therefore, WFP will primarily prioritize cash throughout the implementation of this intervention both to the host community and asylum seekers.

UNICEF is committed to scale up humanitarian cash transfers (HCT) in ways that build on or strengthen social protection systems as part of response. While UNHCR provides HCT for those in the reception and settlement sites, UNICEF will work within host communities and target people with disabilities, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children below 2 years for HCT to meet their basic nutritional and consumption needs, especially since 66% of households in the VCA reported experiencing food insecurity in the past year. UNICEF will also facilitate the integration of such identified vulnerable populations in the government social protection system to ensure sustainable support.

UNICEF will continue to strengthen and support the government in developing social protection systems that are better able to prepare and respond to shocks in the two regions as well as nationally, including the collaboration and coordination required at different levels to influence humanitarian programming to better align with planned and ongoing efforts on Shock Responsive Social Protection. This involves development of an inclusive coordination platform that includes short-term coordination groups such as those set up for coordination of Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) in times of crisis.

WFP
Nangodi, Ghana. 6th November 2023: A display of the amount of money received from the cash transfer programme for host communities.

3. Prevention: Community Integration And Resilience

Priority will be given to providing humanitarian assistance to affected communities and asylum-seekers, preparing them for transition through the inclusion into national mechanism for basic services and by introducing livelihoods and resilience-based activities. Emphasis will be placed on humanitarian and development efforts, focusing on promoting social cohesion and harmony within the asylum and hosting community locations to encourage integration and peaceful coexistence.

While asylum-seekers in Tarikom are granted access to government services, there is limited absorption capacity. Partners will seek to enhance these services to enable asylum-seekers to benefit from them and to promote peaceful co-existence within the communities. To guarantee asylum-seekers access to these services, partners will need necessary funds to help establish, expand, or refurbish health posts, schools, police stations and accommodation for service providers near the reception centres and settlements.

WFP
18th October 2023: With the cash she received, Dorcas expanded her sewing business and is now better able to take care of her son.

Access to services

Health and nutrition

All new arrivals at the reception centre in Tarikom are medically screened in the Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) facility. A key step in access to health services for asylum-seekers is the enrolment in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). UNHCR partner, Caritas, will support the enrolment as well as the medical referral system within the Ghana Health Service (GHS). Individuals seen at the Tarikom CHPS clinic that need higher-level health facilities will be referred to the appropriate secondary or tertiary facility. UNHCR will also support community-based protection through the development of Community Health Committees (CHC).

The VCA conducted by UNICEF in the border districts highlighted 21% of its household respondents were without health insurance. UNICEF will continue to support access to health services for people within host communities by facilitating their identification and enrolment (registration and renewal) into the NHIS. With the limited number of social welfare and community development staff at the community level, UNICEF will support the GHS in training of the community health workers on the identification and referral of protection concerns and other social issues and linkage to appropriate services/support.

In host communities, UNICEF will undertake population screenings followed by subsequent routine screenings as populations in communities with affected persons evolve. These screenings will be then followed up with routine childhood immunization services, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services, and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling. This will also strengthen gaps in health facility service delivery. Provision of essential health and nutrition supplies will be provided to District Health Directorates for treatment of malnourished and unvaccinated children from displaced populations (with the inclusion of host community members where required). This includes supplies such as oral rehydration supplies, emergency medication, ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), Iron Folic Acid (IFA), and Vitamin A tablets.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene

In the reception centres and the settlements (Tarikom and Zini), GRB is currently in charge of WASH interventions. There is a need to complete WASH facilities in the Zini settlement and to expand the existing WASH facilities in the Tarikum settlement.

Outside the settlements, UNICEF will support an estimated 25 communities (reaching about 40,000 asylum seekers and host community members) across relevant districts that are hosting or are likely to host asylum-seekers by rehabilitating or rebuilding the water supply systems for them to be able to cope in the event of an influx of asylum seekers. WASH facilities will be upgraded and expanded in 15 schools and 10 health centres as part of the resilience building process in communities that are likely to host asylum seekers. Affected communities will also be supported with hygiene and sanitation promotion activities, including stopping open defecation. Schools and health centres will also be supported to promote safe menstrual hygiene management.

Education

Caritas collaborates with regional and district directorates of the Ghana Education Service (GES) to enrol asylum-seeker children of school-going age into the Ghana education system for formal education. The primary school in Tarikom has been assessed and efforts to integrate asylum-seeker students into appropriate classes is ongoing. Caritas is providing complementary education to support students (primarily older students) to acquire necessary skills to be able to integrate into the formal education system. Schools also need assistance to rehabilitate facilities.

UNICEF identified several communities with overpopulated classrooms, poor access to learning resources, and limited WASH facilities in schools. UNICEF will prioritize the improvement of learning infrastructure to support access and quality education delivery by making available and using age- and level-appropriate teaching, learning and recreational resources for 20,000 learners; and improving the capacity of over 800 teachers and school administrators to provide psycho-social support to students, including support on referral to psycho-social counselling. School Management Committees and other stakeholders in host communities will be engaged to strengthen their governance response and support to affected children at the school level. Cross-sectoral linkages and service delivery in schools in the areas of WASH, health, nutrition, and protection will be strengthened. UNICEF will also use the education system as an entry point for peace building initiatives through the establishment of peace clubs informed by capacity building efforts and sensitization of education stakeholders. Sports, such as football, will be used to mobilize community level stakeholders for peace awareness engagements.

Climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods

The intervention will target the most vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and individuals with special needs, both in refugee/asylum-seeker and host communities. Fostering community collaboration on shared projects contributes to the strengthening of social cohesion, ultimately promoting peace. This aspect will be particularly emphasized in building relations between asylum-seekers and the host community. Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) will play a pivotal role in bringing communities together to identify their priorities and engage in activities that bolster food access and availability.

WFP
Issaka Tinga, Ghana. 8th January 2024: Jibril cultivates a pepper farm with the cash he received for hosting Burkinabés asylum seekers.

WFP will align, sequence and layer resilience into the emergency response to enable a smooth transition to recovery. Host and asylum-seekers communities will be introduced to productive asset creation activities that focus on their main livelihoods to safeguard and protect against future shocks. Activities that relate to water, natural resource management, crop production, livestock production and fishery among others will be prioritized.

To enhance local food production, partners will provide essential farming inputs and training in modern agronomic practices. The promotion of conservation agriculture will help farmers mitigate the adverse impacts of land use, promote environmental conservation, and ultimately lead to higher yields.

Activities related to the restoration of fragile ecosystems and landscapes through agro-forestry will be encouraged. Communities will also be empowered to recognize assets that positively impact their livelihoods.

Initiatives that create income-generating opportunities to build more resilient livelihoods will be promoted. The local governments and line ministries will be involved to ensure alignment to local development plans and priorities and to promote sustainability.

Social cohesion and community engagement

Community engagement forms a crucial component of this intervention, as participating agencies collaboratively formulate a comprehensive community engagement strategy. This strategy will place affected host populations and asylum-seekers at the forefront of planning and decision-making processes. This ensures their continuous involvement and meaningful consultation, empowering them to actively determine their needs and priorities.

Promoting resilience in communities along the border is a key goal of the Plan. The approach to building resilience is underpinned by efforts at the individual, community, and institutional levels to prevent conflict and build peace. This includes strengthening social cohesion, both vertically (between the state and its citizens), and horizontally (between and within groups), while investing in individuals' capacity to prevent, transform and resolve conflict.

UNHCR and the GRB are engaged with the asylum seekers in Tarikom daily. They have also regular meetings with key local officials as well as traditional leaders on issues of mutual importance. They will keep conducting outreach to locations where asylum-seekers are residing and engage with the asylum-seekers and key host community stakeholders. Activities include the sensitization for asylum-seekers to move to the reception centres and settlements. Notwithstanding the requirement for the asylum seekers to move, UNHCR and GRB promote coexistence through dialogue and advocacy for support to the host communities.

IOM has been working with northern border communities, through a conflict prevention and border governance initiative that seeks to increase state presence, enhance community resilience and social cohesion. Under this Plan, IOM will continue to mobilize communities to take collective action to address needs and improve equitable access to services, with infrastructure often a tangible community-wide benefit of dialogue and engagement processes, also boosting community empowerment, self-reliance and social cohesion in communities hosting Burkinabe refugees/asylum seekers and displaced from climatic events.

Road Infrastructure

The condition of local feeder roads, particularly in the Tarikom settlement site, is severely degraded and worsens notably during the rainy seasons. This degradation significantly hampers the effective transportation of essential humanitarian goods to the reception and settlement sites. Within this intervention, the rehabilitation of the road and the establishment of proper water channels and bridges have been identified as top priorities.

Rehabilitation efforts will be initiated by WFP for the primary access road leading to the reception centre and extending to the settlement site, in collaboration with UNHCR, the Ghana Refugee Board, and the relevant line ministries. Drainage channels and bridges will be established or renovated. Initial technical assessments will be conducted to determine the necessary scope of work.

4. Protect

In the approved reception and settlement areas (Tarikom and Zini), regular protection activities for asylum seekers will be provided by the Ghana Refugee Board and supported by UNHCR and its partner Caritas as well as the relevant government departments. The strategy is to support access to government services and case management (e.g. social services, child protection, GBV, PSEA, health and nutrition and education). In both the Upper East and Upper West regions, UNICEF will keep strengthening the national protection system, expanding its support to the District Social Welfare and Community Development (DSW) Department and partners.

Registration and documentation

As of December 2023, the Ghana Refugee Board, with the support of UNHCR, has biometrically registered 3,328 asylum seekers in the Upper East Region and the registration will continue as people arrive in the reception centres and in host communities. To ensure swift documentation and access to rights as refugees, UNHCR will continue to advocate for the adoption of simplified/accelerated asylum procedures for Burkinabe asylum-seekers and support the authorities with the modalities.

Civil Registration

Birth registration is critical to legal identity, a fundamental right that enables access to services while protecting children from exploitation, child marriage and statelessness. In Ghana, the registry of births and deaths is required by the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1965 (Act 301) including those occurring in the reception centres and settlements. For an infant's first year, birth certification is free. Asylum-seekers who apply after the first year will be supported to obtain birth certificates. In host communities, in partnership with the Births and Deaths Registry services, UNICEF will keep supporting mobile birth registration services to children who have lost birth certificates and those who were not registered at birth.

Gender Based Violence.

In Tarikom, asylum-seekers are accessing social welfare services through the District Social Welfare and Community Development (DSW) Department in Zebilla who visit the reception centre and settlement. They are also accessing health and have access to police services in Tarikom. In the reception centres,settlements and other locations where asylum-seekers reside UNHCR, GRB and DSW will address the six core actions of: prevention; risk mitigation; response; case management; assessment and monitoring; planning, prioritization

and resource allocation. This will be accomplished through close coordination with the appropriate partners and government stakeholders including GHS, DSW, GPS, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), and Legal Aid Commission (LAC). UNHCR will work on engaging and supporting local actors, specifically women-led organizations and community structures, as important safeguarding experts, who can help identify and mitigate risks and assist in promoting safer and more sustainable programming. UNHCR will further roll-out the 2023 Interagency GBV SOPs and provide guidance and capacity building support to key actors to ensure its operationalization.

Partners will continue to support and use the basic procedures that already exist for the referral of GBV cases to DSW or relevant partners to receive appropriate assistance. UNHCR and partners will support DSW and relevant partners to provide other GBV-related assistance including mental health and psycho-social support.

Child protection

The child protection response will rely on existing government capacities while strengthening community-based protection mechanisms. DSW officers will continue to visit the Tarikom reception center and settlement on a regular basis and provide child protection services. The same approach will be set up in Zini with the DSW office covering the area.

Children who need protection services will be identified, assessed and referred, including unaccompanied and separated children, children who experienced or are at risk of violence including sexual or gender-based violence,, exploitation, neglect, harmful practices such as child marriage or other violations, and children and parents/caregivers who need mental health and psychosocial support. Case management will be implemented using government procedures including SWIMS based on the Case Management Standard Operating Procedures.

UNICEF will support the use of the Child Protection Community Facilitation Toolkit to sensitize community members, children, parents/caregivers and religious/traditional/community leaders on various protection risks and promote service-seeking behaviour. Community-based mental health and psycho-social support will also be provided through child- and adolescent-friendly spaces, community engagement, focused messaging and counselling by social service workers.

Persons with specific needs.

Through registration and protection monitoring in the reception centres and settlements, the Ghana Refugee Board, UNHCR and its partners will systematically identify persons with specific needs (PWSNs); and will establish standard operating procedures for appropriate assistance and referrals. Persons with specific needs will be prioritized as individuals and groups at high risk in the assistance provided and the multisectoral programmatic response.

All partners will foster a disability-inclusive action considering these populations are often among the most vulnerable in emergency and fragile contexts, especially children.

Issaka Tinga, Ghana. 8th January 2024: In Issaka Tinga, a beneficiary inspects the compound where she had previously hosted some Burkinabés.

5. Country Cross-Cutting Response Priorities

Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

Placing affected communities at the centre of programming is critical for this plan. Therefore, regular meetings for consultations and feedback will be conducted to enhance accountability and transparency in the delivery of assistance. Inclusive methods of consultation with communities will be employed and tailored to their needs, culture, languages, ensuring the active participation of all age groups, genders, and diverse considerations. Communities' involvement in decision making will be further strengthened through regular consultations on programmes during project implementation, considering culturally appropriate ways of engaging with affected women, men, boys and girls. To this purpose, partners will provide trainings to field staff and on AAP, community engagement and two-way communication, including complaints and feedback mechanisms. Sessions with the communities will be held to discuss the vulnerability criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries, the preferences on the assistance and the delivery modality and communication channels. Partners will also prepare communication material and visuals to ensure beneficiaries understand the process and their rights.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

UN agencies and partners, working in conjunction with partners and the government, will enhance efforts to safeguard beneficiaries and communities against sexual exploitation and abuse. These measures encompass the establishment of transparent reporting channels and referral pathways for necessary support. Complaints and feedback mechanisms, both at the community level and through a toll-free helpline, have been established for support, feedback, and referrals. Communities are consistently sensitized through various channels, including interactive voice response messaging over mobile phone, face-to-face interactions, and posters in the local languages. These efforts focus on the project's objective and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Additional initiatives will involve collaborative development of educational materials with the communities to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. There will be continuous capacity-building efforts for all UN, partner, and affiliated personnel to ensure adherence to the UN Standards of Conduct for Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Additionally, community-based complaints mechanisms will be put in place to address concerns effectively.

Localization

The response plan will prioritize collaboration and partnership with local non-government organizations (NGOs) that have a strong local presence. This approach aims to leverage their ability to provide contextual knowledge and ability to implement community specific programs tailored to community needs. Local NGOs will be encouraged and empowered to play a key role in delivering protection and assistance on the ground. Working with and investing in these local actors as equal and strategic partners will be a priority for an effective emergency response programme.

Climate Action

Priority will be given to initiatives that promote sustainable natural resource management. Awareness campaigns and sensitization efforts will strictly adhere to the principle of 'do no harm' to the local ecosystem. Through training and community-based participatory planning with local communities, environmental risks and mitigation measures for various implementation activities in both host and asylum seekers' locations will be identified.

Regarding domestic energy, renewable energy options and access to clean cooking and energy-efficient devices will be explored to limit the pressure on the wood resources of hosting areas.

Partners will advocate proper waste management techniques to address overcrowding and unregulated waste generation in asylum seekers' settlement and reception centres.

Participating agencies will work closely with local and regional authorities to implement measures that safeguard and protect the environment. To mitigate any environmental damage such as water and air pollution and deforestation that could accompany the reception of asylum seekers, partners commit to: afforestation activities around the settlements and reception centres, promoting water treatment techniques; and conducting sensitization and education on pollution prevention in both the settlements/reception centres and host communities.

Within the project locations, the intervention will also champion climate-smart agriculture practices aimed at enhancing food security in host communities. This entails training in Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), the promotion of agroforestry, and the prevention of bushfires.

6. Partnerships and Coordination Arrangements

The Government of Ghana sets policy in the refugee area and coordinates its response to asylum seekers through the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB).[4] The GRB and UNHCR have set up a Coordination Forum which includes UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, IOM) as well as NGOs (e.g. NCS, CRS, Red Cross, World Vision). The Inter-Agency Working Group for Emergencies (IAWGE) will support these efforts. Monthly operational coordination meetings, chaired by UNHCR, are held also at the regional level.

As lead agency, UNHCR updates the Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team on a regular basis to share relate the progress on the response to the influx of asylum seekers from Burkina Faso.

The UNCT and its various working groups address other issues with a broader perspective and in line with humanitarian development nexus and peace agenda. These working groups bring together UN agencies with various mandates to support these areas in line with the UNSDCF.

In addition, partners in this plan collaborate and work closely on the different activities with the : Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MoLGRD), Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ghana Health Service (GHS), Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ghana Education Service (GES), National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO), Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources (MSWR), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Office of the Head of Local Government Service, Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ghana Police Service (GPS), Ghana Refugee Board, Births and Death Registry as well as various NGOs including, inter alia,World Vision and Brave Aurora.

4 The Ghana Refugee Board (GRB) is established under the Refugee Law, 1992 (PNDCL 305D) to, inter alia, register refugees; provide for adequate facilities, advice and services for the reception and care of refugees in Ghana; seek co-operation with non-governmental organizations and advise the Minister of Interior on matters relating to refugees. The GRB is comprised of high-level representatives from key government agencies including, inter alia:

Ministry of the Interior, not below the rank of Director;

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, not below the rank of Director;

Ghana Immigration Service, not below the rank of Assistant Commissioner;

Ghana Police Service, not below the rank of Assistant Commissioner;

Department of Social Welfare, not below the rank of Director under the Ministry responsible for Social Welfare;

National Intelligence Bureau, not below the rank of Principal Staff Officer;

Attorney-General and Ministry of Justice not below the rank of Principal State Attorney;

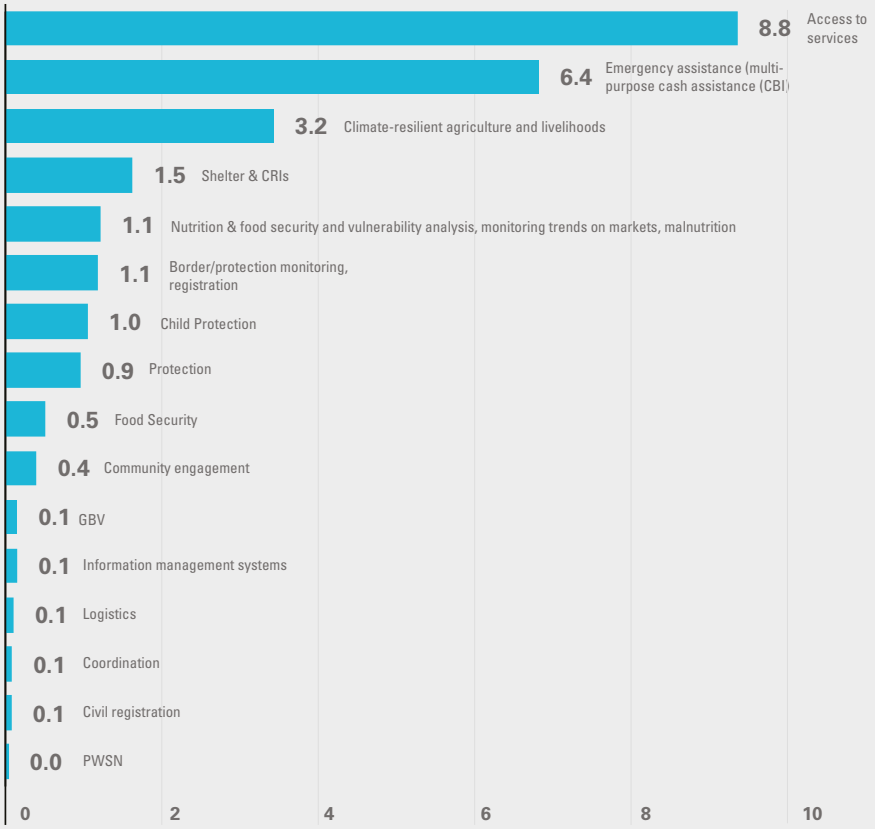
National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) not below the rank of Director;

7. Financial Requirements (USD $)

$ 25.5 (millions)

Analyze	Assist	Prevent	Protect	Other
$2,397,092	$8,412,313	$12,678,981	$1,857,837	$186,092

Budget Summary by Sector



Budget Summary by Partner

Partner (UN Agencies)	Acronym/Short Title	Requirements in US$
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF	12,200,000
World Food Programme	WFP	5,597,315
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR	4,235,000
International Organization for Migration	IOM	3,500,000
Total:		**$25,532,315**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | WFP World Food Programme | IOM UN MIGRATION | unicef for every child