



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

SCALING UP INTEGRATED RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL

Protracted crises

Complex and protracted crises spill across borders and vulnerable people caught in them are often **facing multiple hardships**. One of these crises unfurls in the Sahel region countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), where the current population of about 80 million people is projected to double within the next two decades. **Food insecurity as well as chronic and acute malnutrition are persistently high**, fueled by widespread poverty, escalating conflict and displacement, an environment threatened by land degradation, limited and unequal access to basic services, poorly integrated markets, recurrent episodes of drought and flooding, as well as erratic rainfall patterns.

An integrated approach

In 2018, WFP joined forces with governments, financial and operational partners and launched a massive **scale up of resilience interventions across the five countries**. For the first time, an **integrated package of activities**—combining Food Assistance for Assets (FFA), school feeding, nutrition, capacity strengthening and seasonal support—is implemented across the region and at scale.

In close coordination with governments and partners, the programme changes lives for the better by strengthening resilience at the 1) individual and household, 2) community and ecosystem, as well as 3) national systems level, catalyzing change across the Sahel.

In practice, this means bringing degraded land back to life, getting children back to school, investing in healthy diets for mothers and children, creating green jobs and opportunities for the youth and building social cohesion throughout entire communities. Crucially, this occurs in the same communities, targeting the same vulnerable people over a period of at least five years.

A long-term and sustainable vision

The programme is based on four core principles:

- **Community-focused** through participatory planning methods that facilitate dialogue and ensure the most vulnerable, marginalized, and disempowered have a voice in community discussions on needs and solutions.
- **Government-led and government-owned programmes and coalitions** to strengthen local capacities, develop national systems, and operationalize resilience objectives at scale.
- **Operational partnerships** based on shared outcomes to implement complementary intervention packages and leverage synergies.
- **Evidence-based approach** to demonstrate transformative impact, enable learning, and refine programme delivery.



October 2023

Key achievements 2023 (January to June)

- **3.2 million people** benefitted from a WFP integrated resilience activities across more than 3,190 villages.
- 2.1 million FFA beneficiaries working for soil conservation, water harvesting, gardening, compost, roads, etc. since Sept. 2018, **a total of 280,240 hectares of land have been rehabilitated**, 2,615 ha of garden created and 2,640 ponds created or rehabilitated, to improve and diversify production and income generation.
- **666,000 school children benefitted from nutritious meals in more than 2,630 schools**, while school attendance of adolescent girls was incentivized through take-home rations, scholarships or school kits.
- **962,000 children and women** reached through malnutrition treatment or prevention interventions, and more than 515,000 men and women were sensitized on nutrition.
- **More than 63,000 people** (smallholder farmers, partners, government, management committees, ect.) reached through operational or technical capacity strengthening.

Land degradation counts as one of the most insidious and unnoticed threats to food security, nutrition, and food systems. When soils are poor and water scarce, crops and pastures fail more frequently, landscapes rapidly shift into a state of environmental and social bankruptcy, and the world's poorest and most vulnerable are plunged into destitution. WFP supported the Chadian community of Mallah to build stone bunds to reduce soil erosion, conserve water and ultimately improve their harvest. Photos: WFP/Evelyn Fey

Key outcomes reported

Survey data from beneficiary households shows that overall, **diets are becoming more regular, frequent and diversified, despite the various shocks and stressors affecting the region.** More than three quarters of households stated that the assets created or rehabilitated have reduced day-to-day hardships – many of which are shouldered by women – and helped them to increase or diversify their production through improved water management and soil fertility.

Data from monitoring surveys also suggests that the majority of people we support through our resilience programme **have an adequate food consumption even during the lean season** – a time during which we see a significant deterioration of food security among the general population in the intervention zones significantly deteriorated.

In 2022, Niger faced its worst food security crisis in a decade following a particularly poor rainy season the year before. WFP resilience intervention areas were amongst the most impacted - however, **the vast majority (80%) of WFP intervention villages did not require humanitarian assistance**, which highlights the increased coping capacities of communities to withstand climate shocks.

Resilience interventions have important co-benefits for the environment and ecosystems. A 2021 NASA analysis based on satellite-imagery of resilience sites in Niger found vegetation indices post-intervention **were nearly 50% higher compared to previous years, and 25% higher than in nearby non-intervened areas.**

A 2022 IFPRI study found resilience activities and their planning processes **created spaces of encounter, reducing stereotypes, suspicion and mistrust and enabling stronger bonds within and between communities and leaders.**

BEFORE



AFTER





Partnerships and coalition-building

Based on the common objective of boosting resilience, WFP is collaborating with a broad range of partners :

WFP is working with almost 50 national and international cooperating partners on the ground.

WFP jointly works with the relevant **government institutions at national, regional and local level through technical services** at all stages of programme design, planning, management, monitoring and evaluation to ensure government ownership and alignment with national policies. MoUs have been signed with the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat as well as the Panafrican Agency of the Great Green Wall.

Joint efforts are ongoing with several UN partners, most notably **Rome Based Agencies (RBAs)**, i.e. WFP, FAO and IFAD, remain key partners on strengthening resilience through livelihoods, agro-pastoral and land rehabilitation activities. RBA collaboration is operationalized through joint support to the government as well as joint or complementary programming.

In the course of the scale-up of the resilience programme and under the broader umbrella of the UNICEF-WFP Enhanced Partnership, **the two agencies ensure a strong geographical convergence, joint planning and coordination mechanisms, and develop joint strategies for resilience programming across 56 communes** in Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Meanwhile collaboration also continues around the implementation of resilience and nutrition packages in Chad and Burkina Faso.

WFP's Sahel Resilience Initiative **also contributes to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)** and is actively involved in its technical working groups.

Collaboration with GIZ is on going in Niger in selected communes and communities that are already benefitting from WFP's integrated resilience package, through its

experience on conflict analysis GIZ is strengthening **social cohesion and enhancing local capacities for conflict resolution**, as well as implementing complementary livelihoods activities through technical trainings, income-generating activities, smallholder farmer support, infrastructure construction and disaster risk management at community level.

WFP has signed agreements with ten universities in five countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal) and closely supports **the Sahel University Network for Resilience (REUNIR)**, a network of so far six universities across the region to enhance research and knowledge-sharing on resilience building across the region, advance the institutionalization of resilience tools, and **help build the future generation of resilience experts**.

There would be no outcome without the Sahelian's hard work. Therefore, WFP's approach is grounded in the principle of inclusive community ownership and leadership – at all stages: in design, planning and implementation. These members of the community of Rafa in Niger are digging half-moons structures into the barren soil as part of FFA activities. The technique helps to bring back land to life: the half-moons capture rainfall and runoff water to restore soil moisture, reduce erosion and contribute to groundwater recharge. Half-moons can be used to grow crops, trees and forage. By expanding production and grazing areas, this technology contributes to increased yields, income and ultimately food security within a community. Photo: WFP/Evelyn Fey

More to read:

[**Integrated Resilience in the Sahel on wfp.org**](#)

More to ask:

[**Resilience & Food Systems Unit / Dakar**](#)