

Country Handbook: Burkina Faso



Introduction

Travelling to see the work of Compassion and our local church partners firsthand is an unforgettable experience. On this trip, you'll see for yourself how children are known, loved and protected by their church communities and are being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

This Country Handbook is designed to start preparing you for your trip to Burkina Faso. Please read it before you depart, and we'd also recommend that you keep it handy for easy reference.

We pray that God will bless your time in Burkina Faso!



Country Information



Burkina Faso means the 'Land of Incorruptible People' as Burkinabès are known for their friendly and honest demeanour. Oral storytelling is an important part of Burkinabè culture as folk songs, stories and poems are passed down through generations.

Main languages:

French, Moore

Climate:

Tropical (warm temperatures year-round)

Main religions:

Muslim (63.2%), Roman Catholic (24.6%), Protestant (6.9%)

Currency:

West African CFA Franc



Compassion in Burkina Faso

Compassion has been working to release children from poverty in Jesus' name in Burkina Faso since 2004. 43 per cent of people live below the poverty line.

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program is tailored to be age-appropriate for each child.

Children **AGED 1 TO 3** receive home-based care.

Children and youth **AGED 3 AND OLDER** attend their local Compassion centre, usually on Thursdays and/or Saturdays.



For more information on Burkina Faso, scan the QR code or visit: compassion.com.au/where-we-work/burkina-faso

Compassion assisted children in Burkina Faso typically attend program activities at their local child development centres. Here is an example of what a typical program day looks like:

9:00am - A time of prayer, devotion and breakfast. Breakfast usually consists of milk, bread and porridge.

9:30am - Spiritual lessons, in which children sing songs and learn Bible stories.

10:30am - Break time where children can play in a safe environment and develop friendships.

11:00am - Social-emotional lessons ranging from conflict resolution to developing healthy self-esteem and a godly character. Children often come from challenging home environments and are taught social and personal skills.

12:00pm - Lunch and social time. Children are usually provided lunch which consists of rice, beans, sagabo (a local food made using millet or corn flour) and spaghetti. Additional nutritional support, like rice, maize and oil, is provided for families in extreme need, such as those affected by HIV.

1:00pm - Health lessons, in which children learn practical health and hygiene tips. Example topics include how to prevent malaria and HIV transmission.

2:00pm - Letter writing and career planning. Older children work with local staff to identify their strengths and interests and set goals for their future.

In addition to Compassion's curriculum, from the age of 12, students receive vocational training in areas like mechanics, hairdressing, sewing, soap making, gardening and animal breeding. Parents are offered income generation activities and training on topics such as hygiene, malaria prevention, reproductive health and nutrition.

Cultural Considerations



Clothing

- **Men:** Buttoned or polo shirts are recommended for most activities. T-shirts are acceptable for more casual activities. Please wear long pants, excluding jeans, when visiting child development centres or attending church services.
- **Women:** Modest, loose-fitting tops are recommended. Please ensure your shoulders are covered when visiting local church partners or children. Pants, long skirts and dresses are all acceptable.
- Closed-in shoes are recommended for most activities.
- Tattoos are not widely accepted—it is recommended you cover them if possible.
- Earrings are acceptable, but other piercings should be avoided.

Greetings

- Shaking hands is the most common greeting. Some adults may initiate a hug. It is best not to initiate hugs with children as doing so is not the norm in some regions.
- It is polite to remove your hat and sunglasses when greeting someone.
- Children may appear quite shy when you greet them as they are not used to speaking with adults.

Security

- Please ask permission before you photograph any local people. This can include photos taken from a moving vehicle, so be sure to check with your driver or Trips and Visits Specialist first.
- For security reasons, please refrain from photographing bridges, harbours, military installations, railway stations, airports or government buildings.

Emergency contact information:

Local emergency number: 17 (police), 18 (fire), 112 (ambulance)
Compassion Burkina Faso office: 011-226-50-36-9917
Australian Embassy (closest consular assistance is in Ghana):
+233 302 216 400

Body language

- Please refrain from public displays of affection and avoid touching someone of the opposite sex.
- Many people will avoid direct eye contact, especially when speaking with somebody older than them.
- Actions such as shaking hands or passing items are always done using the right hand, as the left hand is considered unclean.
- Please remove your shoes when visiting someone's home if they do so.

Language

- Useful French phrases:

Hello: Bonjour

How are you? Ça va?

My name is: Je m'appelle...

Do you speak English? Parlez-vous anglais?

I don't understand: Je ne comprends pas

God bless you: Que Dieu vous bénisse

Please: S'il vous plaît

Thank you: Merci

Yes: Oui

No: Non

Eating and drinking

- Visitors are usually served first when sharing meals.
- Most adults and all children eat using their hands.
- In some rural areas, people eat meals in silence.
- It is considered inappropriate for Christians to consume alcohol.

Money

- Cash is the preferred payment method in Burkina Faso and not all vendors will accept credit cards.
- It is customary to tip taxi drivers and helpful staff in hotels and restaurants.



Key Challenges and Prayer Points

Many children are suffering from malnutrition. According to the World Health Organisation, 21.8 per cent of children under 5 are experiencing stunted growth. Please pray for God's provision over families struggling to afford food and ask that our local church partners can continue to provide tailored care to help children recover

Burkina Faso has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, with 66 per cent of people over 15 years old considered illiterate. Alongside supporting the education of children, Compassion's local church partners are addressing this issue with vocational training to help youth earn a good income in future. Please pray over these programs.

Burkina Faso has a high infant mortality rate: 52 in 1,000 children die before they reach their first birthday. Ask God to comfort those who are mourning the loss of their children. Please also pray for Compassion's Mums and Babies program which provides critical support to children so they can flourish during their first year of life and beyond.



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