



COUNTRY PROFILE

DECEMBER 2015



PHOTO CREDIT: S. Dabberstein

A moringa farmer waters her crop. Vitamin-packed moringa is one way USAID is building resilience in communities in the drought-prone Sahel.

OVERVIEW

Niger, an emerging democracy landlocked in the increasingly unstable Sahel region, consistently ranks at or near the bottom of the United Nations Human Development Index. Despite increased economic growth catalyzed by expanding extractive industries, broad-based development has been hampered by poor infrastructure, extremely low education levels and multiple concurrent natural disasters due to the country's vulnerability to climate change. Economic progress is further challenged by the highest fertility rate in the world, which essentially doubles the population every twenty years. These hurdles, coupled with armed conflicts in neighboring Nigeria, Mali and Libya and the presence of armed extremists in the north, risk reversing the development gains Niger has made in the past few years.

PROGRAMS

ENHANCING RESILIENCE: AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The vast majority of Nigeriens rely on subsistence agriculture to meet their daily needs. The region's increasingly frequent climatic shocks, such as droughts and floods, lead to poor harvests and regular food shortages. Even during plentiful times, 40 percent of Nigerien children under five years old are chronically malnourished. USAID provides food and other assistance to the most vulnerable communities, including pregnant and nursing mothers and young children while working to address the root causes of malnutrition and to promote positive health practices. In order to make communities more resilient to food insecurity, USAID works to improve agricultural, livestock, and resource management practices and to ensure inclusive economic growth for all Nigeriens.

DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

Since Niger's return to democratic rule in 2011, the Government of Niger has taken steps to fight corruption and improve governance. USAID is supporting this effort by helping Nigerien legislators develop legislation to support the effective management of the country's natural resources and to protect human rights. USAID is also encouraging cooperation among the legislature, civil society and local governments to increase transparency in the use of extractive industry revenues, and to increase citizen participation in governance, particularly in areas vulnerable to violent extremism.

GLOBAL HEALTH

USAID works to improve the health and nutrition status of the most vulnerable Nigeriens through interventions aiming to reduce malnutrition, increase access to and use of quality family planning services, improve fistula prevention and treatment, support mass drug administration to eliminate or control neglected tropical diseases, and strengthen the HIV/AIDS medical supply system. USAID also works to promote the adoption of positive health practices in communities in Niger.

CONTINUES >

NIGER SNAPSHOT

Year of independence: 1960
Population: 18.3 million (2013)
GDP per capita (PPP): \$937 (2014)
Fertility rate: 7.6 births/woman (2012)

Source: DHS 2012, World Bank

USAID IN NIGER

<http://www.usaid.gov/niger>



COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

EDUCATION

With an illiteracy rate of 70% and only 44% of female primary school students reaching sixth grade, Niger has recently adopted an ambitious national education program to increase educational access, quality and retention. USAID is contributing to these objectives with programming aimed at improving early grade reading and adult literacy in local languages; improving the school environment, especially for girls; increasing parental engagement and strengthening community linkages with education administration. Additional support for impact evaluation of these activities aims to aid the Ministry of Education in making data-based policy and program decisions moving forward.

WORKING IN CRISES AND CONFLICT

Niger faces security threats from internal and external extremist groups and continues to be a major focus of the Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership that USAID implements throughout the Sahel. USAID is helping the Nigerien government and local partners create economic opportunities and increased civic and political participation for Nigerien youth to help undermine extremist messages and encourage stability in Niger and the region.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

USAID is also providing emergency humanitarian assistance to Niger, supporting agricultural, livelihood, food security, health and nutrition interventions. These interventions are designed to deliver life-saving assistance and support populations' recovery from food insecurity while reinforcing their capacity to cope with future emergencies. An estimated 3.4 million Nigeriens are food-insecure and approximately 1.3 million children under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition.

FIELD OFFICE AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

USAID Niger, a limited presence office in Niamey, comprises a USAID Representative and a team of dedicated local and international development specialists who monitor programs and serve as core advisors for U.S. Government development activities in Niger. USAID Senegal's Sahel Regional Office, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace (FFP) regional offices and the USAID/West Africa Regional Mission in Accra, Ghana share the management responsibility for development and humanitarian programs in Niger.

USAID IN NIGER

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