



Niger

Kathryn Richards/CARE



Country Snapshot

Population:	14.7 million
Life expectancy at birth:	51 years
Adult literacy rate:	30%
Access to improved water source:	42%
GDP per capita (PPP):*	US\$627
Infant mortality rate:	79 per 1,000 live births
Maternal mortality rate:	1,800 per 100,000 live births
HIV prevalence:	0.8%

Sources: UNICEF State of the World's Children Report 2010, *UNDP Human Development Report 2009

Program Overview CARE Niger was established in 1974 in response to famine and has worked on several food security projects since then. The program currently focuses on health and nutrition, natural-resources management, education, local governance, conflict resolution, women's empowerment, microfinance, disaster risk reduction, and emergency preparedness and response. Niger is the birthplace of CARE's successful and often-replicated Village Savings and Loan Associations program, which economically empowers women and raises their social and political status. The project is known as 'Mata Masu Dubara' (MMD), or "ingenious women" or "women on the move." Since 2009, CARE Niger has been focusing on creating partnerships with civil society to encourage more sustainable development. The Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 emphasizes disaster risk reduction, strengthens emergency response and prevention, and aims to help create sustainable livelihoods for 150,000 households in extreme poverty.

Health and Nutrition

This CARE program focuses on children under five and women. It aims to develop sustainable nutritional strategies and reduce the impact of food insecurity. The program provides cereals to community nutritional stocks to support the recovery of malnourished children, distributes emergency food supplies, and also supports nutrition education, family planning, vaccinations, rehabilitation of health centres, and medical staff training. In 2009, CARE assistance enabled the distribution of 300 tonnes of cereals and supported more than 80,000 people.

Water and Sanitation

CARE activities focus on providing potable water in rural areas, including digging wells and protecting them from encroaching sand dunes. Through the rehabilitation of wells for agricultural and pastoral purposes, CARE has improved access to water and sanitation for vulnerable households in the Diffa region. In 2009, this project rehabilitated 11 wells

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and built three blocks of latrines. CARE's "Peace Wells, Diffa" project aims for a new water management approach for better access to clean water for shepherds and animals. Four wells were built and 2,300 men and 2,500 women benefited from the project in 2009. CARE also put in place mechanisms for dialogue on water resources management and engages in conflict resolution linked to water-use disputes.

Education

CARE supports education by constructing new classrooms and renovating old ones; constructing latrines; developing school feeding programs (distribution of cereals and animals); developing learning materials; and improving curricula. CARE also funded microfinance projects in schools. In 2009, CARE support for education reached 2,158 children, of which 47 percent were girls. In its adult literacy campaigns, CARE covers the cost of materials to build simple outdoor shelters, while participants contribute the labour force. Two hundred and eighty-three of these CARE-supported adult-literacy centres benefited 57,400 women in 2009.

Governance

CARE works with local authorities, communities, and civil-society organizations to reinforce decentralization and local governance, so as to help key actors understand how decentralization works and the issues at stake. This builds their capacities to carry out projects and make resource-management decisions. In 2009, 4,200 men and 2,800 women, including elected local authorities, benefited from governance capacity building activities.

Economic Development

In cooperation with 12 local civil society organizations, CARE supported the establishment of 562 management committees and 2,166 savings and loan groups in 102 groups of villages. Loan beneficiaries received advice and training in individual and collective business. CARE reduced gender inequalities by promoting savings and

loan programs for women's groups, increasing their access to productive assets and economic opportunities.

Food Security

CARE supports improvement of food security in vulnerable rural households. The goal is to protect and strengthen livelihoods and human capacities by improving agricultural production and the nutritional state of women and children, and to build capacities of communities to prevent and mitigate food crises. CARE has therefore established early warning systems, put in place community food stocks, and trained the stock management committees. Almost 2,500 hectares of land were rehabilitated, 5,000 trees were planted, 786 animals and 455 tools were distributed. CARE also works to prevent food crises with disaster risk reduction activities, which have benefited 1,850 women and 500 men.

Emergencies

Poor rainy seasons exacerbated by climate change have left much of this drought-prone country chronically food insecure. During the 2010 food crisis affecting more than seven million people, CARE is helping people protect their livelihoods and cattle, provide for their families, and prepare for the next planting season. CARE emergency activities seek to enable communities and households to prevent and/or manage crises, particularly through community-based early warning and response systems. Activities include cash-for-work, cash transfers, building community cereals stocks, school feeding, nutritional support for children and pregnant/breastfeeding women, improving water access points, and distribution of food, animal feed, and seeds.

Major Donors

European Commission; the World Food Programme (WFP); UNICEF; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC); the Governments of Niger, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom; and private donors.

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