

NIGER



Country Snapshot

Population (2006 est.):	12,525,094
Rural population:	78%
Human Development Index ranking:	177 (last)
Government system:	Multi-party democracy
Annual per capita income (2004):	\$230
Annual population growth rate (2006 est.):	2.92%
Life expectancy at birth:	44.6 years
Infant mortality rate:	118 per 1,000 live births
School Attendance (elementary):	25.1%
Literacy (2005 est.):	28.7%

Source: www.infoplease.com



Program Overview

CARE has worked in Niger since 1974. Its program currently focuses on the broad areas of health, education, conflict resolution and women's and youth empowerment. CARE works in partnership with local community based organizations, to strengthen their capacity.

Niger was the birthplace of CARE's enormously successful and oft-replicated Village Savings and Loans Associations program, which empowers women economically and raises their status socially and even politically. The project is known as '*Mata Masu Dubara*' (MMD), or "ingenious women" or "women on the move."

Health

CARE's health and nutrition program is focused on children under 5. The program distributes emergency food supplies, but also supports nutrition education and the construction of nutrition centers and health clinics. In 2005, Niger's food crisis drew international attention. CARE's assistance enabled the recovery of over 9,800 moderately malnourished children in 395 nutrition centers. A total of over 90,000 people, 60 percent of them women, have benefited from CARE's health and nutrition activities.

The HIV prevalence rate in Niger is 0.7 percent. CARE's three HIV/AIDS projects help create community groups to fight the disease. These organizations facilitate access to condoms, promote voluntary testing and encourage changes in behavior. CARE also has a pilot project to make HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention an integral part of the successful micro finance projects. CARE's HIV program has reached about 163,700 people, 46 percent of them women, and has helped strengthen some 654 grass-roots groups in their fight against HIV.

Water & Sanitation

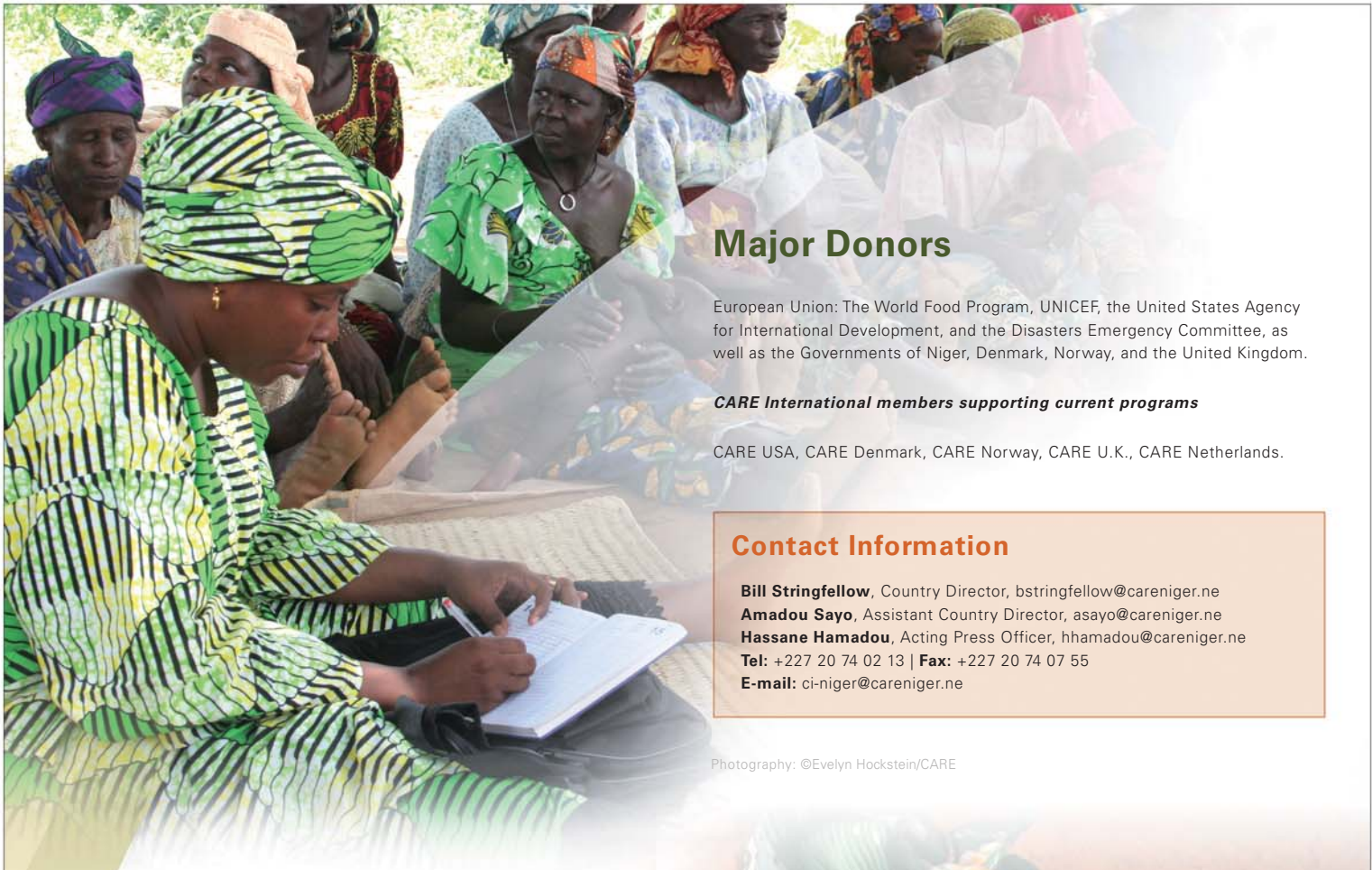
CARE is building on its successes in improving the availability and quality of water. Activities have focused on providing potable water in rural areas, including digging wells and protecting them from encroaching sand dunes. CARE also engages in conflict resolution linked to disputes over water use. Other projects foster water conservation and work to optimize the use of rainwater for agriculture and animal husbandry. Some 16,800 people, including 4,471 women, have directly benefited from these activities.

Education

CARE supports education including the construction of new classrooms and renovation of old ones; school-feeding programs, medicine and clothing; and curriculum improvement.

Adult literacy interventions are part of many projects.





Major Donors

European Union: The World Food Program, UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Disasters Emergency Committee, as well as the Governments of Niger, Denmark, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

CARE International members supporting current programs

CARE USA, CARE Denmark, CARE Norway, CARE U.K., CARE Netherlands.

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In its adult literacy campaigns, CARE covers the cost of materials to build simple outdoor shelters, while participants contribute their labor. CARE also contributes learning materials, and the some of instructors' salaries. In 2006, CARE's support for formal and informal education reached 3,580 children, 61 percent of them young girls.

Governance

Many civil society groups have learned how to organize effectively and make their voices heard by policymakers as a result of CARE's support. CARE helps strengthen the capacities of communities to prepare and manage local projects and to empower women economically. These projects also help train candidates for local office and elected officials on the principles of good governance. Last year, these activities reached almost 18,000 people, 81 percent of them women.

Given that over half of Niger's citizens are under 15, young people are one of CARE's main concerns. Two youth projects focus on vocational training and facilitating income generating activities, including a loan program to start small businesses. CARE also helps create youth organizations to give them a greater voice in deliberations about their future.

Economic Development

CARE has strengthened development in pastoral communities by promoting savings and loans programs for women's groups and equitable access to food and water. Activities target the most vulnerable households. More than 400,000 people have benefited from these programs, between 85 and 92 percent of them women.

Emergencies

CARE's emergency activities seek to strengthen the capacities of communities and households to prevent and/or manage crises. CARE has helped establish a community-based early warning and response system.

Food, medicine and shelter are provided to affected communities and households, when necessary. In 2006, CARE's assistance reached 144,000 people, 50 percent of them women.

