



## COUNTRY PROFILE



J. AHOUANSSOU, USAID/BENIN

At a voting center in Benin, volunteers tally ballots during the March 2006 Presidential election.

### OVERVIEW

In a region with notable cases of failed or failing states, Benin has established a government that largely respects basic rights and freedoms. It has a recent history of credible elections with a peaceful change of power. In March 2006, the election of Dr. Thomas Boni Yayi resulted in the fourth peaceful turnover since democracy was reestablished in the early 1990s. President Yayi's administration has focused on fighting corruption and promoting economic growth.



### PROGRAMS

#### INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

USAID implements the following activities:

##### Girls' Education and Community Participation Project (GECPP):

USAID partners with World Education on the GECPP project to increase girls' enrollment and retention in primary school in nine northern districts of Benin where the gender gap is most prominent, and the number of girls completing primary school is the lowest.

GECPP activities aim to:

- Improve the capacities of the primary school parents' and mothers' associations to support girls' education
- Raise awareness about the importance of girls' education, and
- Assist girls' enrollment and monitoring their attendance.
- Increase community participation in the management and oversight of the primary schools.

The four-year project began February 2008 and will continue until January 2012.

##### Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP):

As part of the Africa Education Initiative, the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program started in Benin in 2004 to help the poorest children across the country go to primary school. To date, 4,600 girls have received scholarships. In 2008, 612 of the neediest boys also received scholarships.

#### BENIN SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1960  
Population: 6.9 million (2004)  
Income per person: \$530 (yr)

Source: World Bank Development Indicators

#### USAID IN BENIN

[www.usaid.gov/bj](http://www.usaid.gov/bj)



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World Education incorporated and two local Beninese partners, *Groupe d'Action pour la Justice et l'Egalité Sociale* and the *Association pour la Protection de l'Enfance Malheureuse*, utilize an extensive and transparent community participation process to identify and support the neediest girls including victims of child trafficking, the hearing impaired, and other girls with special needs.

The average worth of the scholarships is \$100 USD. Scholarships may include school uniforms, school bags, school supplies, a lantern for night study, textbooks, and food.

Teachers, professional women, and other community members mentor scholars providing support in HIV/AIDS awareness, academic counseling, and life skills.

The program is active in 40 schools in ten school districts throughout Benin.

### **Integrated Approach to Combating Child Trafficking Project (IACCT):**

USAID partnered with UNICEF to combat child trafficking in Benin. The project began in October 2005 and is extended until December 2009. The overall objective of the IACCT is to support the Government of Benin in its efforts to combat child trafficking through an integrated approach. The project has three specific goals:

- Improve the knowledge and data related to child trafficking in Benin;
- Significantly reduce the incidence of child trafficking in the country;
- Provide standardized quality care and integration services to child victims of trafficking.

UNICEF has strengthened the local committees that monitor and prevent trafficking, and has created 200 new committees in the northern Atacora and Borgou departments. Campaigns to raise awareness against child trafficking have also reached over 35,000 people in the most endemic communities.

To date, 380 victims of trafficking have been assisted and reintegrated into their families and school.

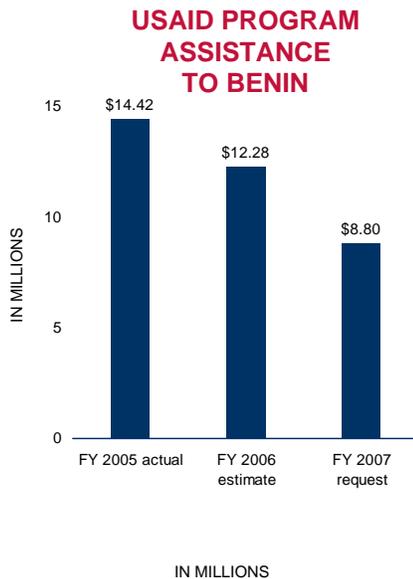
IACCT has developed a code of conduct for transporters based on the anti-trafficking law. The code of conduct has been translated into two local languages, and 1,000 copies have been distributed within ten districts of northern Benin. The majority of transporters in the project zones have



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signed the code, committing themselves to do their part in combating child trafficking in Benin.

### INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

USAID/Benin implements the following activities:

#### The Integrated Family Health Program (PISAF)

Through a cooperative agreement, University Research Corporation (URC) implements PISAF. While activities under this agreement are implemented principally in the Zou-Collines region of Benin, activities also take place in the Borgou/Alibori and Oueme/Plateau regions to reinforce successful work that was completed in those areas under the previous country strategy.

The project consists of family planning/reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health and malaria interventions.

PISAF's overall approach focuses on a) strengthening the capacity of the health system at all levels to ensure access to high quality services, and b) strengthening the role that communities and civil society play in improving quality, increasing the use of preventive health services, and promoting transparency and demanding accountability in health services delivery.

#### Integrated Project to Promote Family Health and Prevent HIV/AIDS (IMPACT)

IMPACT is a cooperative agreement with Population Services International (PSI). PSI's main partners in implementation are JHPIEGO Corporation, Abt Associates and the local NGO OSV-JORDAN. This five year project (2006-2011) is aimed at achieving four main objectives:

- Improve availability and access to HIV/AIDS, reproductive health/family planning (RH/FP) and Child Survival products;
- Increase knowledge about HIV/AIDS, RH/FP and Child Survival to increase demand for and use of products and services;
- Promote and support implementation of best practices in integrated services;
- Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health and the government of Benin to manage and implement the national HIV/AIDS program and advocate for policies that create a supportive environment for social marketing and the provision of health services.

Social marketing activities are implemented nationwide and cover a wide range of health commodities including, but not limited to condoms, oral



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and injectable contraceptives, bed nets, and oral re-hydration salts. Integrated Family Planning and HIV/AIDS services are offered in two selected clinics. Behavior change communication activities target at risk groups such as sex workers, youth and truckers.

### **President's Malaria Initiative (PMI)**

The PMI seeks to reduce malaria related deaths by 50 percent ... (insert the standard language here about PMI) Benin began to implement PMI in FY 2008. Principal activities include:

- Treatment with lifesaving anti-malarial drugs,
- Provision of insecticide-treated mosquito nets,
- Provision of medicines for the preventive treatment for malaria during pregnancy, and
- Indoor spraying of homes with insecticides.

### **INVESTING IN PEOPLE: SOCIAL SERVICES**

#### **Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative (WJEI)/EMPOWER**

The Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative is a three-year, \$55 million presidential initiative implemented in four African countries. EMPOWER, implemented by CARE International, is working to assist Benin in:

- Raising awareness about violence against women and
- Strengthening the capacity of national and local structures to meet the needs of victims of violence

The EMPOWER project will help to reduce violence in the 77 communes of Benin. The project will work closely with the "Strengthening the Legal Framework of Benin" component to be implemented by the U.S. Department of Justice.