



FACT SHEET

Niger Education and Community Strengthening Project



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Goal

Improve educational opportunities available to children while strengthening linkages between local communities and government structures.

Life of Program

06/2012-6/2016

Total USG Funding

USD 7.6 million

Geographic Focus

150 schools across seven regions of Niger, including Agadez, Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Zinder

Implementing Partner

Plan International

With less than 20 percent of girls reaching the 6th grade, a literacy rate of only 30 percent, and a population growth rate of 4 percent, Niger faces some of the most formidable education challenges in the world. Reasons for low attendance and achievement in school include inadequate facilities, scant teaching and learning materials, insufficiently trained teachers, and poor student health. The challenges in providing quality public education strains relations between the state and community members, who often feel neglected by what some see as an unresponsive government.

In the face of such challenges, Niger has recently adopted an ambitious national education program to increase educational access, quality and completion rates. USAID's Niger Education and Community Strengthening (NECS) project collaborates with the Ministry of Education to demonstrate that a package of activities can bring communities and the government together to achieve these objectives. A rigorous impact evaluation of the project, funded by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, aims to enable the Ministry of Education to make evidence-based policy decisions moving forward. NECS is part of USAID's larger effort to build resilient, cohesive communities that are more able to support moderate voices and more resistant to violent extremism.

Project Objectives

- Increase access to quality education at project schools by improving social and physical school environment for students—especially girls—and increasing community participation in education.
- Increase reading comprehension by improving reading instruction and learning in primary schools, and promoting a culture of reading in communities.

Project Highlights

- Gender-equity training for teachers and parents in 2013 led to the institutionalization of gender-sensitive best practices in project schools in 2014.
- Public information campaigns about education increased school attendance rates from 62 percent to 93 percent in project areas by the 2013-2014 school year.
- Over 2,200 previously illiterate community members working to improve their children's schools can now read thanks to project literacy training.