



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Farmers in Niger Enhance Resilience with Better Crops



USAID

Beneficiaries of a USAID development program in Niger.

Issaka Massoyi, a farmer in Maradi, Niger, leads a group that tends and manages a moringa tree plantation. The moringa tree is valued in Maradi for its nutritional and medicinal purposes and for its drought-resistance in the low rainfall climate. As Massoyi and his farming group are discovering, moringa-growing promises to provide greater food and income security in this arid land.

Subsistence farmers face many challenges in Niger, which is one of the poorest countries in the world. The intensely hot desert climate and poor soil quality lead to lackluster crop production in Niger and the surrounding Sahel region. Along with the inhospitable climate conditions, agriculture is limited by a lack of sustainable farming knowledge and practices.

Massoyi and his farming group are confronting these problems head on with the help of one of three USAID Office of Food for Peace programs in Niger. These programs are focused in the Maradi and Zinder regions, areas that have high rates of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition. Through these programs, Food for Peace works to give farmers the training and tools they need to overcome the unyielding harsh climate and growing conditions. For example, growers like Massoyi learn sustainable crop and water management practices at farmer field schools.

Food for Peace's development programs complement and coordinate with other development and resilience efforts led by USAID in Niger as part of the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future. They provide opportunities for participants to experiment with different varieties of stress-resistant crops, such as cowpeas and moringa, and to plant crop varieties that will be drought tolerant, profitable and a good source of nutrition. By diversifying crop production to include more resilient varieties, farmers will be able to produce enough seed for the next growing season, earn enough money to purchase additional and more diverse foodstuffs, and have more crops available for their families to eat during lean seasons.

For Massoyi and other farmers, participation in these programs has led to meaningful rewards. "We can use the moringa

leaves we've stored for our own consumption, or sell it to purchase food for our respective families or to purchase inputs we may need before the next growing season," Massoyi said.

Through coordination with Feed the Future, efforts like these are leading to sustainable results. In 2015, more than 857,000 people in Niger benefited from USAID-funded development food assistance programs, more than 197,000 of whom participated in agricultural activities. USAID's Office of Food for Peace works in line with the Feed the Future initiative's goals to strengthen resilience and improve food security in Niger through development and emergency programs that reach the most vulnerable families.