

Pre-disaster Secondary Data Review – Ageing

Country: Republic of Niger

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Last update: 20/02/2012 N.B. this document will be revised as new data is found

Disaster overview

Niger is facing the risk of a new food crisis that will affect up to 50 per cent of its 15.5 million population. As humanitarian actors prepare to mitigate and respond to this potential crisis, HelpAge has produced this age-focused secondary data review (SDR) in order to highlight the situation of older people in the country and to ensure that the international humanitarian community do not overlook their needs. With over 1 million older people in Niger (50+), age-related needs must be integrated into all areas of response including:

- Needs assessments: currently, surveillance frequently fails to disaggregate data by age so that the particular needs of older age groups are identified.
- Nutrition, health, livelihoods and protection programmes: currently agencies are often not adapting their responses to the particular needs that older people have.

In November 2010, the IASC Working Group reaffirmed its commitment to mainstream humanitarian assistance for older people, in particular by ensuring:

- Assessment methodologies have clear reference to and include all vulnerable groups including older people.
- The IASC guidance on humanitarian action and older people is implemented.ⁱ

The following provides a brief overview of available data in Niger as well as highlighting key areas where no data exists.

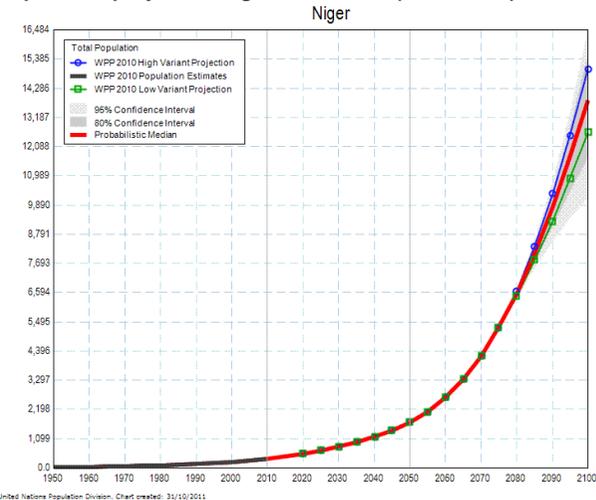
Demography and populationⁱⁱ

Total population 60+: **647,578ⁱⁱⁱ** Total population 50+: **1,338,300**
 Sex ratio: 50-80+ Females: **50, 03%** 50-80+ Males: **49, 97%**

Sex and Age Disaggregated Data:

Age	Male	Female
50 - 54 years	196 617	190 988
55 - 59 years	152 926	150 191
60 - 64 years	118 763	125 691
65 - 69 years	83 815	89 661
70 - 74 years	47 043	47 304
75 - 79 years	29 038	28 180
80 +	40 632	37 451
TOTALS	668 834	669 466

Population projection: age 65 and over (thousands):



United Nations Population Division. Chart created: 31/10/2011

Source: UN-DESA

Vulnerability:

The following categories are consistent with those older people that HelpAge finds to be most vulnerable in humanitarian crises that should be identified for priority assistance.

% caring for grandchildren or other OVC	No data found
% needing care (fully dependent)	No data found
% of older person headed households	No data found
% older persons living alone	No data found
% Older Refugees/IDPs	No data found

Main characteristics

Health^{iv}

Provision of healthcare for older persons

Older people need healthcare, including treatment for chronic conditions that are more prevalent in older age groups, such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, stroke, cancer, respiratory diseases, rheumatism, mental health problems, visual and hearing impairments and other disabilities. In Niger the MoH 2011-2015 Development Plan (PDS) does not consider chronic diseases under any of the High Impact Intervention Actions.

Nutrition

Older people have special nutritional needs, particularly for micronutrients, protein and food that is easy to digest. No data found specifically for older people in Niger.

Livelihoods

Older people need financial support, such as age-appropriate work or micro-finance opportunities for those who need to work, or cash transfers, particularly for those who cannot work. In rural areas of Niger, women constitute 47 per cent of the work force with modest inroads in civil service and professional employment.

Pension for older persons^v

Niger has no official pension system for older persons. The retirement age is **65 years**

	Active Pop.		Inactive Pop.	
	M	F*	M	F
50 - 54 years	154179	70 772	6 301	20 177
55 - 59 years	91 417	33 206	3 990	28 359
60 - 64 years	80 920	36 146	13 465	19 279
TOTALS	326 516	140 124	23 756	67 815

* 50% comprise domestic responsibilities

Poverty^{vi}

Per cent of 60+ population living below poverty line (urban/rural)

Urban %: **36,7%** (2007)

Rural%: **63,9 %** (2007)

Family and tradition

Each Nigerien woman gives birth on average to seven children (2000 estimate). Tradition among some ethnic groups allows young girls to enter into marriage agreements by the age of 10 or 12 (or younger) – this means that there are likely to be large proportions of older widowed women for example. Males head of household have certain legal rights, but divorced or widowed women, even with children, are not considered to be heads of households. There is frequent gender bias in inheritance rights, land tenure, and child custody, as well as end the practice of repudiation, so older widowed women would be particularly vulnerable.

Human rights: Discrimination, abuse, neglect of older persons: no data found

Recommendations:

- The humanitarian principle of impartiality means that humanitarian aid should be provided on the basis of need, so that particularly vulnerable groups receive appropriate assistance. It requires the needs of all potentially vulnerable people to be assessed and analysed, and assistance to be guided by this analysis.^{vii}
- In addition, older people are specifically recognised as a vulnerable group in the revised edition of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response.^{viii} The 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing also recognises their vulnerability, stating that “in emergency situations, older persons are especially vulnerable and should be identified as such”.^{ix}
- Older people have specific nutritional needs, particularly for certain micronutrients, protein and food that is easy to digest.
- Older people’s strength and mobility is often reduced, restricting their ability to access general distributions of food, water and other life-saving services.
- Older people who are separated from their families need protection. The idea that older people are always cared for by their extended families is incorrect. Population movement has meant many older people are isolated and alone. A high proportion of them are women.
- Older people have specific age-related healthcare needs such as treatment for chronic conditions that are more prevalent in older age groups (e.g. coronary heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, rheumatism, and dementia) as well as visual and hearing impairments and other disabilities.
- Older people need targeted help so that they can support themselves such as age-appropriate work or micro-finance opportunities for those who need to work, or cash transfers, particularly for those who cannot work.
- Older people often care for large numbers of children – orphans or grandchildren and need to be supported to fulfil this role.

Key background references

ⁱ <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-products-products&productcatid=24>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

<http://www.stat-niger.org/statistique/index.php?lng=fr>

ⁱⁱⁱ Institute of national statistics, Niger 2011

^{iv} 2011-2015 PDS:

http://www.unfpa.org/sowmy/resources/docs/library/R343_2011_Niger_PDS_15_FINAL_ADOPTED.pdf

^v <http://www.groundswellinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/Pathways-to-Resilience-in-the-Sahel.pdf>

<http://www.stat-niger.org/statistique/index.php?lng=fr>

^{vi} <http://data.worldbank.org/country/niger>

http://www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/profiles/niger_women.htm

<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>

^{vii} [UN General Assembly, 78th plenary meeting, Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations \(A/RES/46/182\), 19 December 1991, www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm \(24 March 2011\)](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm)

^{viii} [Sphere Project, Sphere handbook: Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in disaster response, 2004, www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3d64ad7b1.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3d64ad7b1.html)

^{ix} [United Nations, Political Declaration and Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, New York, 2003, www.un.org/ageing/madrid_intlplanaction.html](http://www.un.org/ageing/madrid_intlplanaction.html)

The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid department funds relief operations for victims of natural disasters and conflicts outside the European Union. Aid is channelled impartially, straight to people in need, regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.