

LIFE-SAVING AID.
LIFE-CHANGING
DEVELOPMENT.



ISLAMIC RELIEF IN
NIGER

WHO WE ARE

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired humanitarian and development agency working to save and transform the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Established in the UK in 1984, we work in over 40 countries, assist people according to need and do not discriminate in any way.

Since we began working in Niger in 2005 we have forged strong working relationships with communities and the government. We are proud to involve the people we serve at all stages of project delivery.

Our work focuses on food security and livelihoods; health and nutrition; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Education, child welfare and orphan support are also priorities for us, and empowering women is at the heart of most of our interventions.

WHERE WE WORK

With a dedicated team of 40 staff working from our country office in the capital city, Niamey, and sub offices in Ouallam and Doutchi, we serve communities in the regions of Tillaberi and Dosso.



Cover photo: Rabi, chair of a women's group set up by Islamic Relief in Zagagadan village, shows some of the millet her group has produced.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE



A woman harvests tomatoes grown with support from an Islamic Relief food security and livelihoods project in drought-prone Tinga, Niger.

A country once rich in fertile grasslands that were a fixture on the trans-Saharan trading route, Niger was a meeting point for cultural influences. With its ancient history, the west African country is steeped in tradition but now faces massive and chronic challenges.

One of the poorest countries on the planet, over 40 per cent of its population live in extreme poverty. According to the United Nations nearly three million people, more than half of whom are children, need humanitarian assistance. A third of those in need have been uprooted from their homes.

Conflict and insecurity are deepening people's suffering, with women and children experiencing the worst of the violence. Many humanitarian organisations struggle to access affected areas, making it harder for families to get the help they so desperately need.

The climate emergency is also devastating this landlocked country, with its economy centred on subsistence farming and livestock. Increasingly frequent and intense drought and failed rains, periodically punctuated by flooding, leave the poorest struggling to earn a living and to feed their families.

Islamic Relief began working in Niger in 2005, helping families overwhelmed by the country's food crisis. We remain on the ground today, though funding for much-needed humanitarian interventions continues to fall far short of what is needed. As well as delivering life-saving humanitarian aid, we are changing lives for the better by working with communities to increase their resilience. In 2019 alone, we spent over £2.2 million on humanitarian and development programming in Niger.

As we work together with our partners and supporters to transform lives in Niger, we are committed to supporting its people to break out of poverty and suffering, permanently.

Ibro Madougou Abdoulaye
Head of Programmes, Niger



OUR PROGRAMMES IN NIGER

Our work in Niger contributes to trying to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals by enabling vulnerable communities to reduce poverty and improve their living conditions.

Our current priorities include:



Life-saving emergency relief

Often among the first to respond to a humanitarian crisis, Islamic Relief delivers vital interventions during emergencies. Our humanitarian response includes food aid, shelter, protection of the most vulnerable, and providing survival items.

Flooding during the lean season in 2019 cost families their livelihoods and precious food reserves. Islamic Relief gave them food and vital items like soap and mosquito nets.



At our intensive nutrition centre in Balayera, a malnourished child receives a drink of water.

Food and nutrition

Our therapeutic and supplementary feeding centres provide life-saving care for malnourished children. Free healthcare programmes help children and women, particularly those who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Islamic Relief also helps families to build reliable livelihoods despite the challenges of the changing climate, and provides seasonal food distribution programmes targeting the poorest households.

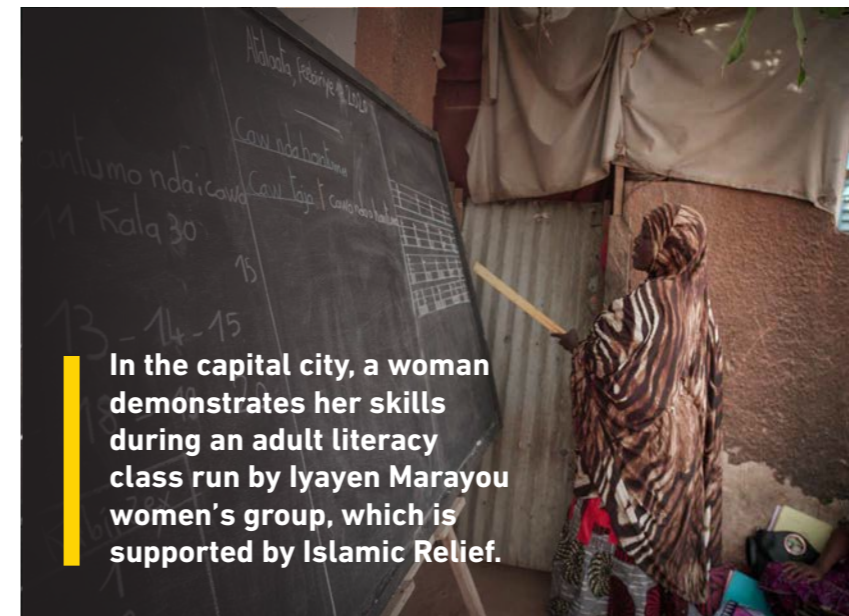
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Islamic Relief works in some of Niger's poorest communities. From constructing wells and latrines to installing solar-powered water supplies and showing people how to improve their health by practicing good hygiene, we are improving access to basic but vital services.

Equipping communities with the skills to maintain their services into the future, we do all we can to ensure our interventions have a lasting impact.



Women collect water from a new borehole installed by Islamic Relief in Dogondoutchi district.



In the capital city, a woman demonstrates her skills during an adult literacy class run by Iyayen Marayou women's group, which is supported by Islamic Relief.

Gender justice and child protection

We equip women to overcome the barriers they face, especially in accessing education and livelihoods. Through our innovative faith-based approach, we mobilise faith and community leaders to change attitudes and practices around gender-based violence and child protection issues. In addition, our orphan sponsorship programme helps meet the basic needs of thousands of vulnerable children – and supports them to unlock brighter futures through education.



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Since 2005 we've helped over 2.97 million people in Niger:



139 projects delivered

Over **1.9 million** people received life-saving emergency aid



Helped protect over **54,000** people against the ravages of drought and floods

Nearly **112,000** people gained better access to food



Water, sanitation and hygiene projects served over **330,000** people

Over **35,300** people empowered to earn a living



Nearly **448,000** people benefited from healthcare services

LIFTING FAMILIES OUT OF POVERTY

Over 9.5 million people live in extreme poverty in Niger, according to the World Bank. Poverty is being deepened by the effects of climate change, which is devastating the agricultural livelihoods which make up much of the country's economy. Conflict and insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin – and on the country's borders with Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria – are also worsening poverty in the country.

The United Nations estimates that 1.9 million people in Niger do not know where their next meal is coming from, so our food and nutrition projects are a lifeline for many. As well as meeting their immediate needs, our sustainable livelihoods interventions help households escape poverty and the shadow of hunger.

Over 18,000 families have escaped hunger through our sustainable livelihoods projects

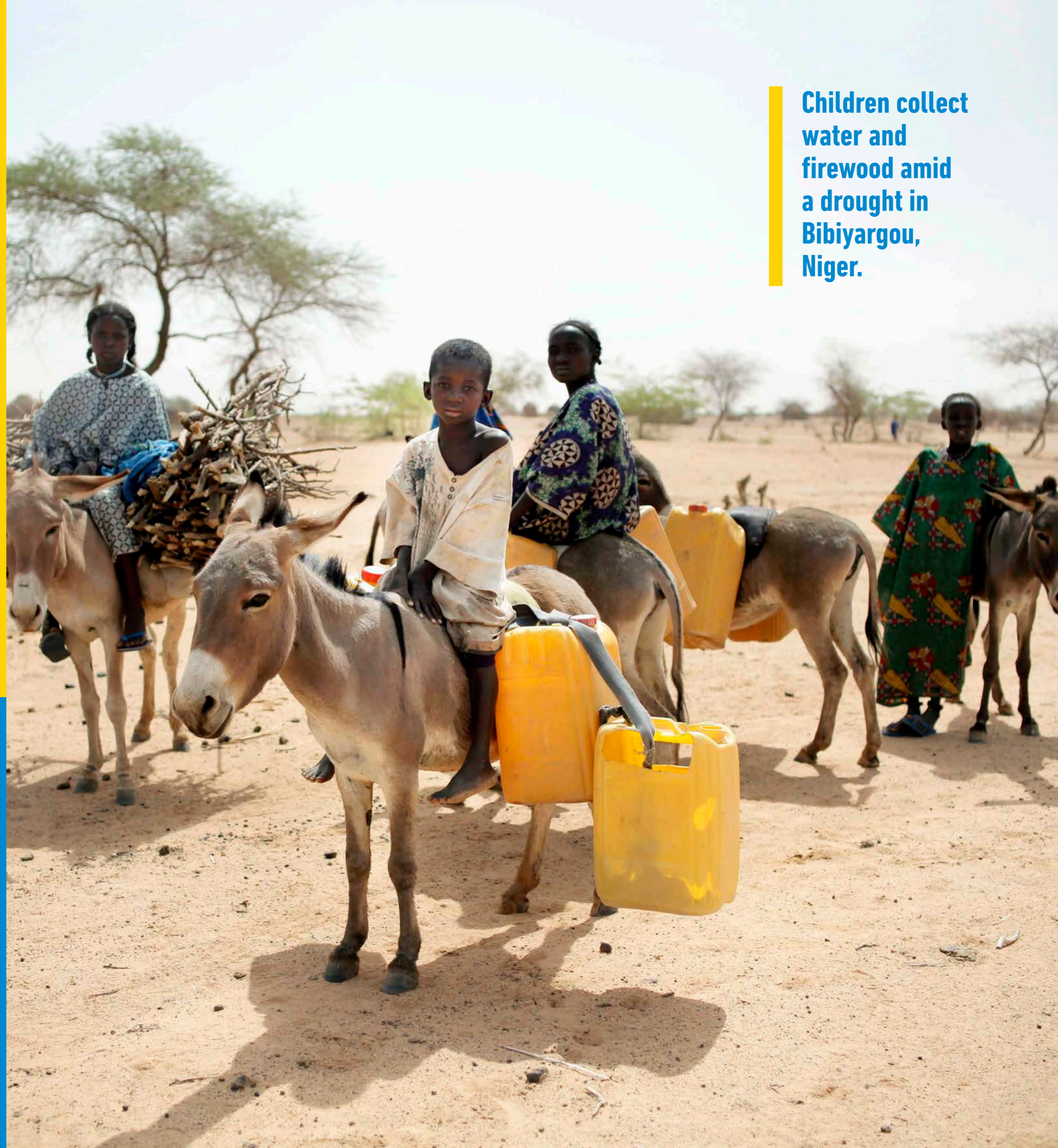
"I'm very proud that Islamic Relief works with some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Niger. Many are being hit particularly hard by the effects of climate change, which is devastating the livelihoods of people already living in extreme poverty and are less able to cope.



"Our interventions are supporting these amazing communities to become more resilient. We are helping them to earn a reliable living, ending worries about where their next meal will come from. Nutrition and health outcomes are improving in these communities too as they're increasingly able to diversify their diet and access malnutrition recovery treatment through our programmes."

Hadiza Boukar,
Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator
Islamic Relief, Niger

Children collect water and firewood amid a drought in Bibiyargou, Niger.



“We came together because we needed support”



“Before when we were fishing on the river, sometimes we used to catch nothing,” says Idrissa, who has been a fisherman for 20 years. “I used to earn XOF 2,000 (about £2.73) per month, not even enough to purchase a bag of millet.”

Then Islamic Relief began a project to reduce food insecurity and improve livelihoods in the Tinga Valley, Ouallam district. Focused on agriculture and fishing, we installed and stocked community fishponds, bringing local people together in cooperatives.

“We came together because we needed support. With the fishponds, we are now able to control production,” explains Idrissa, who joined one of our cooperative groups.

“I am now earning XOF 100,000 (about £136.50) per harvest, which is enough to buy food for my family,” he says, describing how the scheme linked his cooperative to groups of local women who buy their fish to sell at the market.

“Now more people want to engage in fish farming. It is important for farmers to be in cooperatives to benefit from training and other benefits,” says Idrissa. He is looking forward to his cooperative growing so they can construct more fishponds and empower more people to earn a reliable living.



Thanks to his village’s fish farming cooperative, Idrissa now earns enough money to feed his family.

“If my children succeed, I will also have succeeded”



The Islamic Relief project has also given local families access to land irrigated through water-saving technology. Among those to benefit is Asma, who takes care of eight of her children and one grandchild. When her husband passed away 15 years ago, she struggled to provide for her family in a country in which women and girls face particular barriers.

“Women face many challenges,” says the 52-year-old. “Many girls are unable to go to school due to the poverty of their parents. They usually drop out [of education] and get married.”

Helping Asma and other local women to set up and manage a cooperative, we trained them to produce profitable crops all year round. They learned to use drought-tolerant seeds and fertiliser, and discovered how to produce natural ‘bio-pesticides’. Now, Asma earns her living as a farmer - and with Islamic Relief’s help is maximising her profits.

“I have received training on processing crops. I now use a solar dryer that I received from Islamic Relief,” says the entrepreneur, explaining that this means her produce fetches a higher price at the market.

Having been shown how to collect regular data on food items, animal availability and prices, members of Asma’s cooperative are less vulnerable to changing market prices. They can also buy good quality seeds and tools from the community shops Islamic Relief set up.

The grandmother says the support they’ve received to set up a group savings and loan facility is also helping the women lift themselves out of poverty.

“Women are able to save XOF 500 (about 68p) per week and with that amount take a loan,” adds Asma, explaining that each woman makes a weekly deposit into the village savings and loan association. When the association has a sufficient pool of funds, contributors may take out a loan. Women like Asma are now feeling optimistic about the future. Determined that her children will be free from poverty and hunger, she’s supporting their education.

“Most of my children are going to school. If they succeed, I will also have succeeded.”



Asma working on her plot in Sargane village, Ouallam district.

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO UNLOCK THEIR POTENTIAL



Members of the Soudji Ma Zoumboua Zagagadan women's group meet in Zagagadan village, Balleyara district.

With our support women are lifting themselves out of poverty and working together to improve their lives and future prospects. They are also ensuring their voices are heard within their communities and beyond.

- Women in Niger are much more likely to live in poverty than men.
- One woman in every five is without work – compared to one man in 20 – according to government statistics.
- Poverty drives many girls into early marriage, which puts their health at risk and heightens the barriers they face in accessing education and livelihoods.
- UNICEF estimates that one in three girls aged 15-19 are pregnant or have already given birth.

Niger has the world's highest rate of child marriage, according to the World Bank, with three in four girls married before their 18th birthday.

Islamic Relief is tackling gender-based violence and child protection issues through broadcasts on local radio stations. We have also trained volunteers to work in the community, boosting awareness of malnutrition, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV). The community activists have so far identified ten GBV cases and referred them to the district protection authorities.

“In five years we women want to own our houses”



Rabi Abdou leads an enterprising women's group in Zagagadan village, Balleyara.

“The major problem faced by women is lack of resources,” says Rabi Abdou, 45. Women in Niger have fewer productive assets than men, and so many are trapped in poverty.

Islamic Relief is helping enterprising women's groups in Tagazar and Tondikandia communes to change that. Rabi Abdou leads one such collective: the Soudji Ma Zoumboua Zagagadan women's group.

“Each one of us had a problem and we decided to come together to see how we can solve our problems,” says the mother-of-ten, who lives in Zagagadan village in Balleyara district. We supported her group to create a business plan to maximise profitability. Then we gave them XOF 1,700,000 (around £2,340) and helped them to decide how best to invest the money to generate more income, boosting their profit by following the investments they make.

Rabi's group used XOF 1,200,000 (around £1,653) to rent a cereal bank to safely store their grain. They divided the remaining money between their 25 members, enabling each to set up their own small business. Women chose to rear animals, knit, make bed sheets and sell cereal.

“We got training on how to manage our businesses. I now know if I have made a profit or loss. I know how to save some money in case of sickness,” adds Rabi Abdou, who has found her confidence and hope has grown alongside her income. “Before Islamic Relief's support, I used to only make XOF 3,000 (around £4.14) per week from my business. Now I am able to make XOF 13,500 (around £18.61).

“We want to have our own cereal bank in five years. Most women are renting houses but in five years we want to own our houses.”



Lone parent Rabi Adamou now provides for her family and tackles gender-based violence in her community.

The project is also helping women to change their communities for the better, says mother-of-13 Rabi Adamou, who is also a member of the Soudji Ma Zoumboua Zagagadan group. She has been raising her children alone since her husband went to Ghana to look for work.

“For three years now, there has been no contact with my husband,” she says, explaining that four of her children are married, and her youngest are seven-year-old twins.

As well as running her small business, Rabi Adamou is a community activist, using Islamic Relief’s training to raise awareness about gender-based violence and early/forced marriage.

Incidents of early marriages are slowly decreasing thanks to Islamic Relief’s project, she says, describing a recent intervention when a girl was about to be married. “Another woman and I approached the family and stopped the wedding. The girl is still in school.”

The community also has a better understanding of domestic violence and the local support available for survivors.

“Before Islamic Relief came, many people did not know about the protection and inclusion services offered at the mayor’s office,” says Rabi Adamou. “If a man continues beating his wife, we urge women to seek protection and report the case to police.”

This is just one of ten women’s community organisations supported by the project, and both women agree that the Soudji Ma Zoumboua Zagagadan group has inspired many others.

“So many women are asking us how to form their own groups,” adds Rabi Abdou.

REDUCING AND TREATING MALNUTRITION



“It’s shocking to see the number of patients who visit the clinic because they suffer from severe malnutrition. It is very widespread and many suffer from serious health conditions as a result. The reason this is so common is that people simply do not have enough to eat. What we tend to see is that many men leave to find work, leaving women and children behind who are unable to afford the food they need to survive.

“Mothers need to be taught how to take better care of their children, how to nourish them well and take care of their hygiene. Islamic Relief is helping greatly in this area. Before, many children were so weak they could not even walk but now they are much healthier. I hope that Islamic Relief can continue helping those suffering from malnutrition”.

Saley Fati Hanouma
Nurse, employed by Islamic Relief at our nutrition centre in Balayera District Hospital



Baby Hashiru with his mother, Hawa, in the Islamic Relief intensive nutrition recovery centre in Baleyara.

Niger is one of the world's most dangerous countries in which to be a child. With one of the highest child mortality rates on the planet, high levels of malnutrition in the west African country pose a particular threat to children's health and development.

“My malnourished son is better now”

Hashiru was just ten months old when his village health centre referred him to our intensive nutrition recovery centre (CRENI) at Baleyara District Hospital in Tillabery. Diagnosed with malnutrition, he was receiving a course of nutritional supplements but was struggling to regain his health.

“I was told my son was not improving and had to be transferred to the [district] hospital,” says his mother, Hawa. Before Islamic Relief opened the nutrition centre at the district hospital, Baleyara’s remote communities had to go to the capital city – one hour’s drive away – to get treatment for malnourished children. Now an Islamic Relief ambulance takes children like Hashiru for treatment much closer to home.

“My son is better now,” says Hawa, after spending five days with Hashiru at the life-saving treatment centre. Constructed by Islamic Relief as the district’s only CRENI, it includes an ablution block, waiting area, and a kitchen serving nutritious food to patients and their accompanying relative.

As well as therapeutic feeding, the centre provides medical treatment for children with acute malnutrition or diseases caused by the condition. Among them is 20-month-old Raudo, who was brought to our treatment centre after being diagnosed at a health clinic in Deiberi village.

“I did not know that my child was malnourished,” says her 30-year old mother, Fati. “I was told my child is very sick and needs to be admitted to the [district] hospital.”

“The clinic has alleviated cases of malnutrition in this area”

**Moussa Saidou Agali,
Belayara District
Secretary General**



A nurse prepares a vaccination for Hashiru, shortly before his discharge from the malnutrition centre.

Training parents like Fati and Hawa to recognise and prevent malnutrition and practise good hygiene has been a critical component in improving outcomes for children. Both women are eager to share their new knowledge with others in their community.

“Take care of your children and give them food with nutrients,” advises Hawa, who is looking forward to her child being discharged from the centre. “When I go back home, I will prepare some pounded food for my child.”

Raudo’s mother, Fati, is staying with her daughter at the centre, which provides treatment and nutritious food.



Malnutrition threatens the health and development of many children in Niger, with UNICEF estimating that 15 per cent of children are acutely malnourished.

RAMADAN AND QURBANI FOOD FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE



In Niamey, Hadiza, 46, is able to prepare delicious meals for her children using the Ramadan foodpack she received from Islamic Relief.

Amina, who lives in Niamey, tends to livestock received through an Islamic Relief project combining qurbani seasonal meat production and distribution with sustainable livelihoods.



A sustainable approach to ease hunger and poverty

Islamic Relief is piloting an initiative that combines qurbani meat production and distribution with Islamic microfinance to enable people to build sustainable livelihoods in Niger.

"We received training in raising animals and fattening them," says Fati, 47, one of hundreds of women in Niamey to whom we gave goats and sheep to care for. They sell the animals to Islamic Relief's qurbani programme at market prices in time for Eid al-Adha, when the price and demand for animals is particularly high. This generates a profit which is split between the women and Islamic Relief. We use our share to support other income-generating activities, so other poor people can benefit.

Fati decided to invest her share of the profit in expanding her income.

"With the profit I made, I could afford to buy my own animal, a sheep," she explains. With our support, she is now producing fodder for the dry season.

Previously struggling to provide for her children, Fati is proud of her newfound self-reliance and has used our paraveterinary training to secure a job keeping animals healthy.

"I now do not have to borrow food or get loans from my neighbours or take credit at the shops," says the mother-of-seven, who can now provide for her children throughout the year.

Fati has kickstarted a new career and become financially independent.



Every year Islamic Relief provides vulnerable families in Niger with food parcels during Ramadan and qurbani meat on Eid al-Adha. They are a much needed relief for households without enough food to break their fast or mark the Eid festivals.

Wherever possible we integrate our seasonal food distributions with other humanitarian and development programmes, increasing our positive impact for the vulnerable people with whom we work throughout the year. We work closely with local communities, making sure our food parcels reach those most in need, without discriminating in any way.

WATER FOR LIFE

Fatima collects water from the new collection point in Malali village, Kiéché.



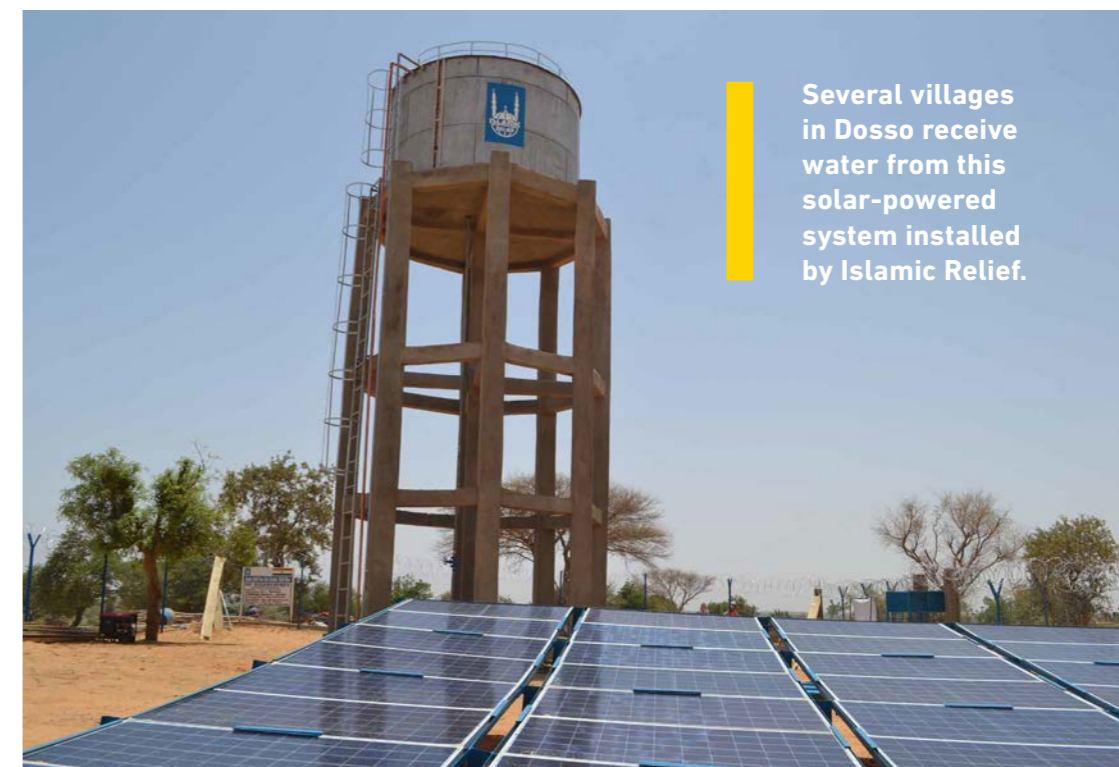
Fatima has always had the difficult and time-consuming chore of collecting water. "I am the only one in charge of collecting water for my family and animals," says the 51-year-old, who lives in Kiéché, where more than half of households lack a reliable potable water supply. The burden of water collection usually falls on the shoulders of women and girls, who face an average trek of three to four kilometres to the nearest water point.

"Sometimes I would have to go back and forth six times to get water. It was exhausting, and I could do nothing else [besides this]. I have been doing this all my life and now I have pain in my bones."

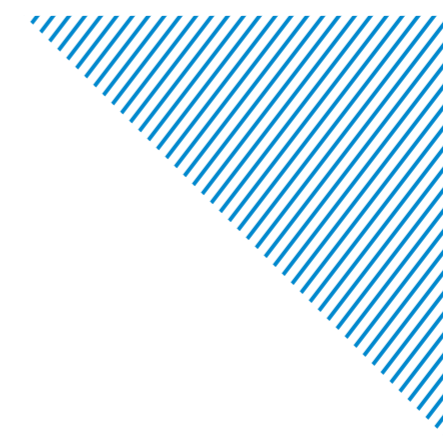
It is even harder to find water in the dry season, when the wells are almost dry, she says. Climate change is making the problem worse, and as local people all rely on the same wells, they are supplying less water than they used to.

Then Islamic Relief drilled a borehole and installed a water supply system – run sustainably by solar power – with 15 water collection points and a trough for animals. It serves 4,500 people and 10,000 animals in eight villages, including Malali village, where Fatima lives.

"The smile you see on my face shows my relief," she adds, explaining that she also attended Islamic Relief training sessions on good hygiene practices.



Several villages in Dosso receive water from this solar-powered system installed by Islamic Relief.



In Niger access to drinking water and sanitation remains very limited. Waterborne diseases and poor hygiene and sanitation are leading causes of death in young children. Climate change is making water increasingly scarce, devastating food security and livelihoods. Working in some of the country's poorest communities, Islamic Relief constructs wells and latrines, installs solar-powered water supplies and shows people how to practise good hygiene.



Amadou has lived his whole life in Tchakao, a hamlet in Kiéché, where climate change was making water scarcer than ever – until Islamic Relief installed a water point. "I know that the sufferings of the past are behind us," says the 73-year-old. "Our animals now have a place to drink and our women will not be tired by walking a long distance [to collect water]."



A child whose mother earns a living through a 12-hectare community farm established by Islamic Relief in Salgane village, Ouallam.

THANK YOU TO THOSE SUPPORTING OUR WORK IN NIGER

Islamic Relief thanks our generous supporters, including ForumCiv and the Islamic Relief family of partner offices, and the incredible communities with whom we work in Niger. Together we will continue transforming lives and communities for the better.



FORUMCIV.

“Islamic Relief is definitely one of the best partners supporting our community. Islamic Relief have introduced water, hygiene and sanitation support and a system to provide clean water. They’ve also introduced fish farming activities and other projects which mean people are able to sustain themselves. In addition we have seen that families have difficulty selling what they produce, so Islamic Relief supports them in terms of processing capacity.

“We are very happy with the very interactive approach of Islamic Relief. [Communities] are involved from the very beginning of a project all the way through implementation.”

Haroon Suleman
General Secretary of the Municipality of Ouallam





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