



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 15-Jan-2019 | Report No: PIDC26249



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Niger	Project ID P168779	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Niger Learning Improvement for Results in Education Project (P168779)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Jun 10, 2019	Estimated Board Date Sep 26, 2019	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Niger	Implementing Agency Ministries of Basic Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To enhance teacher effectiveness and the instructional conditions in basic education

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	100.00
Total Financing	100.00
of which IBRD/IDA	100.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	100.00
IDA Credit	100.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification
Moderate

Concept Review Decision
Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue



Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

- 1. Niger, a landlocked Sahelian country of about 21.5 million people, is in the heart of a turbulent region** marked by political and religious violence in northern Nigeria, separatist and armed movements in northern Mali, and intercommunal violence and state collapse in southern Libya. The violence has affected Niger in profound ways, and, has resulted in a state of emergency in the southeastern region of Diffa and an estimated 198,000 refugees and 137,000 internally displaced persons. The country is currently facing a serious security and humanitarian crisis, which thrives on and reinforces pre-existing institutional vulnerabilities and inter-communal tensions.
- 2. Although poverty rates have fallen, this drop has been outweighed by rapid population growth rates, resulting in a large increase in the absolute number of poor people in Niger.** Between 2005 and 2014, the incidence of income poverty fell from approximately 54 percent to approximately 45 percent. The absolute number of people living in poverty, however, rose from 6.8 million in 2005 to 8.2 million in 2014, an increase of one fifth or 1.4 million people. Overall population growth accelerated from 3.1 percent between 1988 and 2001 to 3.9 percent between 2001 and 2012 and the population of Niger now stands at about 21.5 million. This is explained by a fertility rate of 7.6 children per woman, the highest fertility rate in the world, and a rapid decline in child mortality. With the number of children increasing by 750,000 per year, the state is burdened with extremely high demands for investments in education and health services. Because of its still very high fertility rate, Niger is the only Sahelian country that is yet to benefit from a demographic dividend. Instead, the combination of high demographic growth, depletion of natural resources and weak state institutions, represent a significant risk factor that increases Niger's fragility and likelihood of conflict. These factors have also constrained welfare more generally: Niger has consistently been ranked near to last in the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index since 2010.
- 3. Niger's exceptionally high population growth rate is a result of multiple economic and social factors.** Many women earn very low incomes, have very little education, and enjoy only limited access to information and health services. Women's decision-making powers, including over fertility, are limited. Social norms may also explain a preference for children. Without improvements in these general conditions (risk, human capital, access to health services) and without active engagement to discuss and challenge established norms, population growth is likely to remain high, and the impact of population policies, limited.
- 4. Niger's low human development outcomes are a binding constraint to promoting growth and shared prosperity.** Per capita GDP was US\$895 in 2015 (constant 2011 US\$), making Niger one of the poorest nations in the world. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at about 61 years. The under-five mortality rate is 104 per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality rate is 553 per 100,000 live births - higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average of 546. Only 52 percent of children receive a complete set of vaccinations and 44 percent of children under five are stunted and, as a result, at risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a lifetime. Despite increased enrolment over the past 20 years, education levels remain exceptionally low. A large proportion of the population aged 15 and over cannot read or write, and the literacy rate has only progressed from 14 to 30 percent between



2000 and 2012¹. In addition, these low outcomes further mask wide regional disparities: the mean year of completed schooling for the poorest quintile in rural areas is about one year and the share of the population with no education in other regions is double that of Niamey. Moreover, the return to education is low for levels below secondary school, especially in rural areas. Addressing the quality of education is key to help tackle youth unemployment and to promote a sense of identity and inclusion in a secular context. The World Bank calculated Human Capital Index shows that Nigeriens born today will only reach 32 percent of their productivity potential, due to deficiencies in health and education services.

5. **The strategic vision of the government is clearly outlined in the policy document *Vision 2035*.** The strategy proposes a long-term plan for a prosperous and peaceful country with a diversified and dynamic economy that can create jobs for its young population². In line with its *Vision 2035*, the Government prepared the ambitious Economic and Social Development Strategy for 2017-2021 (*Plan de Développement Economique et Social - PDES*). The PDES aims to bring about a transformation of the country at all levels and to eradicate poverty and inequality. It comprises five core areas of focus: (i) cultural renaissance; (ii) social development and demographic transition; (iii) acceleration of economic growth; (iv) improvement of governance, peace and security and (v) sustainable management of the environment. Its goals are to reduce the incidence of poverty from 39.8 percent in 2016 to 31.3 percent in 2021, achieve an average annual economic growth rate of seven percent, and raise the tax rate to 20 percent. The PDES also aims to achieve structural transformation of the economy by strengthening the secondary (manufacturing) sector, including through a profound transformation of the rural economy, a modernization of public administration and a revitalization of the private sector.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

6. **Niger's education system is evolving in a context marked by a strong demographic pressure, limited resources and risks of major vulnerabilities.** The population of Niger is growing at one of the highest rates in the world and is expected to increase from 21 million in 2018 to 34 million in 2030. This is resulting in a massive demographic shift of the population, with 54 percent of Niger's population under 15. Consequently, there is immense pressure to provide education services. For example, the population entering the first year of primary school is expected to reach more than one million children each year until 2030, compared to about 500,000 currently. The Government of Niger has prioritized the education and training sectors in its budget. In 2016, public spending on education accounted for 20.7 percent of the total budget and 5.2 percent of the Growth Domestic Product (GDP). With such high level of public funding, the education system will likely struggle to mobilize additional public resources or even maintain this level of public funding, especially given the competition with other priority sectors such as security or health. Yet, the education system will need additional resources to be able to keep pace with the growing population and demand for education, creating needs for additional school construction, teacher recruitment and training, among others. In addition, risks related to drought, food insecurity, floods, population movements caused by armed conflict, teachers' strikes and violence in school settings regularly disrupt educational service delivery in the country.

¹ UIS – UNESCO, data retrieved from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ne>

² The key priorities of the 2035 Vision include the overarching goal of bringing demographic pressures under control and: (i) the restoration of security; (ii) extension of public functions; (iii) strengthening of human capital; (iv) transformation of the productive sectors, particularly rural; (v) further improvement to the business environment; and (v) pursuing prudent macro-economic policy. Vision 2035 is aligned with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and published Niger's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).



7. **Despite the priority given to the sector, schooling indicators in Niger remain among the lowest in Africa³.** The number of students enrolled in the education system has increased steadily over the past ten years but at variable rates according to the education cycle. The average annual growth between 2009-10 and 2016-17 was 15 percent in preprimary, 7 percent in primary, 13.9 percent in lower secondary, and 17 percent in upper secondary. Overall, students enrolled in the basic education cycle (primary and lower secondary levels) increased from 1.98 million in 2009-10 to 3.4 million students in 2016-17. The public sector has supported the largest share of this increase and enrolls 96 and 87 percent of students at the primary and lower secondary levels respectively. However, the schooling coverage progressed very slowly over the same period and remains low in comparison with countries in the sub-region. In 2016-17, the gross enrollment rate (GER) was only 8.1 percent in preprimary, 71 percent in primary, 33 percent in lower secondary and less than 10 percent in upper secondary (against, respectively, 4.3 percent, 63.7 percent, 17.5 percent and 3.8 percent in 2009-10). This means that the education system does not have the capacity to enroll most of its school-age population and keep pace with the demographic growth. In addition, many students leave the education system without completing any cycle. Only 8.9 percent of students who entered primary school access to upper secondary school, and only 4.4 percent complete the secondary education cycle.
8. **The low education coverage translates into a large population of out-of-school children.** Overall 51 percent of children aged 7-12, and 60 percent of children aged 13-16 are considered out-of-school⁴. This population comprises children who never enrolled in the education system and children who dropped out. Although accurate information on the out-of-school population is hardly available, these numbers likely include children attending religious school (*Makarantas*). Educational opportunities are unequal and vary significantly according to the place of residence, gender and social background. They are particularly unfavorable for girls and rural students, but all the regions, except from Niamey, are affected by the non-schooling phenomenon.
9. **Girls are particularly disadvantaged in access to quality education services, especially in rural areas.** Expansion of access to basic education has been accompanied by progress in the gender parity index that improved from 0.62 in 2000 to 0.85 in 2016, which represents significant progress given the high demographic pressure (3.9 percent per year). However, a significant gender gap persists and increases as students move through the education system. Girl's access to the first year of primary school is generalized in urban areas but is only 68.3 percent in rural areas. In primary school, the gross enrolment rate (GER) was 82.1 percent for boys compared to 70.2 percent for girls in 2016. This 12-point gap is accentuated when it comes to the primary completion rate, which is 87.4 percent for boys and 69.5 percent for girls. This means that there are inherent barriers to keeping girls in the education system. Disparities in the primary completion rate show that access to the first grade of primary school is only part of the problem for girls. Indeed, once in school, girls tend to repeat and drop out more than boys. In 2016, about 7 out of 10 girls completed basic cycle 1 and disparities are more pronounced as they move up through the system. Transition rate from primary to secondary school has decreased for both girls and boys between 2012 and 2016 and remains lower for girls (51.6 percent against 55.8 percent for boys)⁵. At the lower secondary level, GER is 39.6 percent for boys and 28.8 percent for girls, while the completion rate is 20.3 percent for boys and 14.2 percent for girls. Distance to lower secondary schools is a serious constraint to the continuation of girls' schooling, especially since the direct costs of schooling in lower secondary education are generally higher than in primary school.
10. **High rates of repetition and dropouts lead to serious internal efficacy and efficiency issues.** In 2016-17, the

³ Country Education Status Report (RESEN-2017)

⁴ Country Education Status Report (RESEN-2017)

⁵ Source: Statistical yearbook



repetition rate was 1.4 percent in primary, 20.5 percent in lower secondary, and 19.7 percent in upper secondary. While repetition in primary school has decreased since 2010, it has increased in secondary school and reaches the highest level in the sub region. The internal efficiency coefficients are 83 percent in primary school and 50 percent in lower secondary school, meaning that 17 and 50 percent of resources respectively allocated to these cycles are wasted by repetition and dropouts. The life-school expectancy in Niger is progressing slowly: a student would complete on average 5 to 6 years of education in 2016-17, against 4.7 years in 2009-10. Although Niger is one of the sub-Saharan countries with the highest share of public spending on education as a percentage of GDP (5.9 percent), its school-life expectancy remains much lower than the regional average of 8.1 years in comparator countries, which underlines the inefficiency of the education system.

- 11. For children actually enrolled in the education system, weak education outcomes translate into a severe learning crisis.** The World Bank calculated Human Capital Index shows that children in Niger can expect to complete 5.3 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 2.6 years, with a learning gap of 2.7 years. Indeed, very few students master basic skills at the completion of the elementary education cycle, as shown in figure 3. The 2014 PASEC survey showed that at the beginning of primary school (CP), more than nine out of ten students have language learning difficulties and nearly three-quarters of students at the same level have significant difficulties in mathematics. According to the same source, at the end of the primary schooling cycle (CM2), less than 10 percent of pupils have adequate reading and mathematics performance. The 2015 Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey also revealed that only one in nine (11.2 percent) children could read a simple sentence, fewer than one in two children were able to perform a one-digit addition, and only two out of five children could do one-digit subtraction. The average performance score of students in the public schools was 21.7 percent in French and 11.5 percent in mathematics. The learning crisis is due to several factors, including the lack of present and qualified teachers, the lack of school-readiness of children entering primary school, the lack of educational inputs in the classroom and weak management of resources, and governance challenges.
- 12. Niger's security situation is challenging and complicates the delivery of basic education services in certain areas.** The regions of Diffa, Tahoua and Tillaberi are particularly affected, with attacks by armed groups and extremists as well as inter-ethnic violence resulting in displacement of population⁶. For the academic year 2018-19, more than a hundred schools have been closed due to terrorist threats on teachers and population and burning of classrooms⁷. Since October 2018, 30 schools have been closed in the Diffa region due to insecurity, preventing 114,300 children from attending school. With the recent deterioration of the situation along the border with Burkina Faso, 51 schools have suspended their activities in the Tillaberi region including 33 in the Torodi district, due to attacks targeting security forces and the civil population. Some interventions- although very limited in scope, are ongoing to benefit both refugees and host population in the affected regions.
- 13. In this context, the State of Niger has made education a national priority and is mobilizing substantial support from technical and financial partners in order to achieve its objectives.** Through the "Sustainable Development and Inclusive Growth Strategy" (SDDCI 2035) and the "Economic and Social Development Plan" (PDES 2017-2021), the Government of Niger has focused its attention on education in order to transform its human capital, start its demographic transition, and support rapid, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Niger Government educational program is in line with the strategic framework of the "Education and Training Sector Program" (PSEF 2014-2024).

⁶ According to UNHCR, the population of concern in Niger comprised 362,342 individuals as of November 2018⁶. This includes mainly refugees from Nigeria (118,868) and Mali (57,300), internally displaced persons in Diffa (104,288), Tillaberi and Tahoua regions (51,848) and returnees from Diffa (25,731). Source: UNHCR, Country Operation Update, Niger, November 2018, retrieved from [UNHCR website](https://www.unhcr.org/niger)

⁷ UN-OCHA Niger, bulletin humanitaire Octobre & Novembre 2018, retrieved from <https://www.unocha.org/niger>



Acknowledging the learning crisis, the Government of Niger has prepared a new Roadmap for *Improving the Quality of Education* (2017-2021) to enhance the quality of teaching (curriculum reform, provision of pedagogical materials and strengthened education service delivery) and strategic monitoring of the education system. In addition, a National Forum on providing quality education was held in January 2018 with support from development partners to exchange knowledge and good practices in improving quality. On the basis of a sector review conducted by the Education Ministries in February 2018, a comprehensive sector diagnosis was delivered through the Country Education Status Report (RESEN) submitted in October 2018, whose main indicators are summarized in the below table. The Government of Niger, with the support of UNICEF, will review the PSEF by May 2019 to update the financial simulation and planning for the period 2020-2024. Updating the PSEF and the RESEN is the preliminary step in the preparation of the next GPE funding (US\$85 million) for which the request and implementation will be provided by AFD, subject to validation of the program document by the local education group (LEG) no later than August 2019. At the request of the Government of Niger, the next GPE funding will be disbursed to the Education Sector Common Fund (FCSE) that brings together AFD, the Luxembourg Cooperation, Switzerland, Norway and UNICEF. This new funding would have a focus on basic education, in line with the GPE priority, and would likely support school construction and the planned curriculum reform.

Relationship to CPF

14. **The new Country Partnership Framework (CPF, FY18-22) argued that “business as usual” is no longer an option for Niger.** Shifting Niger’s trajectory will require refocusing on: (i) the role of women and girls (ii) addressing near term risks of conflict and fragility. The overarching goal of the CPF is to help safeguard and accelerate Niger’s economic and social development, by tackling growth constraints, unsustainable population growth and other fundamental drivers of fragility. The CPF comprises nine objectives, clustered in three Focus Areas: (i) Increased rural Productivity and incomes; (ii) Improved Human capital and Social Protection and (iii) Better Governance for jobs, Service delivery and Growth. The Niger CPF will also have a spatial focus in four main regions with the highest levels of poverty and fragility. *Tillabéri* and *Diffa* are already home to over 300,000 displaced persons and face increasing risks from regional conflicts, while around two thirds of Niger’s poor live in the *Maradi* (which alone accounts for 30 percent of the poor) and *Zinder* regions in the south of the country.
15. **In this context, the World Bank will ramp up its technical and financial support to the education system.** The Project will contribute to the second pillar of the CPF on improving human capital and social protection, and more specifically to the key objective of increased access to quality education and training services with a particular emphasis on (i) the level of the informal workforce and (ii) gender parity. In addition, the World Bank will support two Advisory Services and Analytics in FY19 on (i) early childhood education and (ii) koranic schools, whose main findings will inform the design of the Project.
16. **In addition, the project is fully aligned with the World Bank’s Education Strategy 2020 (*Learning for All - Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development*).** The objective of the World Bank’s Education Strategy is very clear: learning for all. A country’s economic development depends partly on the knowledge and skills that people acquire, not the number of years that they spend in a classroom. By focusing on issues that relate to the quality of education and ensuring that the system is built around providing opportunities for all to learn, the project contributes directly to the Education strategy.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To enhance teacher effectiveness and the instructional conditions in basic education



Key Results (From PCN)

PDO-level indicators (proposed)

- Increase in the primary completion rate
- Reduction of the degree of randomness in primary teacher deployment across the country
- Improvement in teachers test score
- Availability of teaching resources and textbooks in the classroom
- Direct Project beneficiaries (number), of which female (percent)

D. Concept Description

17. The proposed project would support the government's priority focus areas and planned reforms to enhance the quality of basic education. The project would be financed through a US\$100 million Credit/Grant from the International Development Association (IDA), using an Investment Project Financing (IPF) lending instrument. Project preparation is informed by key lessons learned from the implementation of the GPE – Support to Quality Education Project (PAEQ), a Bank-administered project under GPE financing that will close on June 30, 2019.
18. The Project will mainly focus on improving retention and learning outcomes in basic education through interventions aiming at enhancing teacher effectiveness, ensuring that school inputs and management have a positive impact on the learning process, and building institutional and human capacities. Interventions will focus on primary and lower secondary levels.

The project will consist of four components whose interventions are linked to achieve the desired outcomes.

Component 1: Improving Teaching Practices and Teacher effectiveness

- 1.1: Strengthening the capacities of teacher education colleges to produce qualified teachers
- 1.2: Developing teachers' professional competencies through piloting of individualized and sustained coaching
- 1.3: Provision of teaching tools and pedagogical equipment in the classroom
- 1.4: Teacher supervision and capacity building of inspectorates

Component 2: Creating an enabling environment for learning for all

- 2.1: Multigrade classroom policy to remedy schooling discontinuity and improve retention
- 2.2: Keeping girls in school so they can reach their full potential
- 2.3: Remediation program for vulnerable children
- 2.4: Developing an alternative form of quality education for out-of-school children

Component 3: Strengthening the management and accountability of the education system

- 3.1: School improvement subgrants to preschools and primary schools:
- 3.2: Enhancing the education human resource management system
- 3.3: Strengthening data, information and management systems

Component 4: Project administration



Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The rehabilitations/construction activities under Subcomponent 1.1 will imply civil works that will generate adverse environmental and social risks and impacts. Among these impacts, the most important are: (i) Air quality, noise/vibrations, water and sanitation, solid waste, (ii) Risks of localized soil degradation, despite the fact that washout works will be limited in depth. (iii) Accidents caused by construction machinery traffic and possible non-compliance with safety (iv) Community health and safety related to potential traffic and road safety risks to affected communities and road users throughout the project life cycle. There are no significant long-term or irreversible adverse impacts expected from project implementation. The risks and impacts are expected to be globally site-specific. The National Office for Environmental Studies and Impact Evaluation (BEEEI) is responsible for monitoring and overseeing of the implementation of environmental and social risks management, including the validation of the screening process and genuine consultation of beneficiaries. The BEEEI implementation capacity and reporting quality still need improvement. The project implementation agencies (MEP and MES) have never dealt with the new World Bank Environmental and Social Framework. Thus, the client has no experience or capacity in applying the expanded ESF beyond aspects that are generally included in the OP's, and significant efforts will be required to capacitate the PIU and familiarize the BEEEI during the project implementation. The ESCP will reflect the relevant actions and measures that will ensure the project compliance to the relevant environmental and social standards.

Note To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Concept Stage ESRS Document.

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APPROVAL

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