

Country profile

World Vision

Chad

GEOGRAPHY

The Republic of Chad is in the middle of Africa. Ancient rock paintings show that rainfall must once have been plentiful with hippopotamuses living in rivers and elephants roaming the land. In modern-day Chad, the land is hot and dry and the country's north is dominated by the Sahara Desert.

Although southern Chad has a rainy season between May and October, most of the rivers are dry a lot of the time. Lake Chad used to be one of the largest lakes in the world, but droughts and poor water management have reduced its size.

PEOPLE

The capital of Chad is N'Djamena, a small town south of Lake Chad. Very few people live in the north. Most of the population of 11.5 million live in the sub-tropical south. Over two-thirds of them live in the countryside and some are nomadic, including northern Arab clans.

Almost half the population, particularly the Arabs, are Muslim. Over one-fifth are Christian, but animist beliefs remain strong in the south. French and Arabic are the official languages, although 100 different languages are spoken.

HISTORY

Chad's early people were hunters, followed by herders. Later, Arab migrants established kingdoms and introduced Islam to the region. Chad was ruled by the French from the late 19th century until the country gained its independence in 1960.



Ensuring that children are immunised against disease is an important aspect of our work with communities in Chad.



Map courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

The north resisted colonial rule and Chad became independent in 1960 after almost 20 years of seeking self-rule. Divisions between ethnic groups and intervention by foreign troops have led to intermittent civil war and a series of coups. In 2003 and 2004 unrest in neighbouring Sudan's Darfur region spilled across the border, along with many thousands of Sudanese refugees. Tensions mounted in late 2005 when Chad accused Sudan of arming and financing rebels in the east.

Following increasing pressure for political reform, Chad held a presidential election in 1996 and former army commander Idriss Déby became president. Déby won a third term in presidential elections in May 2006.

ECONOMY

Over 80 percent of Chad's population relies on subsistence farming and livestock-raising for its livelihood. Cotton, sorghum, millet and wheat are the main crops. Chad's economy has long been handicapped by its landlocked position, high energy costs and political instability.

Chad relies on foreign assistance and foreign capital for most public and private sector investment projects. Chad's economy has been boosted by major foreign direct investment projects in the oil sector that began in 2000. A consortium led by two US companies has been investing US \$3.7 billion to develop oil reserves, estimated at one billion barrels, in southern Chad. Chad began to export oil in 2004 through a pipeline to the coast in Cameroon.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Drought and war have both had a huge impact on the people of Chad. Many people have been forced from their homes to escape violence, losing both crops and livestock. Even in peaceful times, drought can make life a struggle, leaving people with no food or a way to start afresh.

The basic Chadian diet consists of boule, a stiff porridge made of millet and sorghum. Milk and dates are important foods for nomads. Many households do not have a safe water supply, or health facilities within easy reach. Health problems include malaria, tuberculosis, measles and outbreaks of cholera and meningitis. Among the approaches to these issues are immunisation programs and teaching communities about nutrition and hygiene.

EDUCATION

Literacy in Chad is low, at around 33 percent of the population. Regional and gender differences mean the situation is worse for rural children and girls, with only around 20 percent of girls able to read and write. Class sizes are large and very few children are enrolled in secondary school. In the absence of strong government provision, parent associations and local communities are very active in managing basic primary education for their children.

WORLD VISION AUSTRALIA IN CHAD

- provides emergency food relief during drought periods
- assists communities in the construction and maintenance of wells
- ensures farmers receive training, tools and high quality sorghum, maize and groundnut seeds
- advises communities on the construction and management of grain stores, to guard against hunger before the next harvest

Comparatively speaking...

CATEGORY	CHAD	AUSTRALIA
Population	11.5 million	21.5 million
Urban population	27.6%	89.1%
GNI per capita (US\$ PPP)	\$1,067	\$38,692
Population with an improved water source	50%	100%
Adult literacy rate	32.7%	99%
Population living on less than US\$1.25 (PPP) a day	61.9%	0%
Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	209	6
Life expectancy at birth	49.2 years	81.9 years

Source: United Nations Development Programme
Human Development Report 2010

- works with communities to ensure school buildings are repaired and learning materials are provided to keep children in school
- provides immunisation and healthcare training programs to ensure young children are immunised against killer diseases
- supports programs providing literacy classes and small business training to improve the status of women



Improvements to classrooms and other school facilities encourage families to send their children to school.

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