

AFR100 Initiative

Food insecurity in Sahel, particularly in Niger, has proved complex. Indeed, more than 80% of Niger's population is rural and quasi exclusively dependent on agricultural production. However, the gap between the demand for food and food production is far from being bridged. For small scale producers facing food insecurity, poverty, land and water resources degradation, agriculture has to meet the challenge of achieving food security but at the same time respond to the demands of climate adversities. In fact, the current climatic trends pose a significant and pressing threat to agricultural sector exacerbating an already problematic situation.

Several types of interventions are being implemented to reverse the trend, and we would like to acknowledge the considerable efforts of the Government of Niger through the 3N Initiative, which is an excellent integrated approach to ensuring the resilience of populations to food insecurity. World Vision Niger as partner of the Government is part of this dynamic; and a Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is one of the key interventions that World Vision uses in Niger to support community resilience to climate challenges. In fact, Niger has faced challenges of crop failures, extreme climate events and food insecurity for decades, and FMNR was initiated in response to this rather worrying situation in early 1980s. Since then, World Vision has been interested in promoting this practice across several countries including Niger developing tools, sensitizing communities and accompanying farmers.

World Vision Niger places particular attention to FMNR because of its rapid, low cost and easily replicated approach to restoring and improving agricultural, forested and pasture lands well adapted to the climatic conditions of Niger. In addition, FMNR is an empowering form of social forestry, which gives individuals and communities both responsibility for care and nurture of naturally occurring woody vegetation and rewards from sustainable harvesting of wood and nontimber forest products. Furthermore, World Vision Niger has always aligned its interventions with the strategy defined by the Nigerian government and FMNR perfectly fits with ***strategic ax 1 and ax 3 of 3 N initiative which respectively advocate for an "increase and diversification of***

agrosylvo-pastoral and fisheries production” and “improving the resilience of vulnerable groups to climate change, food crises and natural disasters”.

Here we would like to give some of our recent achievements. Thus, between 2012 and 2017 World Vision Niger has set up 267 FMNR village committees that helped train, supervise and monitor 11472 farmers the FMNR including 7113 males and 4359 females across 417 villages in the Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabery and Zinder regions. In the same period, 17587.39 ha of farmland were covered with the practice of FMNR. And, an impact assessment carried out in some WV intervention sites (LAHIA Program) gives us evidence on the impact of RNA in the lives of rural population:

- **Increase in agricultural production:**
 - 57.05% increase in millet crop production on farms under FMNR from 2014 to 2017;
 - 246.8% increase in trees/shrub density on FMNR sites (35.47/ha as average trees density in 2014 against 123/ha in 2017), (source: LAHIA FMNR activities Evaluation report July 2017).
- **Increase in household income:**
 - Household Annual Average revenue is estimated at estimated at 56.086F (\$112) with the practice of FMNR (Source: LAHIA FMNR activities Evaluation report, July 2017).

Success factors

The successes that we have had to date reflect the approach we are taking, and the approach in question, mainly includes the following features:

- Sensitization to create an awareness on climate change and stakes of FMNR practices at the level of different actors including the populations themselves, opinion leaders and religious, local government representatives, agriculture and forestry department representatives;
- Set up and training FMNR committees so as to promote local governance, conduct demonstration and establish link between environment technical services and farmers;
- Community-based monitoring through FMNR committees;

- Gender mainstreaming in the implementation and scaling up; indeed, the FMNR committees that World Vision Niger sets up are composed of both men and women all of them participate in decision making;
- Extension of environmental legislation, texts that govern environment management;
- Promotion of improved stoves to reduce the use of firewood and by the way to limit the pressure on natural resources;

Perspectives

World Vision Niger, in its 2016-2021 strategy, a period that corresponds to that defined by the I3N to make zero hunger a reality in Niger, aspires to see all children living in households which are shielded from hunger and resilient to shocks; which, moreover, fits perfectly with axis VI of the Renaissance II Program: "Rural Development and Food Security". To achieve this, WVN has placed particular emphasis on improving agro sylvo pastoral production, promoting climate and environmentally friendly farming practices and household economic development; and as mentioned above, FMNR is one of the key interventions that World Vision is implementing. For the upcoming four year, World Vision in partnership with CARE and ICRAF will be implementing a project named Evergreen Agriculture funded by the European Commission. The project targets 40 000 households over 90 000 hectares in Oullam and Torodi communes. Furthermore, World Vision plans to scale up and intensify FMNR practice through its intervention areas in Maradi, Zinder, Tahoua and Tillabery Regions.