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MAURITANIA

COUNTRY PROFILE

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, a country with a large land mass but a relatively small population, is contending with high youth unemployment (48.9% for men and 40.7% for women), high poverty (42%) and a relative lack of formal education.

Because Mauritania imports about 70 percent of its food, rising world food prices threaten economic and food security – particularly for the 42 percent of the population which lives below the poverty line. Furthermore, longstanding ethnic tensions and the presence of extremist groups around its borders pose ongoing security challenges, threatening the stability established since the 2009 democratic elections (following a 2008 military coup). In addition, approximately 50,000 Malian refugees remain in Mauritania, further putting a strain on existing national and international resources.

OUR WORK

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

USAID supports activities that provide important job and life skills to vulnerable youth in Mauritania in order to help them find employment and ensure their professional success. USAID focuses on training youth in market-driven technical and vocational skills and helping them integrate into the local job market. USAID is also working to promote exchanges through dialogue and arts and convene stakeholders from government and the private sector to coordinate approaches to positive youth programs the country.

PHOTO: K. PEASE

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

As of August 2016, Mauritania continued to host more than 50,000 Malian refugees, the majority of whom reside in food-insecure southern regions where already-scarce host community resources are strained by the presence of additional families. USAID's humanitarian assistance, delivered through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Office of Food for Peace (FFP), supports initiatives to improve health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene conditions for vulnerable households in the country. USAID works through partners in the Brakna and Guidimaka regions to deliver humanitarian assistance that builds resilience in local communities.

USAID also supports the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS Net) in Mauritania. FEWS Net works to deliver early warnings of actual and potential hazards with respect to food insecurity, food vulnerability and famine. FEWS Net also aims to improve the quantity, quality and timeliness of early warning information and predictions, for use in food security-response decision-making.

GLOBAL HEALTH

USAID supports regional efforts to expand the demand for, access to and use of family planning services, information and supplies in Mauritania. In addition, USAID is assisting the Government of Mauritania to strengthen national policy, advocacy and governance for sustainable health programming in family planning, reproductive health, HIV and maternal and child health. USAID's regional programming also aims to strengthen country management of health commodities and facilitate coordination to ensure that health commodities are available in Mauritania in the long-term.

GOVERNANCE

USAID is supporting West African regional bodies, national governments, and civil society organizations to more effectively counter violent extremism in the Sahel region. In Mauritania, USAID is assisting the government in developing effective and sustainable programs to improve security, reduce conflict and serve at-risk communities in the country.

In addition, USAID and the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are working to strengthen the capacity of regional, national and local decision makers to understand and apply geospatial data for improved economic, social and environmental resiliency in West Africa.

FIELD OFFICE AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

USAID Mauritania, a limited presence office in Nouakchott, comprises a country program manager who monitors programs and serves as an advisor for U.S. Government development activities in Mauritania. USAID Senegal's Sahel Regional Office, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace regional offices and the USAID/West Africa Regional Mission in Accra, Ghana share the management responsibility for development and humanitarian programs in Mauritania.

CONTACTS

MISSION

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