



Featured program for July 2014

RAIN for the Sahel and the Sahara Learning and Earning Programs (LEGS)



Dining for Women



Changing the world one dinner at a time

What are we supporting?

The Learning & Earning Program (LEGS) trains and pays unlettered adult women to mentor girls to keep them in school and helps the mentors develop income generating activities of their choosing for 5 communities in the remote desert area of Agadez in northern Niger.

The \$36,066 2-year grant pays for:

- Mentoring programs for five communities
- Stipends for mentors
- Practical skills workshops
- Savings & loan group activities
- Income generating activity start-up for mentor groups
- Training, monitoring and evaluation of programs including travel and food



“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

Mother Theresa

Life Challenges of Women and Girls

Nomadic women in Niger have responsibility but few skills or opportunities for self-improvement or autonomy

- **Lack of education**

The average Niger girl attends school for only three years.

- **Lack of knowledge of health, sanitation, and child bearing**

1 out of 16 Niger women die in childbirth

- **Lack of opportunity**

Due to displacement and drought-induced food crises in the northern Niger desert area, the nomadic people are forced to give up herds and learn to farm. Their poverty is severe.

- **Overwhelming responsibility with few resources**

Many men have moved to towns to find work, leaving women behind to maintain the home and family with little or no income



The Program

Teach unlettered adult women to mentor school girls, teach them how to help themselves with an income generating enterprise, and provide them with self-help tools to succeed

- Five teams of 55 women and 180 girls for each community
 - 30 Mentors
 - 180 girls currently in school
 - 25 non-mentor women
- Form Savings & Loan group in each village to learn business basics
 - Begin S&L business training
 - Select and begin an income generating enterprise (e.g. herding) with a seed loan
- Learn mentoring skills, hygiene and social issues for mentors to share with their charges and the community
- Work with girls at school throughout the school year to support them and help them learn practical skills



Program Budget

DFW's grant to RAIN is \$36,066 over a two year period

| Description | Cost | Quantity | Total USD |
|--|---------|----------|-----------------|
| Mentors (30 mentors@ \$10/mo. for 9 mos. X 2 years) | \$180 | 30 | \$5,400 |
| Practical skills workshop materials \$20/year per mentor per year | \$ 40 | 30 | \$1,200 |
| Mentor materials for 5 training sessions X 5 communities per year | \$ 20 | 50 | \$1,000 |
| RAIN field agent transport & food for trainings and statistic collection – 5 trips/year | \$129 | 10 | \$1,290 |
| Mentor contribution in year 2 - practical skills materials | | | (\$300) |
| TOTAL MENTORING PROGRAM | | | \$ 8,590 |
| Income Generating Activity for Mentors in each community – activity to be chosen in year 1 | \$2,000 | 5 | \$10,000 |
| Savings & Loan Groups for Mentors+6 additional women in each community - year 2 | \$500 | 10 | \$5,000 |
| TOTAL IGA ACTIVITY | | | \$15,000 |
| Monitoring & Evaluation (3 staff tours to all 5 sites each year, 8 days each tour) | | | |
| Food supplies and food preparation – camping | \$540 | 6 trips | \$3,240 |
| Vehicle rental including driver (per tour) | \$640 | 6 | \$3,840 |
| Fuel (per litre) | \$1.15 | 600 | \$691 |
| Program Evaluation – year-end site visits, evaluation tools, program data analysis – 2 years | | | \$3,765 |
| Niger Administration – receipt processing, budget compliance, program reports – 2 years | | | \$ 940 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM MONITORING & EVALUATION | | | \$12,476 |
| TOTAL: 5 COMMUNITIES, 30 MENTORS, 180 GIRLS, + 25 ADDITIONAL WOMEN IN S&L GROUPS OVER 2 YEARS FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE MENTORING AND INCOME GENERATION FOR GIRLS & WOMEN | | | \$36,066 |

Why we Love this Program

Because RAIN works with a unique nomadic community in one of the poorest countries in the world bringing new and innovative methods to empower women and girls.



- Innovative methods such as loans for seed money, gardening training, animal husbandry and artisan support are utilized to empower women and girls
 - The mentor program allows unlettered women to mentor girls in school to teach the girls about hygiene and social issues (early marriage)
 - Girls learn cooking skills and traditional artisan crafts
 - Mentors earn an income that helps them put food on their family's table
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- The mentors become “wise women” in their communities, sources of information, and role models for girls and other women.

Voices of the People

The mentors



“ As a RAIN artisan cooperative member, I’ve been learning new designs of items I already know, as well as how to make other items for the first time. It is thanks to this work that I am able to support my family’s needs. I’m gaining experience and earning a living doing what I love.”

-- Halima Atchani, Artisan

“ With this [S&L] activity, I acquired a knitting machine with a value of

\$160, from which I will continue to profit.” Fourera Alassan, RAIN mentor

Voices of the People

The girls

“ I’d like to become a doctor to treat the sick and chase some of the horrible illnesses from my village.”

-- 16 year old Fatima Abdou



Voices of the People

The schools

“ Since RAIN introduced a mentoring program in 2009, our enrollment has increased from 65 to 233 students. I see the value of mentoring every day. The children come to school daily. We continue to see big changes – we now have 3 girls, the first ever from our school, who have gone on to middle school.”

*-- Issafou Amadou,
Director Mari Primary School*



Voices of the People

The organization



“The sub-Saharan region is difficult to work in, tedious to live in, and it’s not inviting even to NGOs that want to reach out and help. It takes a stalwart person that has some tenacity and ability to to get out there and stay out there. And I’ll tell you, the Tuareg recognize that. When Bess shows up, this is their sister.”

-- John Ahlgran, Chairman, RAIN Board of Directors

About the Organization

RAIN for the Sahel and Sahara was founded to help a neglected and desperately poor nomadic people provide education for their children

- As a tourist, Bess Palmisciano saw the abject poverty of the Sahel and founded RAIN in 2001 when she could find no one to help the nomadic people.
- RAIN has patiently worked with the nomadic people who are not used to working together.
- They found common ground with education and the schools on which they could build a new community.
- Using schools as the common ground with the nomads, RAIN has helped communities create gardens, agriculture, find clean water sources, and move forward with better livelihoods.



Where they Work: The Sahel

The Sub-Saharan remote arid, desert region of West Africa where the nomadic people of the Tuareg and Wodaabe live.

- Niger is a desert country about the size of France, with French the official language
- One of the two poorest countries in the world according to 2012 UNDP Index
- Outside of the capital, roads are barely passable. There is no railroad, no port, and no natural resources on which to base an industrial economy.
- The Sahel is agricultural and nomadic, either tending herds or tending crops. Well over 95% of the people are totally dependent on the land.
- Because remote areas are so difficult to reach, few NGOs are willing to travel even if they wish to help the people.



Questions for Discussion

Care to share your thoughts?



1. How does a program that helps adult women to earn a better living help the girls they mentor, the school, and the community as a whole?
2. What are the benefits of the program requirement that mentors give 50% of their earnings to the school? Is it a fair requirement?
3. Why is it important for the program to be self-sustaining after the first two years?
4. We have seen other programs with strong, determined charismatic leaders. Could RAIN exist without Bess Palmisciano?