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Country sheet

Benin

SAHA regional
programme





HI's team and areas of intervention

There are 44 staff on HI's team in Benin.

Benin





General country data

a. General data

Country	BENIN	Neighbouring country TOGO	France
Population	13,352,864	8,848,699	67,935,660
IHDI	0.334	0.372	0.825
Gender Development Index	0.88	0.849	0.99
Maternal mortality	523	399	8
Gini Index	37.8	42.4	30.7
Population under UNHCR mandate	3,239	9,876	693,598
INFORM index	3.7	3.9	2.3
Fragile States Index	73.3	82.1	30.7
Public social protection	7.8	23.2	100
Official development assistance received (USD)	843.6	339.4	0

b. Humanitarian law instruments ratified by the country

Humanitarian law instruments	Status
Mine Ban Treaty	Ratified in 1998
Convention on Cluster Munitions	Ratified in 2017
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Ratified in 2012
Act No. 2018-16 of 4 June 2018, establishing the Penal Code	Ratified in 2018
Act No. 2018-34 of 5 October 2018, amending and supplementing Act No. 2001-09 of 21 June 2002 on the exercise of the right to strike in the Republic of Benin	Ratified in 2018



Five decrees implementing Act No. 2017-06 of 29 September 2017
on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with
disabilities

21 June 2023

c. Geopolitical analysis

Social, cultural and demographic context

The Republic of Benin is a West African country located in the Gulf of Guinea. Its political capital is Porto-Novo and its economic capital is Cotonou. The country has a surface area of nearly 114,763km², with 121km of coastline along the Gulf of Guinea. It borders Togo to the west, Nigeria to the east, and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north.

The country is divided into twelve departments: Alibori, Atakora, Atlantique, Borgou, Collines, Kouffo, Donga, Littoral, Mono, Ouémé, Plateau, and Zou. These departments are subdivided into 77 communes. Benin has had a wide variety of ethnic groups since the 15th century, but the Fon are the most numerous (40%), followed by the Adja (15%) and Yoruba (12%). French is the official language, but the most common languages spoken are Fon and Yoruba in the south, Dendi and Bariba in the north.

Political context

Benin has enjoyed a stable democratic regime since 1990. In 2018, the adoption of a law reforming the electoral code meant that all opposition parties were excluded from taking part in the April 2019 legislative elections. This led to unprecedented violence in the country and the main opposition party leaders were unable to stand in the next presidential election. President Patrice Talon was comfortably re-elected for a second 5-year term in April 2021, although this election, marked by a record rate of abstention, was marred by significant pre-election violence. Two opponents of the regime, who were unable to stand for election due to a lack of sponsors, are currently serving prison sentences.

In January 2023, the country held parliamentary elections in which the opposition party, Les Démocrates, took part. This party won 28 seats out of the 109, putting an end to the label of a single-party national assembly.

Since July 2023, relations between Benin and its neighbour Niger have been strained because of the coup d'état there which overthrew President Bazoum. Benin was quick to take a stand and is one of the countries which imposed sanctions against the coup leaders via ECOWAS and did not recognise the new authorities. Benin has therefore closed its border with Niger and supports a possible intervention by ECOWAS in Niger.

Economic situation

Benin's economy is heavily dependent on informal re-export and transit trade to Nigeria (which accounts for about 20% of GDP) and on agriculture. The informal economy is thought to account for 65% of total activity and involve more than 90% of the working population. In 2020, the COVID-19



pandemic severely affected major sectors of the economy such as agriculture, transportation and trade, slowing down the country's economic growth.

Benin's border with Niger has been closed since August 2023 under ECOWAS sanctions introduced in protest against the coup. This is having a negative effect on activity at the autonomous port of Cotonou, through which goods to Niger pass. Even though there are no official figures just yet, everything suggests that this closure is having a negative effect on Benin's economy.

The prices of essential items have soared. The price of fuel has risen from 550 CFA to 700 CFA in less than a year and, although price increases are not significant for domestic gas, distribution companies are struggling to supply it.



Summary of HI's work in the country

The Benin programme emerged from the Togo programme in 1999, following a request to train orthoprosthetic technicians at Cotonou National University Hospital Centre. In 2003, the Benin programme was closed because of funding difficulties.

Between 2003 and 2010, HI championed exchanges between the national Buruli ulcer control programmes in Togo, Benin and Ghana. During this period, only a few short missions were rolled out in Benin.

In 2010, HI reopened its office in Cotonou following a request from the Ministry of Family and National Solidarity. HI set up several projects as soon as it reopened: a project to combat lymphatic filariasis; a project to promote the rights of people with disabilities; and a road safety project. The DECISIPH project to promote the rights of people with disabilities has breathed new life into the voluntary sector in Benin and created a serious and reliable point of contact for the government.

Between 2013 and 2017, HI implemented three projects in the sectors of inclusive education, local and inclusive development, and the management of the physical security of weapons and munitions. The local and inclusive development project has had significant effects in Cotonou, with the drafting of a set of minimum accessibility standards for use by municipalities, and the relaunch of the process to draft the inclusive building code. HI has since become a benchmark in accessibility.

Starting in 2018, projects on socio-economic integration, road safety and inclusive education have been launched. These were followed in 2019 and 2020 respectively by the CAPAF-SEC 2/3 and DLI 2 projects, and then the SIGNAL project in 2021. All these six projects are still running.

In 2022, after carrying out studies on the conflicts in northern Benin and Togo, and especially on the deterioration of the security situation in the north, the programme began to consider the need to have a base in the Atakora department to address possible crises. An exploratory mission was carried out and it was decided to have an office in Natitingou.

In January 2023, the Natitingou office opened with the CDCS-funded Social Cohesion project to help manage conflict through community dialogue and support for women and young people. Given its area of intervention, the Signal project joined the base in April 2023 and carried out its studies on logistical vulnerability in Atakora and Alibori. In June 2023, ECHO's Emergency Preparedness and Response to Basic Needs project was launched to respond to the security crisis that was resulting in population displacement.

In 2023, the Benin mission was involved in the following projects: Employment, Disability and Inclusive Employment; Inclusive Education; Rehabilitation; CAPAFSECIV; Social Cohesion; Signal; Emergency Preparedness; and Making it Work.



Overview of current projects

Sectors in which HI is running projects with a focus on beneficiaries and partners

Project title and main intervention sector(s)	Principal activities	Beneficiaries	Partner(s)	Location	Project start and end dates	Institutional donors
Inclusive Employment	• Developing support structures for people with disabilities • Establishing financial mechanisms to promote access to employment for people with disabilities • Training civil society organisations and public services • Identifying and implementing a strategy to ensure long-term support for businesses • Training human resources experts on disability policy, and business analysis and support • Business creation: raising awareness of inclusion, disability, non-discrimination, inclusive practices • Definition, validation and implementation by civil society organisations of an advocacy plan for integrating disability into public policies.	• 250 people with disabilities seeking employment (18-45 years of age) • 10 facilities • 6 training and social promotion centres • 10 professionals involved in entrepreneurship • 60 public officials • 10 businesses • 4 service providers in the inclusive employment sector • Organisations of people with disabilities and civil society organisations	• National Employment Agency • Direction de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle [Directorate of Technical Education and Vocational Training] • Fonds de Développement de la Formation professionnelle Continue et de l'Apprentissage [Fund for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training and Apprenticeships] • The Federation of Associations of People with Disabilities in Benin • Departmental Directorates of Social Affairs and Microfinance of the Atlantique and Littoral	Littoral and Atlantique departments	07.2021 – 05.2024	AFD, DGD



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			through training and social promotion centres			
Inclusive Education	• Advocacy and support for the Ministries of Education and Training to ensure that the inclusive approach is incorporated into sectoral policies and strategies • Organising consultations for children with disabilities with healthcare providers • Training and coaching teachers in inclusive education.	• 500 children with disabilities for schooling, and 150 young people with disabilities for vocational training (and their families) • 300 teachers • 3 specialist schools • 50 primary schools and 5 secondary schools • 5 guidance counsellors • 10 technical services agents • 2 NGOs • 5 rehabilitation centres • Organisations of people with disabilities	• Ministère des affaires sociales et de la microfinance [Ministry of Social Affairs and Microfinance] • NGO La Colombe – Hibiscus • NGO Équilibre Bénin • Ministère des enseignements maternel et primaire [Ministry of Nursery and Primary Education] • Ministère de l'enseignement secondaire technique et de la formation professionnelle [Ministry of Technical Secondary Education and Vocational Training]	Littoral and Atlantique departments	01.2022 – 12.2025	AFD
CAPAF SEC project - Capacity building for African humanitarian mine action, weapons and ammunition risk management, and the promotion of safe environments Armed violence prevention	• Reinforcing the supply and quality of the training offered by the CPADD [Center for Humanitarian Demining Training] • Building the technical capacities of national authorities and civil society organisations to manage the quality of mine clearance activities and to manage stockpiles of weapons and munitions • Supporting research on armed violence	• State actors: national mine action centres and national commissions for the non-proliferation of light weapons • CPADD • The communities affected by the threat of mines, the explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices in the targeted areas • Team members and partners in the countries where HI operates	• Center for Humanitarian Demining Training • National commissions to combat small arms and light weapons (Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Niger and Chad) • National mine action commissions (Senegal and DRC)	Benin Guinea Bissau Niger DRC Senegal Chad	11.2022 – 02.2024	CDCS



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SIGNAL project Shared transport and storage platforms	• Improving the impact of aid • Improving the targeting and prioritisation of the least resilient populations • Guiding humanitarian actors with the implementation of projects that improve the capacity of populations to recover on their own • Raising humanitarian actors' awareness so as to limit the negative effects of interventions on the resilience of the population • Identifying zones for assessments • Gathering secondary data • Market/transport and road network assessments • Improving the impact of aid • Drafting a review report and creating Logistic Vulnerability Index maps • Data analysis and mapping • Risk analysis • Advocacy • Presenting reports and maps to humanitarian coordination structures and authorities	• Humanitarian actors • Local communities in the project's intervention areas	• Platform of international non-governmental organisations • Town halls of the intervention municipalities • Haulage unions • Association Nationale des Communes [National Association of Municipalities] • Ministère des infrastructures et du transport [Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport] • Agence nationale de la protection civile [The National Civil Protection Agency]	Alibori Malanville, Karimama, Banikoara, Gogounou, Kandi and Ségbana Borgou Parakou, Tchaourou, Kalalé, Pèrèrè, N'Dali and Bembèrèkè	03.2021 – 09.2024	BHA
Making it Work Inclusive Governance	• Identifying organisations that demonstrate best practice with regard to combating violence against women with disabilities • Rolling out a capacity-building plan for the organisations identified	• Organisations of people with disabilities • Women's organisations • Civil society organisations	Identification in progress	Cotonou Borgou Atlantique region	08.2020 – 05.2025	



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Emergency preparedness and addressing basic needs in northern Benin Inclusive Humanitarian Action	• Helping to cover the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations affected by insecurity and forced displacement • Raising local actors' awareness of inclusive humanitarian action • Supporting local actors to ensure inclusive preparedness and response in all emergency response programmes and intervention sectors	• 100 humanitarian response actors • People with disabilities affected by the crisis • Humanitarian organisations operating in the intervention area		Atakora (Matéri, Boukombé, Cobly, Tanguiéta, Kérou)	06.2023 – 05.2024	ECHO, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
Reducing the effects of explosive devices on the civilian population	• Training state actors on risk education • Developing awareness-raising messages and posters • Designing context-specific risk education tools that are sensitive to gender and diversity • Technical and operational framework of risk education in Benin • Training trainers in risk education	80 participants trained in risk education		Atakora, Alibori	09.2023 – 02.2024	UNICEF



Donors

DGD  Belgique partenaire du développement	ECHO  Financé par l'Union européenne	CDCS Avec la participation de  MINISTÈRE DE L'EUROPE ET DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES <i>Liberté Égalité Fraternité</i>
AFD  AFD AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT	BHA  USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE	UNICEF 
	Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs  LUXEMBOURG AID & DEVELOPMENT	