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Chad, Factor 16: Education

Chad: Meeting the Educational Needs

In the heart of Central Africa lies the largest land-locked country, Chad. In northern Chad, the climate is extremely dry and arid, which is unsuitable for growing fruits and vegetables. Families in the northern region of Chad often travel together and live in tents, as they search for new pastures for their livestock to graze. Pastoralism is the most common practice of Agriculture in the north, it is a branch of agriculture in which farmers “[wander] across large areas to find fresh pasture for herds of goats, sheep, cattle or camels” (Chad, 2015). Due to the constant relocation of homes, children do not have access to a school, or an educational program (Chad, 2015). Nomads also lack access to clean water, doctors, and consistent jobs. In the drier regions of the north, “dairy products and millet are the most common ingredients in dishes. A typical northern dish is *esh*, cooked millet flour served with a sauce” (Chad, 2015). As the region moves south, towards the central area of Chad, the climate becomes wet. Scattered throughout the central region of Chad there are villages built around rare oases, where, “crops such as dates, beans and fruits can be grown” (Chad, 2015) and are sold in the *sooq*, or market. Families in these villages live in houses made of mud bricks and thatch roofs, and the children are usually put to work at a young age, leaving little time for them to complete school work. In the southern most region of Chad the climate is perfect for growing crops such as, sorghum, millet, cotton, potatoes, cassava, peanuts, beans, and vegetables (Chad, 2015). These crops are produced by subsistent farmers who struggle to produce enough food for their families. Families in the south usually eat millet flour based dishes, the most popular being *boule*. *Boule* is, “rolled into a ball and served with spicy sauces of vegetables such as onions and tomatoes, beans, meat and fish” (Chad, 2015). Most farmers in Chad are small-scale and only produce enough livestock or crops to feed themselves and their families, this is because, “farming methods are traditionally simple, and irrigation and mechanical equipment are rarely used. Farmers work their fields by hand or use cattle to till the soil” (Chad – Agriculture, 2015). Farmers usually keep gardens only big enough to feed their families because they do not have the tools necessary to farm larger areas. Chadians have no knowledge of modern farming technology, and therefore are unable to produce the mass amounts of crops and livestock like we do here in the U.S. The lack of agricultural education in Chad is holding the country and individuals back from reaching their full potential. Others who do not farm, work in the cotton fields of southern Chad, or in the capital, N'Djamena. Chad's biggest agricultural factor is cotton. COTONTCHAD Société Nouvelle (COTONTCHAD SN), is the company that owns and is responsible for all cotton grown in Chad. The company was created by the government of Chad in 2011, and has created jobs for “four million persons whose income for the most part derives, either directly or indirectly, from [cotton production]” (COUNTRY STATEMENT, 2012). So, almost half of the country's population is involved in agriculture and agricultural production. Agriculture is the country's most important industry but they have no educational structure to teach Chadians about ways to improve their practices.

The education system in Chad is failing. A lack of teachers and supplies forces many schools to ask for a small payment to cover costs, but many families cannot afford to pay for their children to go to school. Even though it is required in the Chadian Constitution that “basic education is obligatory,” (Chad's Constitution of 1996 2015), many kids do not receive an education, and start working at a young age. Culturally, girls stay home and work for the family while boys go to school, even though the Chadian Constitution states that, “Chadians of both sexes have the same rights and the same duties. They are equal before the law” (Chad's Constitution of 1996, 2015). In Chad, “23 per cent of all households in rural areas are headed by women. These households are particularly vulnerable to poverty” (General information on Chad, 2015). Because of this women should be the ones receiving an education. In order

for a civilization to progress and prosper the very foundation of the civilization must advance, and with the women of Chad not receiving good educations, they cannot progress. With only 40% of the country able to read or write; the country's ability to progress slows dramatically. The population of Chad is about 11,631,460 (Africa: Chad, 2015), over half of which are children old enough to be in school, but do not have access to adequate teaching facilities and materials. Without the availability of teachers and an education, the future generations of Chad will be unable to advance their agricultural production. Without agriculture being able to progress, the economy will continue to deteriorate and Chadians will sink even farther into debt and poverty. Education is the most valuable thing we have in this world and the fact that Chad is rural and does not have adequate resources should not keep the people of Chad from receiving an education. In 1994, less than twenty percent of Chad's youth could read and write; and from 1994 to 2001, the amount of children able to read and write increased dramatically. However, from 2001 to recent years the amount of children in Chad who have been taught to read and write has bottomed out around forty five percent (Chad: Literacy rate, youth total (% of people ages 15-24), 2012). With such a low percentage of children literate on a simple topic such as reading, the futures of these children and their families look bleak.

By increasing the amount of children in school and receiving an education, the quality of life in Chad would improve. Chadians would learn how to increase crop production, find better drinking water, and prevent disease transmission. Although agriculture is very prominent in Chad, one way to improve Chad's economy and their way of life is to advance agriculturally. Chadians do not have access to, or knowledge of, modern technologies used to produce large scale crops. With almost forty percent of all land in Chad being used for agriculture, and eighty percent of the population working in agriculture, the agricultural industry in Chad should be more advanced (Africa: Chad, 2007). With a better education, students could learn how to implement better technologies and practices in their farms at home. Which would help them to produce more crops they could sell and feed more of the population with, helping to decrease the poverty rates and malnutrition in Chad. Clean drinking water is a serious issue in Chad. Most water is contaminated with fecal matter, through which most diseases are transmitted. If Chadians had access to a better education, they would be able to implement better sanitation and distribution practices, "access to safe drinking water and sanitation services in Chad is among the lowest in the world, a major factor in the country's recurrent outbreaks of diseases like polio, meningitis and cholera" (Hubbard, 2012). Educating Chadians on how to sanitize and contain drinking water would prevent the transmission of diseases such as Hepatitis A, Hepatitis E, or Typhoid fever (Chad Major infectious diseases, 2015). The transmission of deadly diseases is another major problem in Chad. The number one cause of premature death in Chad was diarrheal diseases, most of which are passed on through the consumption of contaminated water (GBD PROFILE: CHAD, 2010). Most families in Chad get their water from shallow wells or "low and polluted lakes and rivers" (Hubbard, 2012). Most of these places are polluted with trash and waste from villages, making it easy contract diseases. Many mothers and young children contract diseases such as cholera and Hepatitis A or E from drinking water contaminated with fecal matter, then become sick and further contaminate their water sources. If the children of these villages were educated about diseases and how to prevent them, or how to implement a sanitation system, their ways of life would be greatly improved. The people of Chad would not have to worry about getting a disease and could pursue other, more important things in their daily lives.

Chad's government budgets 2.3 percent of its GDP each year for education expenditures, and they are ranked 160th in the world for how much they spend on education (Africa: Chad, 2007). That is part of the reason Chad's education is so lacking, is because they do not receive adequate funds to pay for the necessary supplies to run a schooling program. Another dilemma Chad faces is that most children in Chad are needed more at home and are sent to work instead of to school. But one of the biggest problems children face is malnutrition. It is the cause of disease contraction and death; Chad is ranked 13th in the world for most underweight children (Africa: Chad, 2007). Children who are malnourished most likely

die at young ages or are unable to attend school. These factors can affect education in Chad in the future either positively or negatively. If the government were to increase the amount they spend on education, the country would start to prosper, but if they were to decrease the amounts they spend on education, the few schools that are open and able to teach students, would no longer receive funds to continue. Also, if more and more children are needed to work instead of go to school, the amount of educated individuals will drop, but if child labor laws were enforced more severe, then more kids could attend school. Malnutrition could get worse, and affect more children and cause more illness, or it could be prevented by getting adequate drinking water and food, which an education would help in the process of doing.

The best way to effectively address the lack of education in Chad would be to implement more schools, and curriculum within those schools, and strongly enforce Chadians' rights to an education. The second Millennium Development Goal is to achieve universal primary education by 2015. It's 2015 and less than half the population in Chad can read. The best way to begin to combat the education problem in Chad would be to send teachers to Chad. Most schools in Chad suffer from a lack of teachers, which causes the few schools who do have teachers to become overcrowded and the teachers unable to individually help students in their areas of need. The addition of teachers to rural villages would greatly benefit students in these areas by giving them a chance to receive an education and improve their lives. Another way to keep children in schools is to make school a safe and healthy environment to be, so the addition of sanitation facilities and clean water sources would draw in students. Mothers would be more likely to send their children to school knowing they will have access to these things instead of out in the fields to work. This is being done in other countries and is called the SOS Children's Villages. SOS is a program that takes care of children by providing them with sanitation, medical care, and educational facilities. There is only one SOS village in Chad, in N'Djamena, which is extremely helpful to these children. The village provides assistance to over 600 children and their families (SOS Children's Village N'Djamena, 2015). But there are more rural places in Chad that need educational help and assistance, not just the capital. The implementation of programs similar to this one would be easy and successful. The introduction of teachers in villages would greatly benefit these villages, much like the SOS village benefits the children of N'Djamena.

In order for this plan to be successful, the villages and teachers must work together to provide support for the students as they attend school. Mothers must be on board with and trust the teachers before they will send their children to school, especially girls. Along with community support, they will need government assistance as well. The Chadian government only spends "2.3% of its gross national income on education, compared with an average spending of 3.6% by developing Sub-Saharan African countries" (Chad, 2015). So, if more funds were used to build educational and sanitation facilities, the people of Chad would be able to send their children to school without having to worry about the health risks and more students could benefit from an education. It would also help if companies like Cotontchad and other agricultural based employers followed the child labor laws, and reported any offenses, instead of using children to work in their fields. These rural villages and farms are the key places to focus on when trying to implement educational programs because, they are where the most poverty and famine strike, and basic education will help the most. If they could get a little bit more support from the government, and teachers in rural villages, Chad would have a solid foundation for improving the illiteracy rates within the country. Which, in turn would begin to slowly improve the quality of life in Chad. Education would help prevent the transmission of disease, the number one cause of death in Chad, and improve the way Chadians live. Knowledge is the most powerful tool we have in the world, and without it we will get nowhere; Chadians have the right to an education but inadequate resources are holding them back. With the help of the government and teachers, and the educational programs, Chad will prosper and work its way out of its poverty stricken state.

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