



COUNTRY PROFILE



J. Ahouansou, USAID/Benin

Beninese citizens participating in the March 2006 elections. USAID technical assistance promotes decentralization and devolution of authorities to local communities. Community participation helps ensure that the government responds to the needs and interests of its citizens.

OVERVIEW

In a region with notable cases of failed or failing states, Benin's tradition of peaceful transitions of power and an established, healthy democracy make it rare among African countries. With the March 2006 presidential elections, Benin has had four peaceful presidential elections and three different presidents in 15 years. The current administration of Dr. Thomas Boni Yayi has pledged to fight corruption and ineffective management and to achieve double-digit economic growth.



PROGRAMS

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH

USAID assistance addresses high maternal, infant and under-five mortality rates. Although Benin is a middle-ranked country for HIV prevalence, there is potential for the epidemic to spread. Therefore, USAID assistance will focus on containing and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: THE PRESIDENT'S MALARIA INITIATIVE (PMI)

Benin will be a new PMI country in FY 2008 and support the PMI goal of reducing malaria-related morbidity by 50 percent in the 15 participating African countries. Benin will achieve this goal over three years by reaching 85 percent coverage of vulnerable groups with proven preventive and therapeutic programs. These interventions include artemisinin-based combination therapies to treat malaria; a combination of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and indoor residual spraying to prevent malaria; and intermittent preventive treatment to address the impact of malaria in pregnancy.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: EDUCATION

Education is a critical sector for sustained economic growth, improved health, and continued democratization. In Benin, adult literacy of less than 39 percent is attributed in large part to a primary education completion rate of less than 50 percent. Assistance targets basic education, and helps increase basic literacy and numeracy needed for a modern economy. A strong emphasis is placed on reducing the substantial gap between the number of girls and boys who enroll in and complete primary school as well as on improving management within the basic education system.

BENIN SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1960
Population: 8.6 million (2006)
Income per person: \$530 (yr)

Source: World Bank Development Indicators

USAID IN BENIN

www.usaid.gov/bj

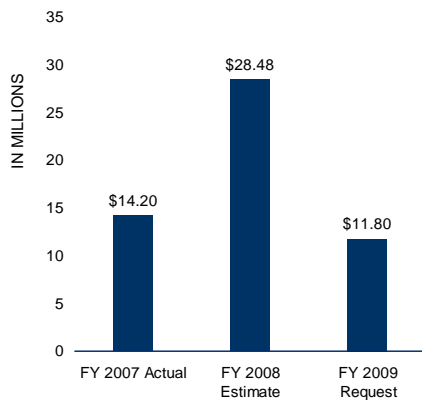


USAID | BENIN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID PROGRAM ASSISTANCE TO BENIN



INVESTING IN PEOPLE: THE AFRICA EDUCATION INITIATIVE (AEI)

The Africa Education Initiative provided funding to train nearly 30,000 primary school teachers; provided over 1,200 girls per year with scholarships and mentoring; and produced and distributed 725,000 textbooks and other learning materials to the children of Benin. Benin will use AEI funds to support girls to enroll and remain in school and reduce the gap between the number of girls and boys enrolled in school. AEI funds are used to strengthen parent and community participation in school management to increase transparency. AEI funds also support training and certification programs for primary school teachers who lack official teaching credentials and provide learning materials and training for six newly opened teacher training colleges.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: THE WOMEN'S JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE (WJEI)

Benin is one of four African countries selected for the Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative (WJEI), a three-year program to reduce violence against women and children. The USAID WJEI program will focus on increasing awareness of gender-based violence and improving the capacity of care centers and shelters to address the comprehensive needs of victims of gender-based violence.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mission Director
Rudolph Thomas
01 B.P. 2012
Cotonou
Benin
Tel: 229-21-300500

Benin Desk Officer
Rockfeler Herisse
202-712-4229
Email: rherisse@usaid.gov