

## Niger

SIM's work in Niger includes involvement in church planting and evangelism, education, medical ministry and development.

Niger is the largest country in West Africa. A landlocked country, 80 percent of the land is desert where the heat can be so intense that rain frequently vaporizes before it reaches the ground. The life expectancy at birth in Niger is 41 years. Most of the population is under 17 years old. Twelve percent of all infants die before their first birthday.

### Current SIM Ministry

Niger is predominantly Muslim. At least 4,000 years ago, it was home to a highly developed civilisation. Islam took root among the country's leaders a thousand years ago but became the religion of the rural people only in the 19th century. Despite constitutional religious freedom, pressures exist to make the nation more Islamic. The 2005 United Nations Human Development Index rates Niger as the poorest country in the world.



Among SIM Niger's partners are 120 congregations with more than 6,000 adherents. Surprising openness to the Gospel exists among some sectors of the population.



SIM's vision is expressed through a variety of ministries in partnership with the Nigerien church and other mission organisations: Bible translation and literacy, evangelistic outreach, theological education, discipleship, worship ministries, general education teacher training, and media publication, as well as various medical and community development initiatives.

Sahel Academy provides education for MKs (missionary kids) from many missions including SIM. SIMAIR provides air service for missionary travel, supplies, and medical emergencies.

### SIM's Partner Church

SIM entered Niger in 1924. The churches planted by SIM missionaries formed L'Eglise Evangélique de la République du Niger (EERN). In 1989, EERN suffered a division into three groups: EERN, UEEN (Union des Eglises Evangéliques Protestantes du Niger) and EESN (Eglise Evangélique Salama du Niger). Other independent churches include the EEI (International Evangelical Church) and the ACEN (Christian Evangelical Assembly of Niger). All three groups are recognised by the government as independent church organisations, and have a combined total of 100 congregations, 65 pastors and evangelists, and over 6,000 adherents.



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### Unreached People

Niger has 15 people groups in which less than 20% of the population has any affiliation with a Christian church.

Although Niger is predominantly Muslim, there is a surprising openness — albeit general unresponsiveness — to the Christian message. Many Muslims are willing to listen. Radio Station ELWA and the new Radio Espoir in Niger's capital, Niamey, have helped prepare the hearts of many nomadic [Tamajaq](#) and [Fulani](#). Some Fulani, feeling the effects of famine, are opening up to the message of Jesus due to the response of Christians who brought relief to them. Encouraging progress is also being made among the Tamajaq.

### History of Christianity

Christianity first touched Niger in the seventh century when Berber Christians migrated south after being driven from North Africa by emerging Islam. Isolated from other Christians, the faith gradually weakened and Christianity disappeared from Niger until the twentieth century.

Protestant missionaries were the first to arrive in Niger. In 1924, SIM began work at Zinder and now serves in 15 locations. Out of this work emerged L'Eglise Evangélique de la République du Niger (EERN).

In 1929 African Christian Missions, Inc. (now known as Evangelical Baptist Mission) opened work. The Union des Eglises Evangéliques Baptistes (UEEB), started by this mission, today comprises four churches, a missionary branch supporting three missionaries, and approximately 700 members.

Roman Catholicism spread from Benin to Niger in 1931. The Roman Catholic Church currently has over 15,000 affiliates, although approximately 95% of these are expatriates.

In the past decades, other Protestant missions have arrived. These include Baptist International Mission, Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist, Fellowship of Independent Missions (now called Fellowship International Mission), YWAM (now called JEMED — Jeunesse en Mission et Développement), Horizons (includes Frontiers), Calvary Ministries, Portes Ouvertes, Sahara Desert Mission and SIL.

The church in Niger is small and faces tremendous pressure from Islam. Nevertheless, national believers have a growing vision for church planting and evangelism. Challenges include a shortage of pastors, educated Christian women, and mature, well-trained leadership.

### Please pray for

- SIM missionaries will be an authentic and vibrant praying and worshipping community, and make discipleship an integral part of their daily lives.
- SIM missionaries will develop personal friendships and working relationships within SIM partner churches.

- theological education of all forms, whether in French at ESPriT seminary, the vernacular language Bible schools, or in decentralised TEE classes, will grow and equip key leaders for the church in Niger.
- the general education initiative will raise the vision for quality education from a Christian perspective and mobilise hundreds of Christian teachers with a passion to transform Niger via their classrooms.
- health ministries (such as Danja and Galmi hospitals), community development programmes, and food security intervention will reflect the compassion of Jesus Christ in word and deed.
- media ministries such as radio programmes, cassette recordings, printed materials, etc., will be effective in proclaiming the Gospel message to those segments of the population that are still unreached.
- the children and young people of Niger will be touched and transformed through children's clubs, high school and university drop-in centres, and the personal witness and lifestyle of those working with them.
- Niger will remain politically stable and open to the Gospel.

## Opportunities

[Student Evangelistic Center Leadership Training Director](#)

[Maintenance \(Mechanic, Electrician, Electronics\) at Galmi](#)  
[All Niger Opportunities](#)

## Projects

[Danja Fistula Centre, Niger](#)

[Hausa Literacy Project](#)  
[All Niger Projects](#)

## Stories

[Mission impossible?](#)

[Galmi Hospital — No Regrets](#)  
[All Niger Stories](#)

## Partnering



To find out more about the LIFT team who are going to Niger in November [click here](#).

The priority is electrical work, at Galmi Hospital, including wiring the new surgical ward, and general repairs in the missionary compound.

This is LIFT's eighth visit to Niger but any of the previous team members will tell you that it is a special calling to work for the Lord in such a harsh and barren country. It has been a privilege to work alongside the missionaries and local workers at this hospital.

To find out more about LIFT go to [www.liftni.org](http://www.liftni.org)