



Welcome the stranger.
Protect the refugee.

HIAS Chad's Program to Adapt to Climate Change

Chad is an arid Sahelian country with a population of around 17 million people. For several decades now, the country has faced a series of security and humanitarian crises.

In the Eastern part of the country, where HIAS has been operating since 2005, the harsh desert climate adds to the vulnerability of the population. Farming is very complicated due to limited access to water and arable soil, suitable for agricultural activities. The breeding of cattle, another common source of livelihood, is also made difficult by the challenging environment.

Additionally, Eastern Chad is hosting around 374,000 refugees from Sudan, who fled their country due to the recurrent conflict in West Darfur between Arab ethnic groups and the other tribes in that part of Sudan. This context, combined with the challenging climate conditions (drought, short but heavy rainy season), creates a crisis that humanitarian and development actors, including HIAS Chad, have been responding to for more than a decade.

Climate change has also had a serious impact on Chad, especially in the North and Eastern part of the country, where rainy seasons have become shorter and heavier. According to the results of the survey cited by the website Conversation, "a combination of high poverty, frequent conflicts, and the risk of both droughts and floods means the central African nation is bottom of the list, just below Bangladesh and some way behind Norway, the country least vulnerable to climate change...Chad is bigger than many Westerners may realize. At 1.28m km² it's larger than Nigeria and twice the size of Texas. Around 90% of its 10M people live in the southern half of the country, as most of the northern half extends well into the Sahara Desert."¹

The difficult climate limits access to natural resources such as firewood for cooking, and water points, which last approximately 9-10 months a year in this part of the country.

The Permagardening program, initiated by HIAS Chad, has adapted to this context by creating the opportunities for the most vulnerable refugees to supplement the food rations received from WFP and UNHCR, which are facilitated by HIAS Chad in 13 camps (Oure-Cassoni, Iridimi, Touloum, Amnabak, Mile, Kounoungou, Kouchaguine Moura, Gaga, Farchana, Brédjing, Tréguine, Djabal, and Goz-Amir) and Kerfi site. The Permagardening program was introduced in 2019 in Djabal and Goz-Amir with JWW funding and in the next year, it was extended to Kerfi site. With BPRM funding the program was extended to 4 camps of Farchana sub-delegation (Farchana, Brédjing, Tréguine and Gaga) in Ouaddaï province in 2021. In 2022, it was extended to Mile and Kounoungou camps located in Iriba sub-delegation. Another JWW grant (2021-2022) is helping train even more gardeners in Djabal, Goz Amir, Kerfi, Bredjing, Treguine, Farchana and Gaga camps.

It is worth mentioning that permagardening technics have proved to be a highly innovative and cost-effective strategy that builds on small-scale agricultural techniques to maximize soil fertility and water management by using available but oftentimes limited local resources. The program aims to provide the beneficiaries with trainings on how to farm throughout the year despite of the lack of rain and scarcity of

¹ <https://theconversation.com/chad-is-the-country-most-vulnerable-to-climate-change-heres-why-78423>

water during the difficult dry season in this part of the country. The beneficiaries are taught how to drain and bank water during the rainy season and technics for using wastewater from different sources so as to be able to water their gardens during the dry season. The harvests can be used to meet household food needs and provide beneficiaries with a more diverse diet. The surplus can be sold in local camp markets, providing a source of income. Above all, the project is tailored to improve the mental health of its vulnerable and most at risk beneficiaries while more able-bodied family members make a living in the field or other economic sectors. The fruit trees also help to reduce some of the risks associated with climate change. And in terms of SGBV risks and prevention, the permagardening initiative also acts as a safety mechanism for women and girls who no longer need to put themselves at risk by traveling alone outside their camps.

Over 1,200 refugees in the Bredjing, Treguine, Farchana, Gaga, Djabal, Goz Amir, Kerfi, Mile, and Kounoungou camps continue to benefit from this program and are provided with agricultural tools to allow them to work on their garden. Permagardens cost approximately \$17 per individual (\$120 per household) to: a) support a 3-day training of trainers on permagardening techniques; b) provide ongoing training and monitoring for volunteering gardeners by Lead Gardeners and HIAS staff; c) provide vegetable seeds, fruit trees seedlings and agricultural materials to gardeners; d) provide trainings and material support to form Village Savings Loan Associations (VSLA) in order to generate income from the sale of their crops. Targeted beneficiaries gather on blocks in the camps where this is taking place and receive trainings on forming Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The purpose of the groups is to enable the participants to be organized, support each other with this program and to increase savings from the sale of their crops.



Images of the theoretical and practical trainings (Djabal camp, April 2022).



Garden preparation in Farchana camp.



Images of vegetable gardens in Djabal camp (April 2022).



Fruit tree distribution and planting in Bredjing cam (April 2022).



Fruit trees in Goz Amir camp (April 2022)



VSLAs meetings in Goz Amir camp.

Due to climate change, Eastern Chad experiences heavy rains for only 2 to 3 months. The rains result in the flooding of the seasonal rivers or wadis which can make movement from one point to another very difficult. During this period HIAS Chad activities slow down especially the regular visits to the camps to aid refugees. Many cases of GBV, including rape, domestic violence, and early and forced marriage of young girls are reported. HIAS Chad has therefore developed GBV prevention and case management to reduce the effects of this form of violence. The program consists of organizing SGBV prevention (awareness-raising activities: trainings, sensitizations) and response activities (multi-sectoral assistance: psychosocial, legal, material, medical) by involving all humanitarian and government actors, with a special emphasis on the participation of community-based protection and prevention networks (community leaders, religious leaders, SGBV committees, Youth for Human Right Clubs, Joint Peace Committees for peaceful coexistence, etc.). The services provided by HIAS Chad range from mass sensitizations, targeted trainings, support in launching income generating activities, individual and group counseling offered to people with specific needs and SGBV survivors, to bread making trainings for vulnerable women and girls in all 13 camps and Kerfi site.

Both the permagarden and GBV prevention and case management programs are intended to build resilience for the vulnerable groups within the refugee population as well as for some members of the host communities as they are all living in a very difficult environment which is only aggravated by climate change.



Mass sensitizations by the SGBV committee in Goz Amir camp.



Training session in Gaga Camp against genital female mutilation (February 2022)



Door to door sensitizations in Kouchaguine-Moura camp.



Mass sensitizations by the Youth for Human Rights Club in Treguine



Bread making initiative for vulnerable women in Treguine camp