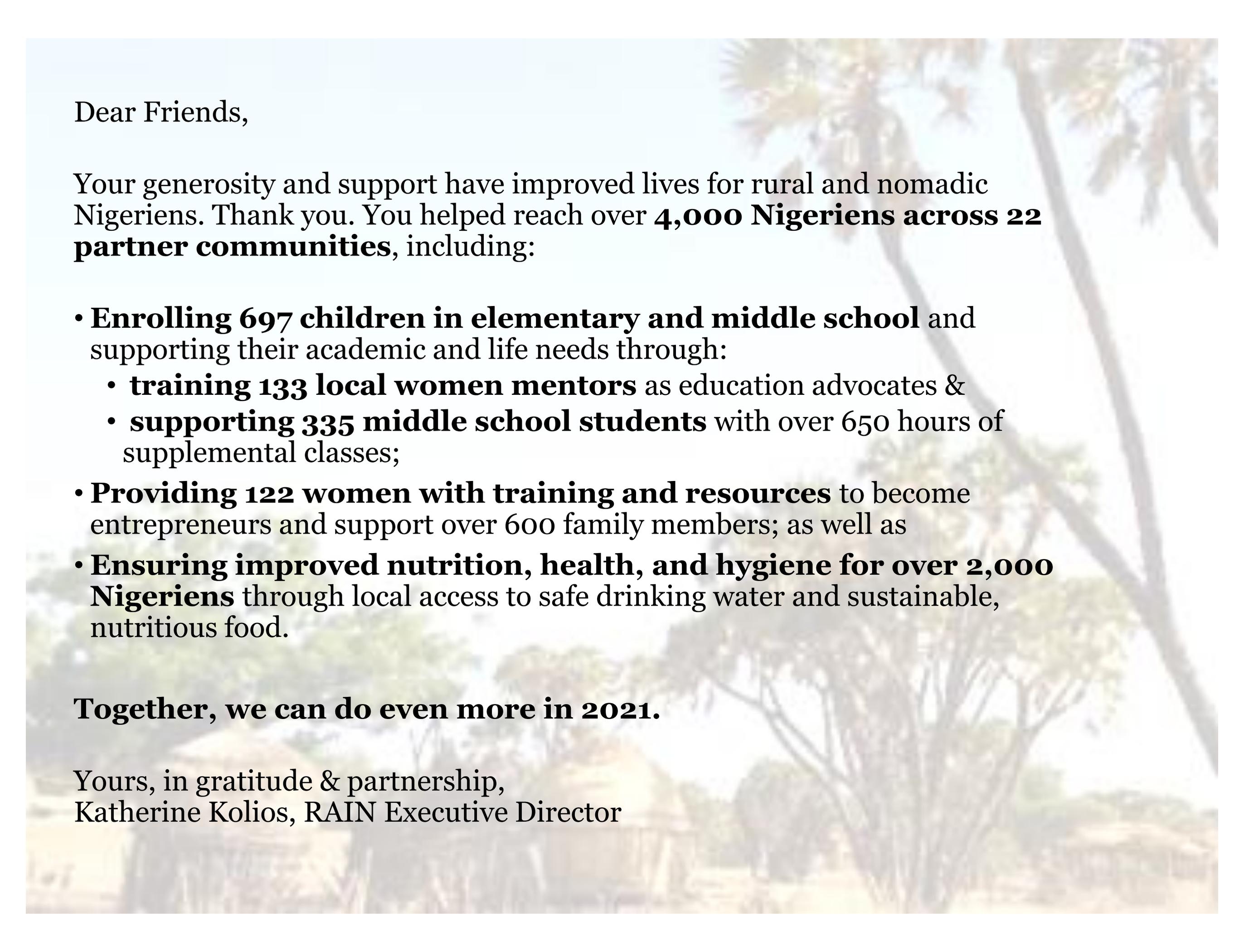




# Rain for the Sahel and Sahara 2020 Annual Report



Dear Friends,

Your generosity and support have improved lives for rural and nomadic Nigeriens. Thank you. You helped reach over **4,000 Nigeriens across 22 partner communities**, including:

- **Enrolling 697 children in elementary and middle school** and supporting their academic and life needs through:
  - **training 133 local women mentors** as education advocates &
  - **supporting 335 middle school students** with over 650 hours of supplemental classes;
- **Providing 122 women with training and resources** to become entrepreneurs and support over 600 family members; as well as
- **Ensuring improved nutrition, health, and hygiene for over 2,000 Nigeriens** through local access to safe drinking water and sustainable, nutritious food.

**Together, we can do even more in 2021.**

Yours, in gratitude & partnership,  
Katherine Kolios, RAIN Executive Director

# Challenges in 2020

## Security Crisis

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The security situation in West Africa deteriorated in the last year as jihadist groups gained territory in southwestern Niger. In March, after much consideration, RAIN's leadership determined that we could no longer safely continue our programming in the Tillaberry region. We hope to re-enter the Tillaberry region as soon as possible. In the interim, we are expanding programming in the more secure Agadez region.

## Covid-19

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Covid-19 hit Niger in late March. The Nigerien government focused on limiting the spread of the virus, which included closing schools. RAIN was committed to helping schools recommence as quickly and safely as possible thus minimizing the risk of students dropping out.

In support of this effort, RAIN distributed soap, established washing stations at local schools and delivered awareness building & training seminars on the transmission of COVID-19. Fortunately, after two months of closures, schools reopened in late May. It's too early to know the full impact on our students, but we feel confident that the continued support of our mentors will help to mitigate the repercussions. We remain committed to providing continued support as the situation evolves.

## Climate Change

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The effects of climate change are more severe in the Sahel than in many other parts of the world. Droughts alternating with flooding have become more frequent, with devastating impact. In Niger, 80% of the economy is based on agriculture and so both income and survival are closely tied to climate. Extreme weather patterns result in falling agricultural yields and a drop in food and income, just as the population is growing rapidly.

This year, Niger saw unprecedented flooding. Tens of thousands of people's homes were flooded and herds were washed away. After the devastation of the wet season, Niger is now experiencing a particularly acute season of malaria. This poses a challenge as limited health resources are focused on Covid-19.

# Access to Education

## Tanalher, Mother of a Mentored Student

**“RAIN supported my daughter when we had lost all hope. Through RAIN’s mentoring program, she learned to love her studies and she succeeded in earning her middle school diploma. This experience convinced her to **continue her studies at Tagama High School** this year.**

**I can’t find the words to describe my feelings; thanks to your initiative, our lives have changed for the better... now I am confident in the future.”**



## Maoude, Agadez Learning Center Graduate

Maoude was one of the first students at the Agadez Learning Center (ALC). After completing middle school, he continued onto high school through RAIN’s partnership with the French organization, Grain de Sable. **Just 2% of Nigeriens complete high school but Maoude proudly went on to do more.**

Last fall, **Maoude began his freshman year at the University of Agadez** where he is studying Biology and Environmental Studies. Maoude and his friend, Alabouri, also an ALC graduate, are the only Wodaabe Fulani (ethnic minority) students at the university.

- **Students are staying in school:** At our flagship partner middle school in Aouderas, enrollment increased by 37%, including a **remarkable 62% increase among girls.**
- **Students are succeeding:** On average, **mentored students had a 93% pass rate** – which was 14% higher than the pass rate among non-mentored students.
- **Students are receiving the support they need most:** RAIN helped ensure **safe, secure housing for 81 middle school students.** Not having somewhere safe to stay is the #1 reason students from elementary school don't continue on to middle school, a critical next stage of educational advancement.

Our success has shown that this program is unique in achieving greater diversification. **Inclusion of underrepresented populations**, including ethnic minority groups, girls, and students with physical disabilities provides more students with the opportunity to pursue an education.



## Access to Education - 2021 & Beyond:

In response to community interest, RAIN is expanding into **15 additional elementary schools and two new middle schools** across the Agadez region – reaching **685 students**. This will be RAIN's largest project in 2021.

- We aim to keep kids safe from Covid-19 as they return to school. At 50¢ per mask, \$832 provides masks for all students enrolled in our partner schools.
- The 545 students enrolled at our partner middle schools will receive course support in 6 subject areas. At \$16/student/year, classes cost \$8,720 annually.
- 685 students will be paired with mentors to help them stay in school and reach academic success. At \$19/student/year, it costs \$13,015 annually.
- RAIN provides room and board to 92 youth, facilitating access to middle school for students with an otherwise prohibitive commute. At \$288/student/year, room and board cost \$26,496 annually.

In total, the Access to Education Programs (including construction costs) are estimated at \$308,013.

## Construction at the Agadez Learning Center

We are hoping to **expand capacity for our residential program** at the Agadez Learning Center.

Plans for this year include construction of a new girls' dormitory (\$56,386) and an adjacent bathroom and shower facility (\$15,371). This new space will **create secure housing for 25 girls**. We also plan to reinforce the construction of the boys dorm (\$15,370) which will open up the possibility for a 2<sup>nd</sup> story expansion in the future. We would like to construct a food storage facility (\$12,778) to maintain hygiene while allowing for more economic bulk purchases of staple foods. Finally, we plan to install our own solar system to enable consistent, reliable electricity for evening study and general needs.



# Women's Entrepreneurship

Investing time and energy into something unfamiliar can be intimidating. According to Taffakhir Aghali, President of Aouderas' Savings & Loans group, *"when Azara (RAIN's Field Agent) first came to our village to tell us about Savings and Loans, we were all afraid."* Fortunately, Taffakhir and her neighbors trusted Azara and, as they learned from their mistakes and their successes, they also grew to believe in the Entrepreneurship Program.

**In year 1, the average loan was \$25, in year 2, \$35. Loans need to be larger to be transformative. In 2020 (year 3), the average loan was almost \$175.** Taffakhir and her neighbors were gaining real "on the ground" trust in the program... and in themselves.

This year, profits ranged from 11,250-82,900 cfa (\$21-154) with **an average profit of 29,742cfa (\$55), almost 30% of the loan amount.**

In practical terms, the impact of the program is that *"the women in our group emerge as significant contributors to their family expenses, including food, schooling for children, and social activities in the village"* (Taffakhir).

Beyond the numbers, the S&L Groups *"help the [women] to feel safer and like it's their money, they're in control, **they don't have to go to someone else for help**"* (Fatima).



Maka (right) used her loan to start her own store selling tea, coffee, couscous, salt, batteries, soup, sardines, and more. Maka took this ambitious step and now **Maka's is the first store in her village of Soulefet!**

She says *"I'm proud I succeeded"* and *"I'm not going to stop - I plan to grow the store so it's even bigger."*

**Maka has fully paid off the money she'd borrowed - meaning the store, and everything in it, belongs to her 100%.**



Zeinaba, a widow from Iferouane Nord, was sleeping in a room made of straw. With her loan, **Zeinaba was able to construct a permanent structure for her bedroom so she could sleep better protected from the weather.**

Zeinaba's success has encouraged her neighbor, Tahid, who lost her home in flooding. Tahid has the land to build but just needs the funds to do it. Zeinaba's story gives Tahid hope.

(Zeinaba with the new room [left] and a room of straw [right])

## Women's Entrepreneurship - 2021 & Beyond:

In 2021, **248 local women** in RAIN's partner communities will benefit from our **Women's Entrepreneurship** programs. They will learn about economics and receive support to launch their own business.

- 115 women will take part in Savings & Loans Groups. Each group of 20 women requires \$150 in seed funding – less than \$10/woman for a project that yields 30% average returns.
- 12 women will be provided with their own goat herd at a cost of \$250 per herd. Each herd includes one buck, three does, and vaccinations. A herd provides milk & cheese. When the herd is big enough, each woman is charged with helping a neighbor to start a herd of her own.

The Women's Entrepreneurship Programs are estimated to cost \$46,285 in 2021.



# Sustainable Food & Water Systems

RAIN drilled borehole wells which utilize solar powered submersible pumps. These wells ensured two communities - Nassile and Tagantassou - accessed safe, clean, drinking water. Both communities successfully established well management committees to ensure a sustainable maintenance process.



After the well installations, there was enough water for the community gardens to grow. Through irrigated gardens, our 94 partner gardeners worked to feed over 450 people in their communities. Nassile and Taganatassou's wells and gardens provided **access to clean water and nutritious food to over 1,000 adults and children from neighboring communities** .



*“In Nassile, in the beginning they didn’t know vegetables at all, they thought tomatoes were mangoes... but now they recognize that plants like eggplant can regenerate at the right season to **produce twice as much!**” – Abdoulsalam Dourkari, RAIN Agriculture Specialist (top right with blue scarf)*

Despite a difficult harvest year nationally, gardeners were able to move away from subsistence agriculture to agribusiness. Some reinvested profits to buy grains, like millet and sorghum, to store and sell, increasing **community funds in Nassile over 94%.**





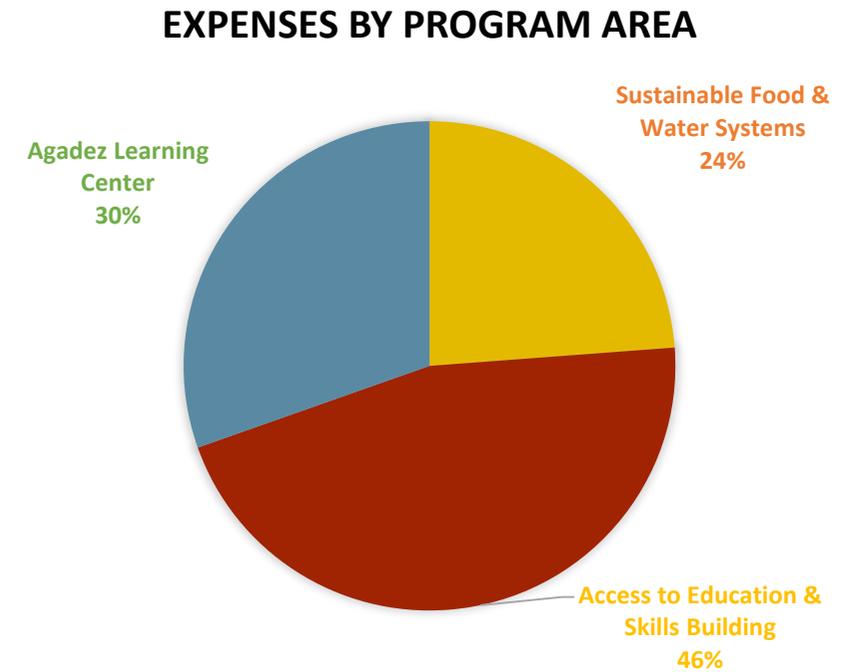
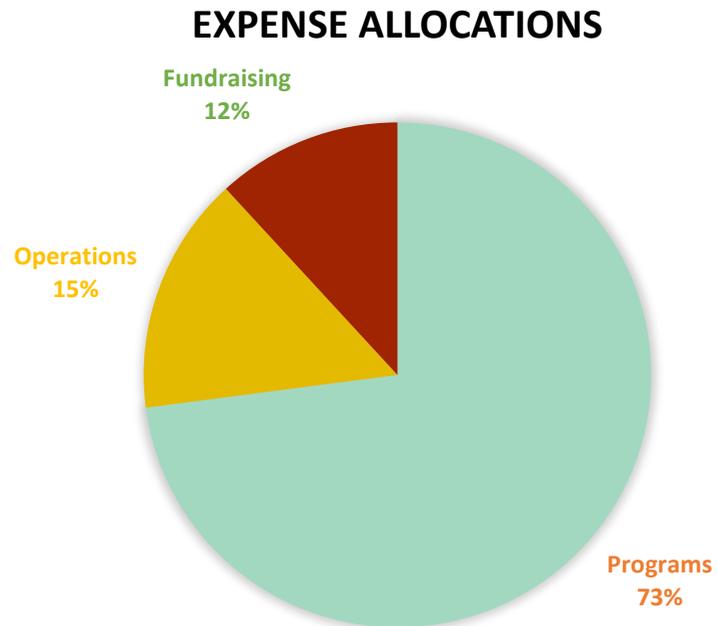
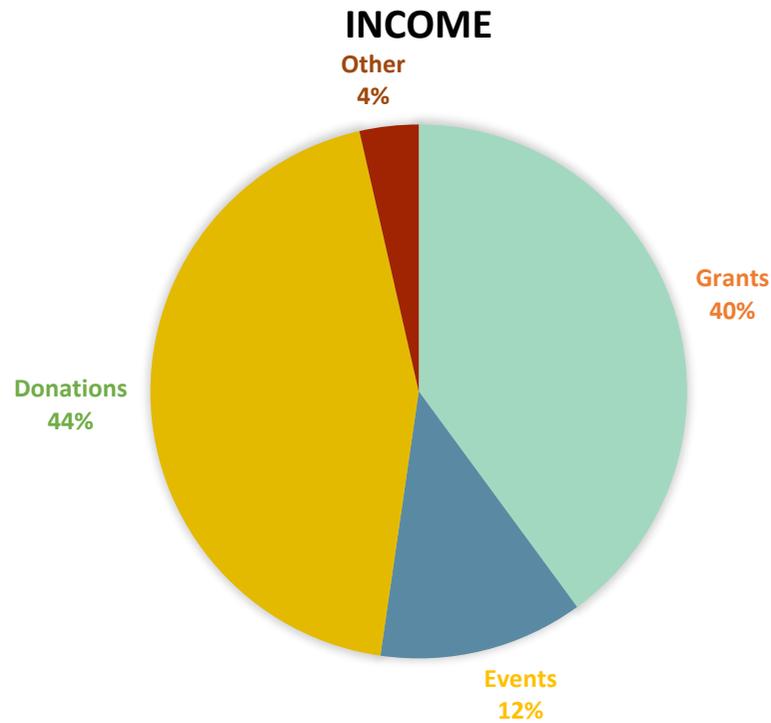
## **Sustainable Food & Water - 2021 & Beyond:**

**In 2021, RAIN will provide two additional communities – Betarmatas and Torguit – with new wells.** Thousands of rural Nigeriens will gain access to safe water allowing community members to follow basic public health protocols.

The wells will also benefit community gardens through irrigation and efficient water usage. This provides a sustainable food source through nearly year-round harvests. 76 Nigeriens will be trained in sustainable agricultural practices and agribusiness. Committees will oversee the new wells and community gardens. These wells and gardens will also provide access to safe water and nutritious, diverse food to Nigeriens in neighboring communities.

In total – RAIN's 2021 Sustainable Food & Water Systems Programs are estimated to cost \$162,993 including well construction (land survey, drilling, water tower, solar powered submersible pump) and garden infrastructure (irrigation lines, fencing, etc) for the two partner communities.

# FY20 Financial Overview



	Expense	%
Sustainable Food & Water Systems	\$61,031	17%
Agadez Learning Center	\$117,352	33%
Access to Education & Skills Building	\$77,993	22%
Operations	\$39,723	11%
Fundraising	\$64,356	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$360,455</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: FY20 was an unusual year. Several large scale projects were put on hold due to COVID-19. Had those projects been carried out, a maximum of 20% of the budget would have gone to operations and fundraising.



**Thank You for Your Support!**

**If you're interested in becoming more involved, please  
call us at 603-371-0676 or email Katherine at  
Katherine@rain4sahara.org**

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