Impact Evaluation of the Niger Participatory & Responsive Governance Project: Baseline Report [1]

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Executive Summary

Across most development indicators, Niger ranks close to the bottom of global rankings. Over the past three years, it has been second to last on the United Nation's Human Development Index—just above Central African Republic. At root of the country's perennial development crisis are unfavorable structural conditions. It is landlocked, arid, susceptible to erratic weather patterns, and heavily reliant on a single export—uranium—making it vulnerable to commodity price shocks. These structural problems contribute to and are compounded by significant governance challenges. One of the biggest is the absence of an effective state—one that can provide citizens with basic public services that are necessary for inclusive development. In its place, the state is dominated by a small group of business, military and administrative elites who compete over the private distribution of scarce public resources. A second major challenge is the militarization, or securitization, of the state, in which military and security institutions represent the face of the government for many Nigerien citizens and divert resources from public administration. These governance challenges have given rise to a 'crise de confiance' or 'crisis of confidence' between citizens and the state. Low-levels of state legitimacy threaten to continue to erode citizen support for democracy and risk strengthening the hand of the military or extremist organizations.

To help mitigate these governance challenges in Niger and bolster stability in one of the world's most fragile states, USAID is investing in the Participatory and Responsive Governance (PRG) Project. The overarching goal of the PRG project is to strengthen the collective responsiveness of the Nigerien government to its citizens' priority public needs. The project aims to strengthen collective responsiveness through three channels: 1) political party campaigns; 2) collective engagement and coordination of multiple stakeholders (government, non-government, donors) to undertake reforms that address citizen priorities; and 3) capacity-building of local think-tanks, media, NGOs, and civil society to promote participatory governance.

To better understand how the PRG may affect governance in Niger, a team of researchers from AidData at the College of William and Mary have teamed up with the implementing partner, Counterpart International (CPI), to undertake a rigorous impact evaluation of the program. The impact evaluation focuses on the PRG's multi-stakeholder dialogues that will bring together community leaders, municipal and regional councilors, private sector actors, professionals and citizens to confer upon, design and initiate Regional Development Plans (PDRs) and Communal Development Plans (PCDs). The expectation is the multi-stakeholder dialogues will catalyze development and government responsiveness both in terms of process and outcomes: the dialogues are intended to serve as focal points, or coordination mechanisms, for a diverse set of actors to come together to bring multiple perspectives to bear on the challenge of community development as well as marshaling the resources and forging the strategic partnerships necessary to ensure the development plan is implemented. Multi-stakeholder dialogues have strong potential to impact relations between Nigerien leaders and citizens because of the historical context in which they will take place. Dialogue is a major pillar of Nigerien democracy dating back to the transition to multiparty competition in 1992, which occurred at a National Conference involving stakeholders from diverse sectors of society (politics, labor, education, religion, etc.).

The evaluation employs a randomized design to test this theory of change, in which the 24 communes where targeted activities be held were randomly selected from a broader pool of 48 eligible communes. We refer to the 24 communes randomly selected for these activities as the "treatment" group, and the remaining 24 communes as the "control" group. This report provides an overview of the design of the impact evaluation as well as findings from a baseline household and community leader survey carried out in January-March 2017. The household survey entailed a sample of 1,258 households using stratified random sampling at the village-level within communes. The leader survey target was 144 surveys across the 48 communes (3 interviews per commune) but only 118 surveys were completed due to availability and logistical challenges. Follow-up surveys are planned for late 2018, with outcome analysis to follow.

The baseline surveys are valuable to gauge levels of perceived legitimacy prior to the implementation of the multi-stakeholder dialogues as well as to evaluate statistical balance between the control and treatment communes. Overall, the study communes are well-balanced, with similar demographic profiles, religious and ethnic compositions, levels of political participation, and satisfaction with Nigerien democracy across the treatment and control groups. As expected, there are a small number of characteristics that are not completely balanced across the groups due to random chance, including their ethnic diversity, political freedom, and voter turnout. We can address these imbalances by controlling for these variables in the statistical analysis when evaluating the impact of the PRG program on perceived state legitimacy and other related outcomes.

Substantively, as we describe in the report, the baseline survey highlights the governance challenges Niger faces and the importance of the PRG program. Overall, participants in the household survey report a general frustration with government—from the president to the national assembly down to local government—in terms of receptiveness to citizen demands, responsiveness, and putting public interest above personal interest. In another sign of low systemic legitimacy, despite high dissatisfaction, there is high levels of political disengagement. The majority of respondents have taken very few political actions when they have been dissatisfied with their government's performance. Equally problematically, citizens do not see the media or political parties as effective institutions in holding government accountable. This crisis of confidence in civilian institutions seems to be filled by higher levels of trust in security institutions. Respondents indicate that they are more willing to trust and respect the role of the military and police than politicians and political parties.

Despite these significant challenges and important opportunities for strengthening governance, on several dimensions citizens' revealed preferences suggest enduring support for the Nigerien political system. For example, when it comes to taxation—the sine qua non of the state-society compact—most participants believe the government has the right to collect taxes and citizens have the obligation to pay them. Similarly, most see Niger as a democracy and believe it is the best form of government.

Finally, and most relevant for the PRG program, more than 70 percent of survey respondents agree that community dialogue among local leaders and citizens is an important vehicle for strengthening government responsiveness to citizen priorities.

Whether community dialogues can actually induce the government to be more responsive and in turn improve the coverage and quality of priority public goods will be the primary focus of this impact evaluation.

Introduction

This baseline evaluation provides a description of USAID's Participatory and Responsive Governance program being conducted in Niger. The impact evaluation is being implemented by Ariel BenYishay (College of William and Mary), Lisa Mueller (Macalester College), and Phillip Roessler (College of Wiliam and Mary). The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) was contracted by USAID to conduct this baseline data collection in partnership with AidData. NORC in turn contracted the baseline fieldwork to Kantar Public. Kantar was responsible for conducting the in-country surveys and managing the field team. The survey work began on January 24th and finished on February 12th, 2017. The final datasets were delivered to the research team on March 28th, 2017.

Impact Evaluation Overview

This document provides an overview of AidData's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) component of USAID's Participatory and Responsive Governance (PRG) program in Niger. The overarching goal of the PRG project is to strengthen the collective responsiveness of the Nigerien government and its citizens to priority public needs in order to help mitigate what Nigeriens call a *'crise de confiance'* or 'crisis of confidence' between citizens and the state and ultimately bolster stability and governance in one of the world's most fragile states. The project aims to strengthen collective responsiveness through three channels: 1) political party campaigns; 2) collective engagement and coordination of multiple stakeholders (government, non-government, donors) to undertake reforms that address citizen priorities; and 3) capacity-building of local think-tanks, media, NGOs, and civil society to promote participatory governance.

This impact evaluation will focus on evaluating USAID's Participatory, Responsive, Governance - Principal Activity Program (PRG-PA). The PRG is designed to be a principal contributor to the achievement of Development Objective 2 under the Niger Operational Framework: *Citizen Confidence in the state increased among target populations.*

Post-electoral activities focused on targeted citizen priorities under Phase 1 will provide initial contributions to results under IR 2.2: *Equitable access to public sector services increased in target areas* while continuing to contribute to the participatory processes under IR 2.2, including civic engagement in governance.

Our impact evaluation will focus on the post-electoral activities and IR 2.2. Our objectives for the impact evaluation follow those stipulated in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan provided in the PRG Program Description (PD) (p. 28), which states in part that:

> "Given the innovative nature of this proposed project, the project design team recognizes the value of also developing an external impact evaluation to test the fundamental hypotheses and theory of change embedded in the project design, and to determine whether changes in outcome measures are directly attributable to the project. This aligns with the USAID Evaluation Policy, which requires new and innovative or pilot projects to be subject to impact evaluation and thus the counterfactual analysis needed to determine causality. We also recognize the particular importance of being able to show attributable results in USAID governance programming, and see evaluation of this project as an opportunity to try to prove intervention efficacy. Lastly, an impact evaluation of aspects of the PRG principal activity in its Phase 1 would allow for findings to be applied to improved project design and implementation in the anticipated Phase 2 scale-up. In this way, the impact evaluation will also play an important formative assessment role for the project."

Treatment: PRG-PA Implementation

USAID selected Counterpart International (CPI) to implement the five-year PRG-PA. CPI's program will seek to increase the capacity of stakeholders – including Civil Social Organizations (CSOs), traditional and religious leaders, government and political parties, the media, and private sectors.

CPI's plan includes a multi-stage program with three different sets of activities. The overall goal is to strengthen electoral accountability and the responsiveness of the Niger government to priority public needs. This evaluation will focus on the second of these activities, which involve conducting government systems mapping to inform collective action initiatives (activity 2.1); building a set of master dialogue facilitators (activity 2.2); brokering commitments around targeted citizen priorities through local partner dialogues (activity 2.3); supporting media production of reliable information that supports collective action (activity 2.4); initiate three national-level working groups with government, business, academic, and civil society representatives focused on health, education, and security (activity 2.6); and train government and non-government leaders on the Service Improvement Action Planning (SIAP) tool (activity 2.9).[2]

CPI plans to accomplish activity 2.1 by identifying individuals who can influence government priorities and champion and create advocacy campaigns. These individuals will be pulled together in a systems map that will improve the understanding of the different networks of influence within the government. The maps will be created based on topic, type of reform, key individuals and institutions, policy decision

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[2] A small number of other sub activities were not evaluable because their rollout would take place across much of the sampled communes, making treatment-control comparisons infeasible.

points, and changes in the system over time. This mapping exercise seeks to increase the overall understanding of how to and who to negotiate with in government systems, especially those who might seem like unlikely allies. They will be used as points of reference as CPI and partners develop their collection action plans.

Under activity 2.1, CPI will also be creating maps of media organizations that specify in communications on security-related topics. Along with the mapping exercise, CPI will also run a perception survey in Agadez, Diffa, Niamey, and Zinder to understand citizen views of the security sector in Niger. The survey results will highlight priorities for the planned activities, specifically focusing on improving communication between communities and government actors on security issues.

As part of Activity 2.2, CPI will train up to six sub-grantees from civil society groups and the private sector to run multi-stakeholder dialogs that will cover topics that emerge from local election debates and conversations. This will include topics such as service delivery problems and gaps in education, health, and security. Two individuals (one man and one woman) from each selected sub-grantee will receive training on "asset-based community mobilization; cross-cultural communication; socially inclusive, participatory facilitation methods and dialogues for social, political, and policy change."[3] These "Master Dialogue Facilitators" will then, over time, be expected to train additional facilitators from their organization.

The trained Master Dialogue Facilitators will then lead local partner dialogues as part of activity 2.3. These dialogues are intended to create a forum where different community members will be able to build partnerships, utilize resources, and identify common goals. The dialogues will include municipal leaders and regional councilors, community groups, private sector actors (such as business based in regions), *fadas,* Cadres de Concertation (CDC), women's cooperatives, and other local groups. Activity 2.3 will also include 10 town hall meetings in specific regions. These town hall meetings will include municipal leaders, the media, CSOs and other community groups, religious and traditional leaders, and private sector representatives. These meetings will address health, education, and other issues related to security in order to identify issues that collective action initiatives can target.

CPI also intends to train media partners to cover these events as part of activity 2.4. This will include holding workshops for media actors to train them on effective interviewing techniques and how to discuss important priority issues with stakeholders and citizens. These media actors, which will include radio stations, televisions, and print partners (local and national magazines), will then cover the dialogues to insure public transparency and encourage action around dialogue outcomes.

Activity 2.6 will work on creating three national–level working groups that will be made up of government, business, academic, and civil society members. These groups will focus on discussing health, education, and security issues. The members will meet to review current education and health service delivery issues and communication problems in the security sector. These groups will produce

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[3] Counterpart International, "Participatory Responsive Governance – Principal Activity (PRG-PA) Annual Work Plan", June 8th, 2016.

recommended policy and legislation as well as the actors that should be involved in implementing those measures.

The last activity is activity 2.9, which will introduce monitoring tools for citizens and government officials. One of these tools is the Service Improvement Action Planning (SIAP) tool. CPI will train citizens and government officials to use the SIAP tool to record the priorities that come from the dialogues. They will then seek to use this tool to achieve the dialogue identified service improvements identified by monitoring progress on a regular schedule and reporting results and outcomes. Monitoring tools will also include citizen surveys results and other quantitative measurements.

In addition to these activities, CPI added a security-specific modification in late September 2016. As of early October, the Nigerien government delayed elections by 2.5 years. Given this delay, CPI has been instructed to not run their election related activities. For more information on CPIs work, see CPI's "PRG-PA – Y1 Annual Workplan (Feb 2016 – Feb 2017)".

Theory of Change

One of the core objectives of the PRG-PA is to improve collective (government and citizen) responsiveness to priority public needs by increasing the capacity of Nigeriens to undertake and sustain collective action that holds their representatives accountable. Few institutions are purported to be as critical for responsive government as political accountability, in which citizens possess the capabilities and capacity to hold the government answerable for its policies.[4] Extensive research suggests a strong, positive association between broad-based political accountability and the effective provision of public services;[5] even limited accountability in authoritarian regimes is found to improve human development.[6]

There are two key limitations of existing literature on this subject, however. First, most rely on observational data (cross-national datasets that analyze associations between indicators of accountability and provision of public services) to draw inferences about the effect of political institutions on government responsiveness. The problem with such an approach is isolating precisely how much institutions of accountability matter for the provision of public services. It could be that this association arises due to reverse causality: the provision of public services (which themselves could be supplied for exogenous reasons—for example the threat of external war) leads to political accountability.[7] Or it could be the case that the association between accountability and public services is

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[4] Besley, Timothy. 2006. *Principled Agents?: The Political Economy of Good government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[5] Bueno de Mesquita, B., et al. 2003. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. Adsera, A., et al. (2003). "Are you Being Served? Political Accountability and Quality of Government." *Journal of Law, Economics, and organization* 19(2): 445-490.

[6] Miller, M. K. 2015. "Electoral Authoritarianism and Human Development." *Comparative Political Studies* 48 (12).

[7] Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution*. New York Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

spurious; both are a function of a third unobserved variable. Thus, accountability does not have as powerful an effect on responsive government as we would expect.

A second limitation is existing cross-national studies tend to focus primarily on the role of structural or historical factors in accounting for the emergence of the accountability-responsiveness nexus—such as the structure of the economy (the degree to which it is dependent on natural resources), forms of colonialism, history of state centralization or societal fractionalization, a culture of meritocracy, or geography. While it is critical to understand the long-run processes underpinning institutional variation, these studies are less valuable for understanding what policy interventions in the short-term are effective at bringing about more accountable and responsive governments.

This impact evaluation aims to help fill this gap in the literature. It will rigorously test the effect of a participatory and governance program on improving political accountability and government responsiveness to citizen priorities. One of the central components of the program is a series of multi-stakeholder dialogues that bring together community leaders, municipal and regional councilors, private sector actors, professionals and citizens to confer upon, design and initiate Regional Development Plans (PDRs) and Communal Development Plans (PCDs). The expectation is the multi-stakeholder dialogues will catalyze development and government responsiveness both in terms of process and outcomes: the dialogues are intended to serve as focal points, or coordination mechanisms, for a diverse set of actors to come together to bring multiple perspectives to bear on the challenge of community development as well as marshaling the resources and forging the strategic partnerships necessary to ensure the development plan is implemented.

Beyond its effects on coordination and resource mobilization, multi-stakeholder dialogues are theorized to have important governance benefits, which are seen as critical for sustainable development.[8] In eliciting the participation and contributions of a diverse set of actors the dialogues enable an inclusive decision-making process, which is seen as a key source of legitimacy.[9] Moreover, the formalization of collective decision-making procedures and a plan of action facilitates common knowledge amongst participants and the constituencies they represent, which not only improves transparency but also accountability as the stakeholders are seen to commit to implement the plan. Though there are no sanctioning mechanisms built into the PRG, there is a strong media component to the program that will publicize the dialogues and the commitments coming out of them, which are intended to increase awareness and raise the costs for the stakeholders if they fail to follow through.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues have strong potential to impact relations between Nigerien leaders and citizens because of the historical context in which they will take place. Dialogue is a major pillar of Nigerien democracy dating back to the transition to multiparty competition in 1992, which occurred at a National Conference involving stakeholders from diverse sectors of society (politics, labor, education,

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[8] Bäckstrand, Karin. "Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Rethinking Legitimacy, Accountability and Effectiveness." *European Environment* 16.5 (2006): 290-306. Hemmati, Minu. 2002. *Multi-stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability: Beyond Deadlock and Conflict*. New York: Routledge.

[9] Hemmati, Minu. 2002. *Multi-stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability: Beyond Deadlock and Conflict*. New York: Routledge.

religion, etc.). Subsequently, the National Commission for Social Dialogue (CNDS) and the National Council for Political Dialogue (CNDP) were founded in 2000 and 2003 with the express purpose of facilitating debate and compromise between political parties and civil society organizations of different partisan leanings. However, these institutions have not fulfilled their mission: As of 2017, the space for open dialogue is shrinking amid government crackdowns on the press and civil society; political parties are increasingly polarized into pro-government and opposition camps. Given this historical background and contemporary situation, multi-stakeholder dialogues in the PRG-PA framework have two main advantages as experimental treatments: First, they are familiar and salient institutions in Nigerien society, which enhances external validity (i.e. the applicability of findings outside the experiment). Second, they address several flaws in the CNDS and CNDP. Namely, they are local instead of top-down and they include an innovative media component, reducing concerns that the treatments will merely replicate mistakes of the past.

Taken together, the use of multi-stakeholder dialogues is expected to improve local government responsiveness through multiple channels—improving the capabilities of community elites to craft and implement a development plan that addresses citizen public priorities while ensuring this plan of action is seen as legitimate and that it actually gets implemented.

Most existing social science research on the efficacy of multi-stakeholder dialogues tends to focus on international governance and rely primarily on qualitative evidence.[10] As far we can tell, there have been no experimental studies on the effect of multi-stakeholder dialogues on local development. Thus this impact evaluation has the potential to make a broader contribution to development strategies in low-income countries.

A second innovation of the impact evaluation is it will also evaluate the efficacy of follow-on informational interventions to sustain public discussion and facilitate collective action. There is an emerging literature on the effectiveness of informational campaigns on government performance and the quality of services. While some of these interventions have been found to be quite effective and cost-efficient—for example, the provision of information on the quality of healthcare in one's community relative to other communities and the national average led to significant improvements in health service provision in Uganda[11]—others have found that informational interventions do not always translate into increased civic and political engagement, improved accountability, and better services.[12]

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[10] See for example, Bäckstrand, Karin. "Democratizing Global Environmental Governance? Stakeholder Democracy after the World Summit on Sustainable Development." *European Journal of International Relations* 12.4 (2006): 467-498.

[11] Björrkman, Martina, and Jakob Svensson. 2009. Power to the People: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment on Community-Based Monitoring in Uganda. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124(2): 735-69.

[12] Olken, B. A. 2007. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *Journal of Political Economy* 115 (2). Banerjee, Abhijit V., et al. "Pitfalls of Participatory Programs: Evidence from a randomized evaluation in education in India." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* (2010): 1-30. Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy Weinstein. "Policing politicians: citizen empowerment and political accountability in Uganda preliminary analysis." *Columbia University. Unpublished manuscript* (2012). Lieberman, Evan S., Daniel N. Posner, and Lily L. Tsai. "Does Information Lead to More Active Citizenship? Evidence from an Education Intervention in Rural Kenya." *World Development* 60 (2014): 69-83.

In this study, we will analyze the additive effect of messaging citizens to remind them of the commitment elites in their communities made in the multi-stakeholder dialogues and to provide a status report on the degree to which the stakeholders are making good on their promise to initiate and implement a development plan. To do so, the PIs may plan to use SMS to message a randomly selected subset of citizens the progress (or lack thereof) that the local government has made in addressing citizen public priorities and to emphasize the citizens' responsibility to continue to monitor progress to ensure its future implementation. We propose that this messaging should not only be specialized—directed at individual citizens to increase their personal sense of responsibility[13]—but also provides concrete examples as to how their fellow citizens are acting on the information they have received to improve government performance.

Summary of Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

Impact Evaluation Design and Implementation

As noted, the impact evaluation (IE) will focus on the second project outcome of the PRG: improved collective responsiveness through increased multi-stakeholder contributions to public goods provision. In particular, the IE will assess the degree to which increased multi-stakeholder coordination and collective action leads to change in perceived government legitimacy and the coverage and quality of public goods that meet citizen priority needs. We refer to the subset of PRG-PA activities covered by our evaluation as public goods reform (PG reform).

The other project outcomes of the PRG—responsiveness of political parties and local capacity-building to promote participatory governance—will not be *directly* evaluated in this impact evaluation, though the interactive effects of party responsiveness and capacity-building with PG reform implementation may be assessed.

The IE employs a randomized design that entailed randomly selecting the 24 communes out of 48 to receive the PG reform program. This randomized design will allow us to causally estimate the effect of the project intervention using panel surveys and changes in objective measures of public goods provision and access.

The overall data collection plan for the evaluation is as follows:
1. Baseline survey at household- and cluster-level on socio-economic and socio-cultural indicators; political attitudes and engagement; strength of informal and formal institutions; multi stakeholder coordination and contributions; public goods provision and access; citizen preferences for public goods. This includes surveys with randomly selected households in

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[13] Grossman, G., et al. (2015). Can SMS-Mobilization Increase Citizen Reporting of Public Service Deficiencies to Politicians?, Working Paper.

treatment and control communes as well as interviews with commune level officials and government officials.

2. Midpoint checks for compliance (e.g., were the multi-stakeholder dialogues held in the appropriate locations) and change across key indicators for admin and community-level data.
3. Endline survey and qualitative analysis at commune/government level, household, and cluster-level indicators and administratively measured behavioral data.

Below, we discuss the randomization design, sampling design and power, and data collection efforts.

We include the complete Household Survey Questionnaire and Commune-level Questionnaire administered at baseline in the annex folder.

Randomization Design

The goal of the randomized design of the evaluation is to ensure that the treatment and comparison groups of communes are otherwise similar in the characteristics targeted by the PRG program. In non-randomized settings, differences between treated areas and comparison groups may bias estimates of the program's effects. The randomization therefore aims to form groupings of communes whose average characteristics are as similar as possible prior to program implementation.

AidData completed the randomization of communes in September 2016. The sample frame for the randomization included only communes that were selected by CPI based on criteria that reflected the security conditions and existing organizational connections by CPI's sub-awardees. CPI identified 48 communes that fit these criteria. Importantly, CPI has project funding and capacity to administer the PG reform activities in 24 of these 48 eligible communes. Given this constraint, in order to distribute the activities' benefits fairly among these 48 communes and to better evaluate their impacts, AidData randomly selected the 24 "treatment" communes.

Out of the communes provided by CPI, AidData stratified the randomization based on three factors: region, urban/rural status, and whether or not they were targeted for CPI's initial PRG-PA Activity 1 (to make elections more responsive to priority public needs). This created 10 sets of communes, each of which shared identical values for these factors (i.e. belonged to the same region, were similarly urban/rural, and slated for Activity 1/not). The numbers of communes within each set varied: some sets contained as few as three communes, while others contained as many as nine. The aim was to select approximately half of the communes within each set to be in the treatment group (in cases where the number of communes within each set was odd, the number of communes to be selected for treatment was randomly rounded up/down).[14] This procedure ensured that equal number of Activity I communes were randomly selected into the PG reform treatment and control groups, and that approximately half of each region's urban communes and approximately half of each region's rural communes.

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[14] It is important to note that there need not be exactly equal numbers of communes in the treatment group and control groups within each set. What is important is that the assignment of a commune to the group is random.

The final randomized assignment was conducted using the STATA statistical software on September 16, 2016. Figure 2 below maps the treatment and control commune assignments.

Figure 1: Treatment and Control Assignments
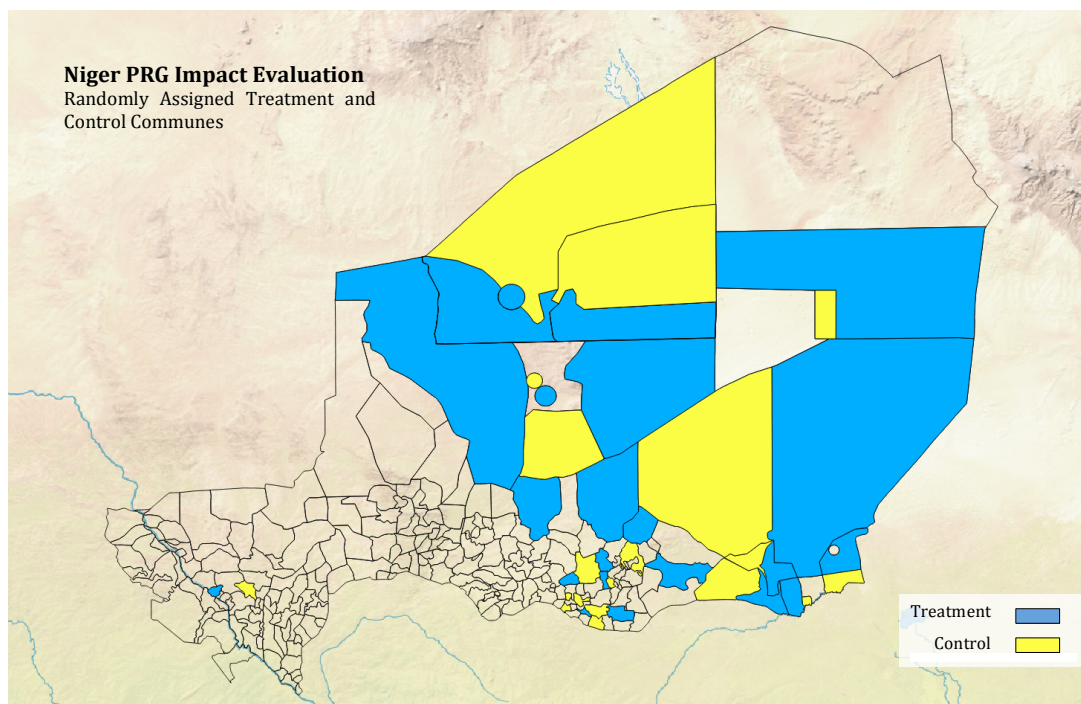
A key aspect of the randomized design is that only the communes assigned to the treatment group will be the targets for the PG reform program for the duration of the evaluation, currently expected to last approximately two years. CPI's ongoing partnership in the evaluation has been and will continue to be crucial for the evaluation's success.

Sampling Design and Power

Household survey sample design

The household survey target sample consisted of 1,200 households selected using stratified random sampling. Within each of the 48 communes in our randomization frame, we randomly sampled 3 enumeration areas (Villages), within which either 8 or 9 households were to be sampled.

This sample size was targeted to allow us to detect treatment effects of 0.1 standard deviations or greater in our primary outcomes. These are quite precise minimum detectable effects. We will use a number of techniques to maximize precision available from our sample. First, we will use randomization inference approaches to determine exact p-values under the sharp null hypothesis of no treatment

effects for any unit (as specified Gerber and Green 2015). Second, we will use repeated measures across rounds. Third, we will aggregate multiple measures of common concepts into standardized indices, thereby guarding against multiple comparisons while maximizing the precision with which each concept is measured (Kling, Liebman and Katz 2007).

We used simulations to confirm that our sample design will allow us to detect treatment effects of 0.1 standard deviations with 95.4% confidence (and 0.2 deviations with >99% confidence). We obtained survey responses from the Afrobarometer Round 6 carried out in Niger in 2015 and estimated the intra-cluster correlation and means of the seven outcomes most closely related to our evaluation (limiting the sample to those regions covered by the project). We then simulated 10,000 samples that match these correlations and means. For each of these samples, we next simulated 10,000 random assignments under the sharp null hypothesis of no treatment effects and measure how many of these yield treatment effects of each size. The results of this simulation (shown in the figure below) indicate that only 4.6% of placebo assignments generate treatment effects as large as 0.1 standard deviations. We thus conclude that our design is well powered to detect even moderately sized treatment effects.

The household survey collected information on basic household indicators such as occupation, education level, poverty, religion, and connectivity (such as access to phones, internet, radio, and other news sources). Survey questions also measured household's political views by including questions about political views and parties, the security situation in their community, elections, government officials, and trust and relationships to local and national leaders. In order to measure local views on priority needs, the survey measured local individual's thoughts on how effective local and national governance has been, how accessible civil services are, important local and national issues, and how local and national government priorities match local household's needs [see index for full survey].

Figure 2: Simulation Results
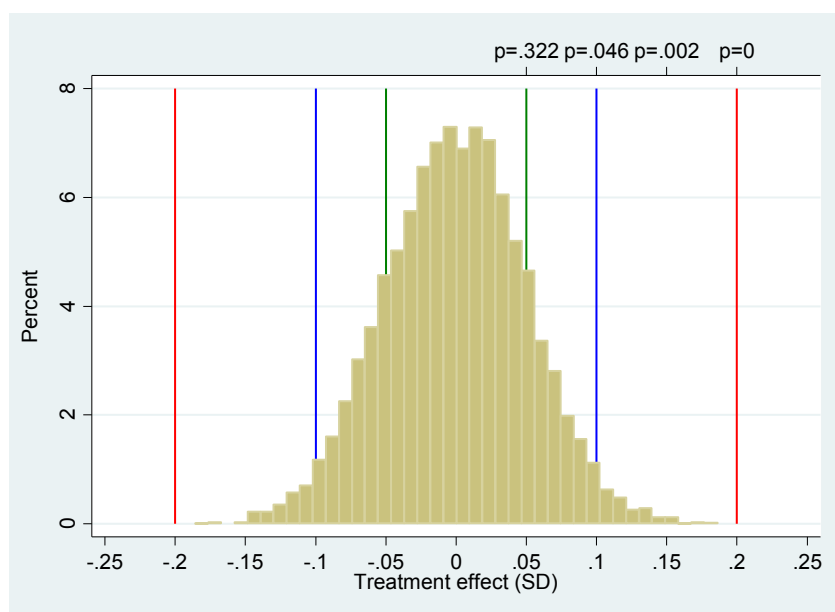
Commune Level Official Sample Design

CPI outlined in their work plan the goal of building accountability and government capacity. Dialogues are designed to advance that goal by inviting commune-level officials to share their perspectives on health, education, and security in the context of the postponed 2017 local elections. To measure the impact of these interventions, enumerators interviewed commune-level officials at baseline and will conduct follow up interviews at endline on their knowledge in the following areas: leadership and strategic management, information about the citizens and programs of the commune, political opinions, level of communication with citizens, and external relations and communications.

The leader survey target was 144 surveys across the 48 communes (3 interviews per commune) but only 118 surveys were completed due to availability and logistical challenges. The field team sought to interview a commune mayor, an administrator in the health or education field, and a traditional or religious leader. The interview targeted to towards the commune mayor could also be directed towards the highest-level official in the commune that is available to complete the survey. The mayor could bring in officials that work for him/her to complete more of the specific statistical questions. These additional people were listed on the survey and it should be clear whether or not these additional people were in the survey for the entire time or if they were just part of the interview for the necessary fact based information.

The survey targeted at the commune health or education administrator included individuals outside the commune mayor office at the school or health center. This was not necessarily a doctor or a teacher but the individual who runs the health center or schools, etc. The final survey reserved for a traditional or religious leader survey was targeted at village elders, village leaders, Imams, or other religious leaders.

Data Collection

Household and Leader Survey Fieldwork Details

The survey work was contracted out to NORC, who in turn contracted Kantar Public to conduct the fieldwork. Enumerator training happened in Niamey from 16th to 20th of January 2017 with a team of 45 enumerators, 12 supervisors and 15 Quality Control staff. Enumerators were recruited and hired by Kantar partners in Niger and most recruited enumerators had an average experience of 2 years in survey administration. The local team hired enumerators from the various project regions and therefore they had experience with the area, local politics, and were very fluent in the local dialects needed for the survey. Each survey team was comprised of four enumerators and one team supervisor.

The target for each commune was 25 household interviews in each of the 48 communes across 6 regions in Niger. The targeted sample was 1,200 interviews, and Kantar conducted additional interviews in order to account for potential replacement of any poor quality surveys. In total, Kantar achieved 1,314

interviews. Back checks included re-visiting the respondent to confirm the enumerator visited and re-ask a series of questions to confirm the interview took place correctly. The survey firm also conducted spot checks on surveys, telephone check, audio checks, GPS checks, and forensic checks. After completing the back check process, the survey firm discarded 56 surveys delivering a final dataset of 1,258 surveys.

The leader survey target was 144 surveys across the 48 communes (3 interviews per commune). However, due to a variety of reasons including the non-availability of commune mayors and inconsistent work by the enumerators, only 118 surveys were completed. The baseline leader survey sought to survey three leaders from each commune. The enumerators were instructed to survey the commune mayor, a health or education administrator, and a religious leader. The survey selection protocol and the leader survey are located in the annex. Given the aforementioned security concerns, some communes were not surveyed leaving the total number of surveys at 118. 110 men and 8 women were interviewed between the ages of 25 and 95 with the mean age of 49. The survey data proved difficult to collect due to the lack of knowledge of commune leaders on commune level statistics such as health and education indicators.

The survey firm divided their enumerators between the regions of Zinder, Agadez, Niamey, and Diffa. The teams were assigned three randomly selected villages from each commune in those regions. The assigned villages were pre-selected by AidData via a random lottery from village lists obtained from the National Statistics Office. Three replacement villages were also pre-selected in case there were any problems surveying the originally chosen village. These three additional villages were comparable in household size to the original village to ensure overall survey balance.

Selection and Replacement Protocols for Households

To select households, the survey firm used a random route walk approach. Kantar, NORC's in-country partner, has used this method successfully in several projects. In the training, the enumerators were taught how to canvass the community, identify an entry point, and calculate intervals for selecting households.   For every selected household, only one eligible respondent was interviewed per household. Each enumerator was assigned an area of the village to select respondents from via random walk. Once the household was selected, the enumerator asked a household member (often the head of household if s/he was present) for information on each member of the household. The survey software would then randomly select one respondent from that household list.

Respondents who had travelled out of the village were replaced with an individual with same gender and within the same age group in the same household. Otherwise, the household was replaced entirely. Enumerators would move on from that household and follow selection criteria to find their next household. If respondents were still in the area but were not currently at home the enumerator would revisit the household at a later time. Interviews usually took approximately 45 min to 1 hour. Overall the household survey went smoothly and the data collected was of high quality.

Quality Control and Data Processing

The quality control checks included in-field checks and data validation checks. Physical in-field checks included a trained quality control team who followed the enumerators and were present during the data collection. Their work included performing back-checks, which involved re-visiting the respondent after the interview was completed to confirm whether the interview took place, screening the respondent to ascertain if he/she is qualified and re-asking some of the questions to see if the responses match what was captured during the original interview.

Quality control personnel also performed spot checks, which involved a follow up on interviews while they were being conducted to check if they had been conducted in accordance with the survey guidelines. Finally, the quality control team also accompanied an enumerator throughout the entire process (finding a respondent, selecting the correct interviewee, and the interview process). They were responsible for ensuring the right methodologies were applied and the right questions were asked.

The survey firm also conducted telephone checks, which included follow-up calls made from Kantar Public's Ghanaian office on completed interviews to ascertain whether the respondents had been interviewed and whether they were qualified or not. The last quality control check included audio checks. These were silent recordings that were programmed on questions of interest. When these questions were asked, it triggered an audio recording of the question. These recordings were validated in the office to ascertain whether the questions were asked correctly and whether or not responses matched what is in the data.

Kantar's home office data team checked the collected data once it was uploaded to the home database. This is a detailed check performed on extracted data to look for the following:
- Duplicate interviews or entries;
- Omissions;
- Peculiar interview durations (either far below or above the average duration);
- Dates and time of interviews;
- Straight lining and other inconsistencies.

The data team also performed GPS checks. The team extracted coordinates and plotted them to determine whether or not the interviews were conducted in the right locations and whether or not they were correctly spaced.

The survey firm reported that all the questions seemed to have been well understood both by the interviewers and respondents, and the questionnaires were properly completed. The logic between each question was checked more than twice before and after the fieldwork.

Hypotheses and Measures

Household Survey Findings

Summary Statistics: Household Survey

A total of 677 men and 581 women were surveyed with the household questionnaire. The mean age of respondents was 36, the youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest respondent was 90. The sampled respondents have an overall low level of education, with the majority of respondents having no education (40%), followed by 23% having some sort of informal education, 12% completing some secondary, and just a small minority completing more education. Most of the sample is living with their non-polygamous spouse (68%) with 17% being single and the rest of the sample split between not living with their non-polygamous spouse, being in a polygamous marriage, divorced, separated, widowed, and refused to tell. Forty-four percent of the respondents were the head of household, with 33% being the spouse, 14% a child, and remaining being additional family members or friends. The majority of respondents never had a job (22%), are home makers (15%), are in either farming, fishing, or forestry (25%), or are vendors/traders (9%).

The most common preferred language for survey respondents was Hausa (37%), followed by Tamasheq (19%), Fulfulde (15%), and Kanuri (15%). 89% of respondents are Muslim, with only a handful of respondents identifying specifically as Sunni (2%), Tijaniya Brotherhood (2%), or Shia (3%). Most respondents were Hausa (34%), Tuareg (21%), Peulh (16%), or Kanuri Manga (16%). Summary statistics for both treatment and control groups can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

Variable		Control	Treatment	P-value
Age		36.41	36.37	0.97
Gender	Male	0.53	0.55	0.46
	Female	0.47	0.45	0.46
Education Level	None	0.36	0.43	0.07
	Informal	0.26	0.20	0.18
	Some Primary	0.09	0.08	0.78
	Completed Primary	0.06	0.06	0.88
	Some Secondary	0.13	0.11	0.18
	Completed Secondary	0.05	0.05	0.92
	Post Secondary	0.01	0.02	0.38
	Some University	0.01	0.02	0.53
	Completed University	0.01	0.01	0.97
	Post Graduate	0.01	0.01	0.99
	Don't Know	0.00	0.01	0.14
Marital Status	Single	0.17	0.17	0.82
	Married, Living With	0.68	0.68	0.97
	Married, Not Living With	0.03	0.05	0.15
	Polygamous Marriage, Living With	0.03	0.02	0.45
	Polygamous Marriage, Not Living With	0.01	0.00	0.06
	Divorced	0.02	0.03	0.30
	Separated	0.01	0.00	0.25
	Widowed	0.04	0.05	0.64
	Refused	0.00	0.00	0.10
Religion	None	0.00	0.00	0.17
	Christian	0.00	0.00	0.32
	Muslim	0.90	0.89	0.96
	Sunni	0.02	0.02	0.96
	Ismaeli	0.00	0.00	0.35
	Tijaniya Brotherhood	0.02	0.02	0.69
	Oadiriya Brotherhood	0.01	0.00	0.22
	Shia	0.02	0.03	0.42
	Izala	0.00	0.02	0.00
	Traditional Ethnic Religion	0.00	0.00	0.99
	Hindu	0.00	0.00	0.24
	Bahai	0.00	0.00	0.33
	Agnostic	0.00	0.00	0.16
	Athesist	0.00	0.00	0.24
	Refused	0.00	0.00	0.99

Balance: Household Survey

A goal of the baseline survey is to ensure that the control and treatment groups have no statistically significant differences between them (tested at 5% sig). The household survey was fairly balanced between treatment and control characteristics. Because most of our questions of interest asked for responses in categorical levels (i.e., "a lot", "somewhat", etc.), we conduct balance tests on each of the categories for each of the questions. It is important to note that such tests incur more frequent differences across treatment and control groups than for continuously measured variables. We include the complete balance tables in the annex and discuss the main findings below.

Out of 43 variables examined, 7 had 2-3 answer choices that were unbalanced between the treatment and control group. Out of 226 answer choices, only 31 were unbalanced. This rate is somewhat higher than would be expected by random chance. Many but not all of these answer choices indicate worse initial perceptions and conditions in the treatment group than in the control group (though some variables do indicate better perceptions/conditions in the treatment group). The imbalances suggest that the treatment group is slightly more ethnically diverse than the control group and more respondents in the treatment group feel less free to join political groups or vote for whoever they want without feeling pressured. In the same vein, a statistically significant number of respondents in the treatment group also didn't vote compared to the control. The research team plans to address these residual imbalances by including these imbalanced baseline conditions as covariates in the statistical analysis when evaluating the impact of the PG reform on perceived state legitimacy and other outcomes.

Baseline conditions: Household Survey

Security and the military

Overall, the survey reflects high levels of trust in security institutions in Niger. Consistent with prior estimates from the most recent round of the Afrobarometer survey (Round 6 in 2014/2015), respondents indicate that they are more willing to trust and respect the role of the military and police than politicians and political parties.

A majority of the sample either agree (57.5%) or strongly agree (15%) that the police always have the right to make people obey the law. Fewer people disagreed (9%) or strongly disagreed (5%), while 5% neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% responded that they don't know (Q41).

When asked, a majority of sampled individuals responded that they trust the police (70%) and the army (78%) a lot. The trust in the army and police was higher than respondent's trust in politicians and government officials, specifically the president, the national assembly, the independent National

Electoral Commission, the national tax authority, the local government council, and the ruling party. It was also significantly higher than trust in opposition political parties and the ruling party (Q46).

In that same vein, 56% of respondents think the local government has been fairly or very responsive to citizens' needs and security issues, while approximately 26% believe they have been very or fairly unresponsive. Overall, respondents indicated that they thought the local government was more responsive to demands for security and less responsive to demands for public services and economic development (Q49).

Media and Connectivity

A majority of respondents get their news from the radio (60%) and far less get their news from television, newspapers, the internet, or social media with newspapers being the most never used media source.   At the same time a majority of respondents don't necessarily believe what the media prints or say things it knows are untrue. The survey population was split between thinking the media often (28%) abuses its freedoms by printing or saying things it knows are not true and 26% believing that they rarely do.   12% say they never do with a small minority (5%) saying they always do.   The remaining respondents (28%) didn't know (Q43).

Figure 3: Does the Media Abuse Freedoms by Printing Untrue Things?
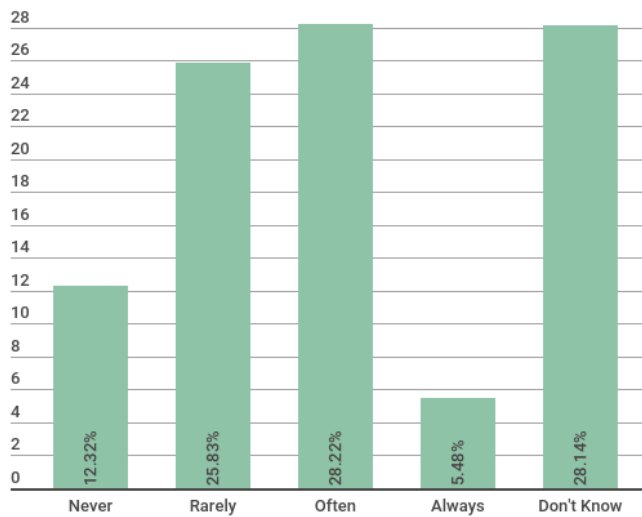
Tax Authorities and Courts

The survey reflects general respect in the authority and legality of the courts and tax authorities. For taxes in general, a majority of respondents agree that people should pay their taxes because they are important for the country to develop.

53% agree and 11% strongly agree that tax authorities have the right to make people pay taxes while only while 9% don't know and 9% neither agree nor disagree. (41) This view coincides with 20% of respondents agreeing and 44% of respondents agreeing very strongly that citizens must pay their taxes to the government in order for our country to develop. On the flip side, 10% agree and 17% agree very strongly that the government can find enough resources for development from other sources without having to tax the people (Q41)

62% of respondents agree or strongly agree that courts have the right to make decisions that people always have to abide by. A minority (15%) disagrees with this statement and an even smaller number of respondents (6%) strongly disagree. A further 11.5% responded that they don't know and 7% neither agreed nor disagreed (Q41).

Political Parties

Respondents indicate that political parties (both opposition and parties in power) are less trustworthy than the military or police and that competition between them can lead to conflict. This conflict could be the result of parties being silenced by the government as respondents indicate in the survey.

35% of respondents believe that competition between political parties often leads to violent conflict while 26% believe it rarely does. Another 13% believes it never causes conflict, 9 % believes it always does and 18% don't know (Q43).

32.5% of respondents believe that opposition parties (or their supporters) are often or are always silenced by the government while 32.5% don't know. 25.5% of interviewees think the government either rarely or never silences opposition (Q44).
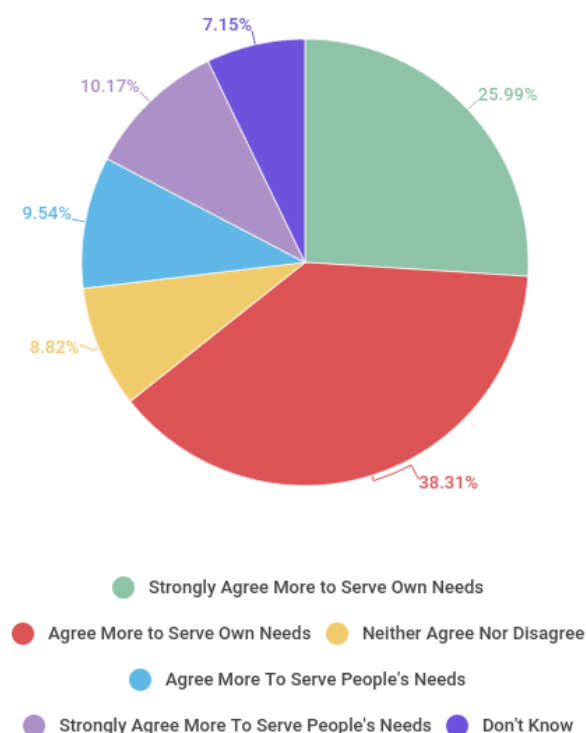
Views on the National Government and the President

Overall, respondents were less favorable when asked about politicians and the national government. Responses indicate that the sample believes the president often ignores the courts, doesn't spend time listening to local people, and that political leaders are more interested in serving their own interests than the interests of the people. It was notable though that respondents often responded with "don't know" when asked questions about the president.

When asked if they believed the president ignores the courts and laws of Niger, a large margin of respondents (30%) said they "don't know". 26% said he often does followed by 19% of people saying he never does and 18.5% responding that he rarely does. Only a handful of people said he always does (5.5%).

The majority of respondents agree that members of the national assembly (52%) never spend time trying their best to listen to what local people have to say. Approximately 20% of respondents believe that members of the national assembly often listen and 13% say that this group only sometimes listens to local people. The remainder of respondents either thinks they always do (4%) or they don't know (10%) (Q47).

Figure 4: Are Leaders Concerned With Serving Their Own Needs or People's Needs?

- Strongly Agree More to Serve Own Needs
- Agree More to Serve Own Needs
- Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Agree More To Serve People's Needs
- Strongly Agree More To Serve People's Needs
- Don't Know

When asked whether or not the president ignores the national assembly and just does what he wants 32% answered "don't know" while 24% says he never does. 18% said he rarely does and 21% responded that he often does. Only 5% said he always does (Q43).

Approximately 40% of respondents agree and 26% strongly agree that leaders of political parties in Niger are more concerned with serving their own interests than the interests of the people. The remaining respondents either neither agree nor disagree (9%), agree (9.5%) or strongly agree (10%) that they are more interested in serving the people that themselves (Q45).

The majority of respondents have the highest level in religious leaders, traditional leaders, the army, and the police while respondents exhibit slightly lower levels of trust in the president, the national assembly, the Independent National Electoral Commission, the national tax authority, the local government council, and the ruling party. The lowest level of trust was seen in opposition political parties and the ruling party (Q46).

Views on Local Government

Overall respondents are generally displeased with their local government's ability to maintain roads, market places, and create economic development. This goes along with respondents saying that they felt their local government did not spend time listening to their constituents. Despite this, they do seem to feel somewhat positive about their local governments ability to respond to security concerns appropriately.

Respondents were fairly evenly split between thinking the local government was very or fairly responsive (40%) and very or fairly unresponsive (39%) to addressing citizens demands. This is similar to how responsive respondents think local government has been to needs and demands of local citizens for public services such as healthcare and education.   More respondents (around 56%) think the local government has been fairly or very responsive to citizens needs and security verses approximately 26% who believe they have been very or fairly unresponsive. Overall respondents indicated that they thought the local government was more responsive to demands for security and less responsive to demands for public services and economic development (Q49).

Overall more respondents felt their local government maintained local roads fairly badly (34.5%) or very badly (32%). Approximately 20% felt they were maintained fairly well but very few (4%) thought they were maintained very well. Respondents answered more favorably (31.5% answered with fairly well, 4.5% answered with very well) with how local governments were maintaining local market places but the consensus still leaned towards fairly (30%) or very badly (24%) (Q53).

The majority of respondents agree that the local government councilors (45%) never spend time trying their best to listen to what local people have to say. Approximately 20-24% of respondents believe that these groups often listen and 13-15% say that those two groups only sometimes listen to local people. The remainder of respondents either think they always do (4%) or don't know (10%) (Q47).

Democracy, Freedoms, and Voting

Overall respondents indicate that they feel mostly free to vote how they want or say what they think. They also indicate that they feel able to join political any political organization they identify with. In terms of democracy, a majority of the sample believes that while they consider Niger a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems, they are torn between being satisfied or not happy with how the democracy is currently working.

Figure 5: How Free Are You To Choose Whom To Vote For?

Legend: Not At All Free · Not Very Free · Somewhat Free · Completely Free · Don't Know
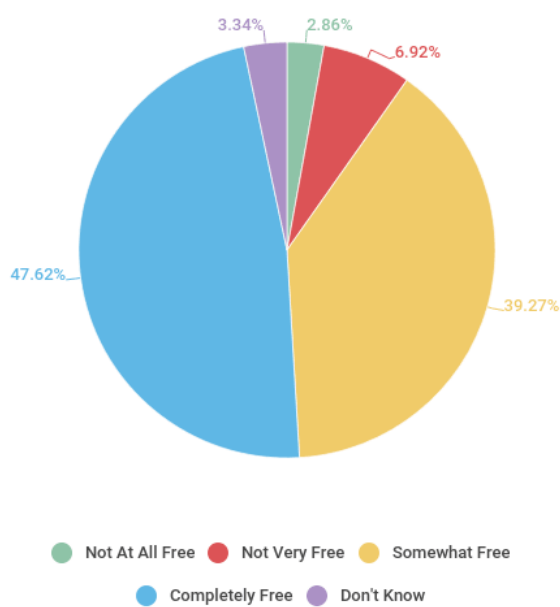
Most respondents answered that they feel somewhat free (42%) or completely free (24%) to say what they think. The same applies to joining any political organization and choosing whom to vote for without feeling pressured. 43% of respondents feel somewhat free to join any political organization while 39% feel completely free. 47% of respondents feel completely free to choose whom to vote for without feeling pressured while 39% feel somewhat free. Overall respondents indicate that they feel the most free to choose who to vote for (Q31).

The survey respondents were evenly split between thinking Niger is a full democracy (28%) and thinking it is a democracy with minor problems (27.5%). 24% of respondents think Niger is a democracy with major problems while only 6% think it is not a democracy. A final 11% don't know and 4% do not know what a democracy is (Q39).

Figure 6: How Much of a Democracy is Niger?
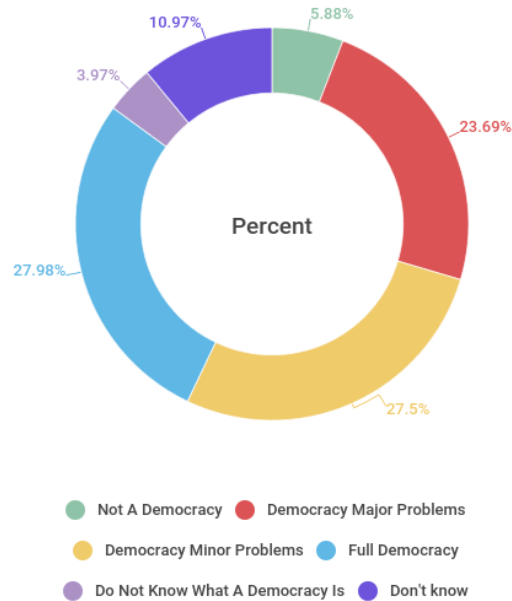
Respondents are fairly evenly split between being very or fairly satisfied (41%) and not at all or not very satisfied (42.5%) with the way democracy works in Niger. 2% thought Niger is not a democracy while 14% responded with "don't know" (Q40).

Elections

A very high number of respondents said they voted in the last election and a majority of the sample thought the election was fairly free and fair. Despite this, respondents indicate that they don't think elections actually help put representatives in power that will accurately reflect their views. They also don't think elections can help remove representatives that are not doing what local people want.

75% of interviewees responded that they had voted in the last election with only a minority responding that they didn't vote. 5% were not registered while 4% didn't vote and another 4% didn't have the time to vote (Q32).
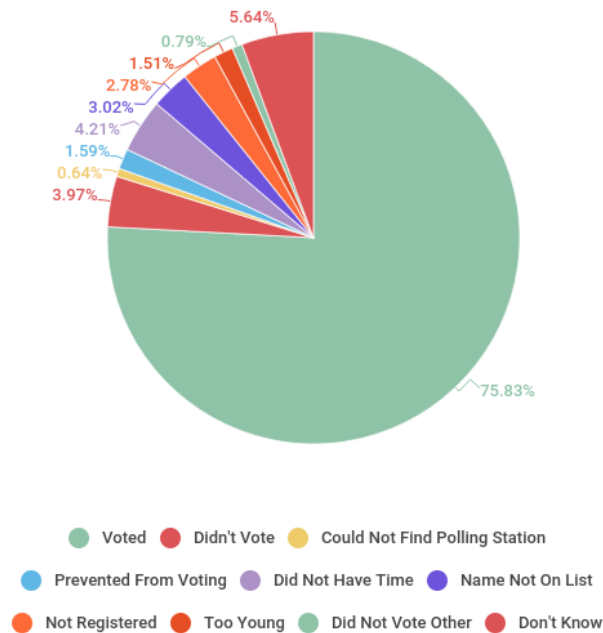
Overall respondents thought the 2016 election was completely free and fair (44%) while approximately 18% thought there were minor problems and 15% thought there were major problems. 13% responded with "don't know" and 8% thought the elections were not free at all (Q33).

Approximately 30% of respondents do not think that elections ensure that the representatives to the national assembly reflect their views very well while approximately 25% think their representatives reflect their views well. Around 18% of respondents felt they didn't reflect their views at all well while very few (approximately 7%) think the representatives represent them very well. 21% of the treatment and control group respondents replied with "don't know" (Q44)

The same follows for respondents' opinions on how well elections enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want. Approximately 30% of respondents feel this does not enable voters to remove leaders from office who do not do what the people want very well and 9% think it does not do it very well at all. Around 25% thinks elections do this well with 15% saying it does it very well.   22% responded that they don't know (Q44).

Figure 8: Free and Fairness of Last Election
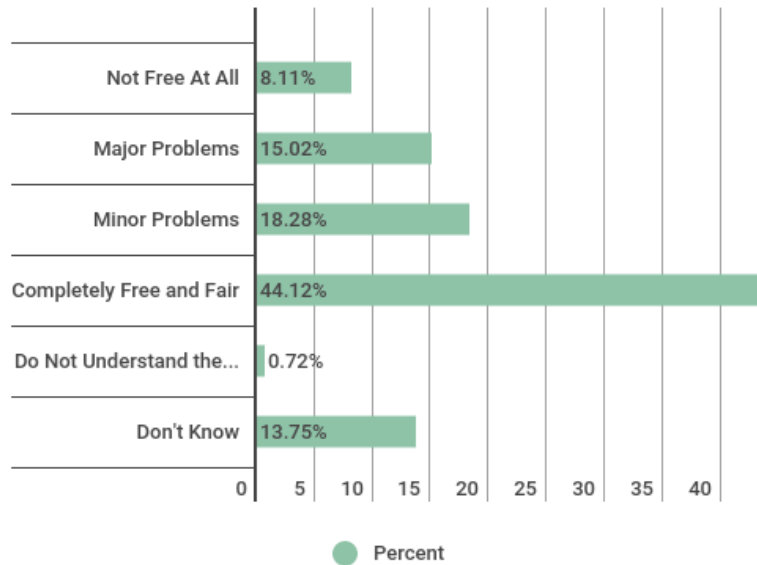
Community and Individual Political Actions

The majority of respondents have taken very few political actions when they have been dissatisfied with their government's performance (Q37). Respondents did indicate that they would perform certain actions given the chance including meeting or contacting candidates, attending a campaign rally, request action from local politicians, or contacting the media. At the same time, actions that the respondents would not take included refusing to pay taxes or participating in a demonstration.

Approximately 75% of respondents did not try to persuade others to vote in a certain way or work for a candidate or party while just over 55% of respondents did not attend a meeting with a candidate or campaign staff or attend a campaign rally (Q34).

Most respondents said they had never contacted a local leader with more respondents contacting religious leaders and traditional leaders than political party officials, government agency officials, members of the national assembly, and local government councilors (Q35).

If respondents had visited a local leader the majority of them went with a group (34%) while only 13% went alone. 36.5% went for a community problem as opposed to 10% going for a personal problem (Q36).

33% joined others in their community to request action from their government while 63% did not. For those that didn't, approximately 40% would if they had the chance while 26% would never. For those that requested action, 15% did it several times, 16% did it often, and 3% contacted them only once or twice (Q37).

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A higher majority of respondents did not contact the media (like a radio program or writing a letter to a newspaper) or contact a government official to ask for help or make a complaint. 45-50% of respondents would contact the media or a government official given the chance while approximately 40% would never take those actions (Q37).

Close to 90% of respondents have not participated in a demonstration or refused to pay taxes with only around 12% of respondents saying they would if they had the chance. Close to 87% of respondents say they would never act in that way (Q37).

Commune Leader Survey Findings

Summary Statistics: Leader Survey

118 individuals were interviewed during the leader survey. The youngest respondent was 25 and the oldest was 95 with the mean age around 50. The survey respondents were mainly men with only 8 out of 118 being women. The majority of respondents were Haoussa (43%) with the rest mainly split between Kanouri (18%), Touareg (17%), and Foulani (13%). The remaining respondents were Zarma (7%), Toubou (1%), and Arabe (1%). The primary language for each respondent mirrors respondent's ethnicity with 48% of respondent's preferred language is Hausa, 19% prefer Kanouri, 13% prefer Tamasheq, and 10% speaking Fulfuide. The remaining respondents speak either Zarma (7%) or Tubu (2%).

The sample is split between respondents being Imam or religious leader (15), the mayor (14), the first deputy mayor (10), the SG (11), and a decentralized service agent for the state (12). There were also health agents (4), village oracles (6), School director/teacher (9), CSI chief (6), pedagogic advisor (1), Inspector (1), Quarter Head (7), Village chief (7), technical service agent (6), municipal S (3), board member (3), second deputy mayor (1), and a DDES (1).

The highest level of education reached by these respondents was post-graduate (2 individuals). The majority of respondents finished high school (39%) or finished college (30%). 22% did not complete elementary school, 7% completed elementary school but nothing further, and 2% completed vocational or technical school.

### *Baseline Conditions: Leader Survey*

Connectivity

According to respondents residents communicate with government officials mainly through phone calls and meetings including individual meetings, small group meetings, community meetings. Very few

residents communicate via community radio, delegation, a petition, a letter, email, and text message (GV4). Respondents indicate that 26% of residents communicate with government officials somewhat infrequently, somewhat infrequently (22%), or infrequently (24.5%). Only 11% responded that they communicate frequently (GV4A).

The sample responses show that when government officials want to communicate with residents they use radio, meetings (community, small group, and individual), and phone calls. They rarely or never use text messages, email, letters, petition, TV programs or commercials, visits, via the press, through the town hall, and sending of courtiers/posters (GV5).   The majority of respondents indicate that government officials communicate somewhat frequently (36%).   29% say they communicate infrequently while 14% say it is somewhat infrequently. Only 10% say they communicate frequently and 11% responded with "don't know" (GV5A).

Figure 9: How Often Do Government Officials Communicate With Residents?
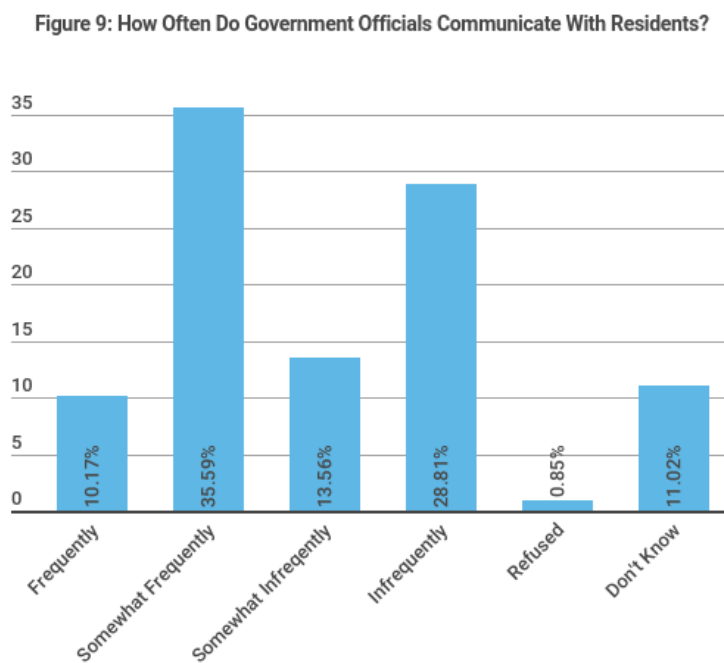
When they do communicate, respondents indicate that residents talk about problems with a health center, issues with a school, report diseases or other medical problems, reporting violence, conflict, or military, complaints about community services (including water, electricity, trash services, etc.), and reporting crimes.   They more infrequently reach out about complaints about neighbors, complaints about voting issues, reporting corruption, questions about government services, questions about political parties, property issues, and issues with farm animal breeders (GV6).   Government representatives communicate the same information on issues as residents but also communicate with more frequency information about farm animal breeders, property issues, reporting on community projects, and complaints about voting issues than residents (GV7).

61% of respondents had participated in a multi-stakeholder dialog during the past year while 35% reported that they had not participated in one (GV8). Respondents reported that dialogs were organized by the United Nations (10), the town hall council (7), Hydraulics Landlords (4), government authorities (10), technical partners (14), the mayor (9), the CARE3N Initiative (8), and NGOs (9) (GV9).

Responsiveness and Accountability of Government Officials

63.5% of leader respondents answered that the President of Niger is either very good or somewhat good at carrying out his duties and almost 30% thought he was either somewhat bad or very bad at completing his duties.

The Commune Mayor had overall positive reviews but less positive than the president. Approximately 45% said he is either very good (19.5%) or somewhat good (25.5%) while around 33% said he is either somewhat bad (23%) or very bad (10%). Respondents rated both the president of the commune council and the president of the regional council president lower than the Commune Mayor or President of Niger indicating that they think they are less good at carrying out their duties (GV1).

Respondents we asked if they had heard of any corruption involving the current mayor, the president of Niger, the president of the commune, and the regional council president. Overall the sample responded that they had mainly not heard of corruption with any of the four government officials. More respondents answered that they had heard of some corruption with the current mayor and less with the President of Niger.   "Have not heard" was a popular option for corruption involving the current mayor (19.5%), the president of the commune (30%), and the regional council president (16%) (GV2).

Figure 10: Have You Ever Heard About Corruption Involving the Current President of Niger?
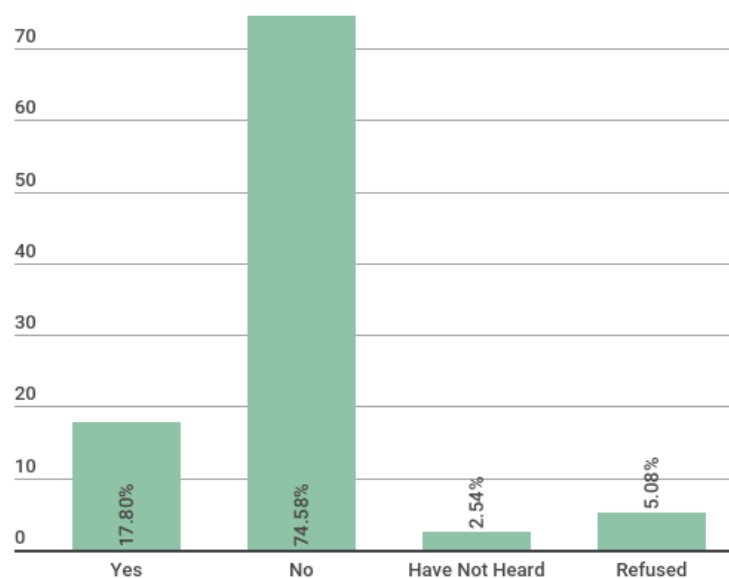
Commune leaders lean towards very committed (30.5%) or somewhat committed (24.5%) when asked how committed other elites in the commune are in addressing citizen priorities. 19% answered not very committed while 14% answered not committed and 12% don't know (PD9).

Respondents are also very split when asked how reliable other elites in the commune are in following through on promises to addressing citizen priorities but they lean towards answering that they are very (27%) or somewhat (29%) committed. 10% answered not very committed while 20% answered not committed and 13.5% don't know (PD10).

Interacting with Residents

The leaders surveyed are fairly split on how often officials interface with residents. Respondents lean more towards "frequently" for how often the mayor's office connects with commune residents with 22% saying they do very frequently and approximately 30% saying they do somewhat frequently. 29% say somewhat infrequently and 9% say very infrequently and 8.5% responded with "don't know".

Officials of the customary authority were listed as interfacing even more frequently with residents than any other official. 30.5% said they interact very frequently and 38% say somewhat frequently. 19.5% said somewhat infrequently and 4% respond that they interface very infrequently. On the other hand commune council officials interfaced with constituents less frequently than the mayors office and the customary authority and the police were listed as the least likely to interface with residents (GV3).

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**Necessary Local Actors for Development Projects:**

In thinking about the development of their commune, the top person that the respondent believes they should engage or coordinate with the most to address development issues in your community are chiefs (19%) and the deputy mayor/Governor Commissioner (23%). Teachers and presidents of the youth group, Secretary general, tax collector, retailer trader, and the SDO were also mentioned as necessary individuals to coordinate with to address commune development issues. 76% of respondents said they interacted with these individuals a lot with the majority saying they coordinate with them every one to 7 days (PD11).

The type of people that respondents believe are necessary for the implementation and adoption of development projects is different than the individuals that respondents think are necessary to coordinate with the address development issues. Housewives, chiefs, the councilor secretary general, the FCC, and teachers were the top people that respondents believed were the most important actors who are necessary to engage with or coordinate with to ensure development projects are adopted and implemented. 75% of respondents say they interact with the top individuals a lot and 43% say they interacted with them in the last 2 days (PD12).

Community Meeting Dynamics

The survey asked a variety of questions to understand meeting dynamics in communes from a community leader's point of view. When asked about how decisions were made in the last commune assembly, a majority of leaders (64%) thought that every person decided when a decision had to be made on problems or issues in the commune while 18% thought the village leader, other council members, and some other non-council members decided. 11% thought the commune mayor decided and the remaining 7% thought just the village leader and other council members decided (PD2).
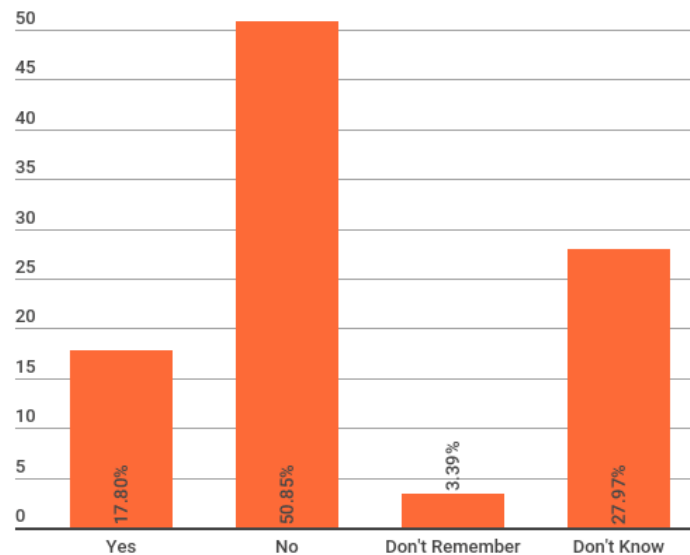
Figure 11: Which Describes What Happened at the Last Commune Assembly

Session When a Decision Had to Be Made on a Commune Issue?
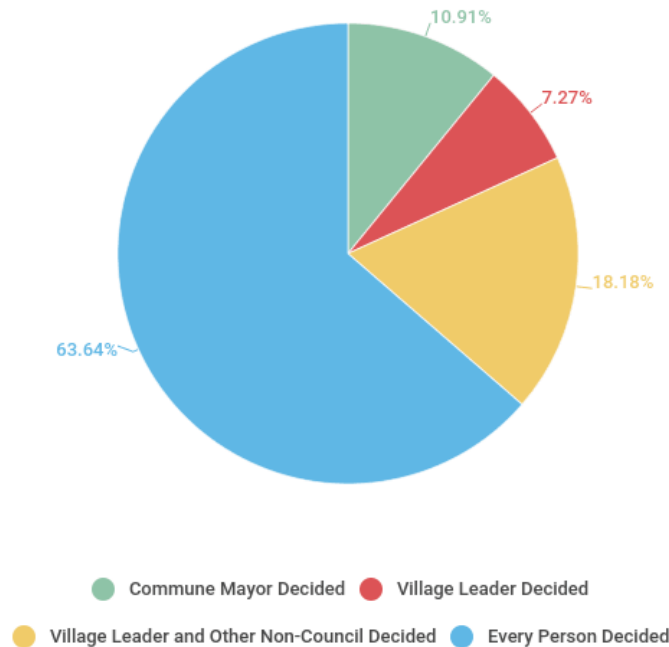
Most respondents (65%) think that they could organize a meeting of important actors to discuss development issues in the commune while 9% said maybe, 6% said they did not think so, 6% refused to answer, and 14% answered that they didn't know (PD13). Out of the respondents who thought they either could or maybe could put together a meeting, they thought a mean of approximately 46 people would show up with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 1000 attendees (PD14).

The survey asked a number of questions about the community assembly sessions to help understand the dynamics during the meetings. Overall over 50% of respondents thought there was no one group among poor, middle, and rich residents dominate decisions about problems or issues in the commune. 28% responded that they "don't know" and 18% thought there was one group that dominated (PD3). Out of that 18%, more thought rich residents dominate the discussion while remaining respondents are split between poor and middle class residents. While respondents were split between which group dominates, they agree that the poor have the least amount of influence in commune discussions (PD5).

When asked how the dynamics work between ethnic groups, the respondents are split evenly. 48% believe there is an ethnic group that dominates while an equal number thinks there isn't a dominant group (PD6). Of those that believe there is a dominant group, a majority believe that Haoussa (70%) dominates the most in commune assemblies during decision-making process while Kanouri (20%) and Foulani (10%) were also mentioned (PD7). When asked which group has the least influence in commune discussions, respondents responded with the Foulani (30%), the Haoussa (20%), and "Others" (20%).

Balance: Leader Survey

Overall, the Leader Survey hypothesis variables were fairly balanced between treatment and control groups. Out of 420 possible answer choices across the 46 questions, 11 were statistically different. The remaining response categories were balanced across both treatment and control groups. Overall, the groups are well balanced. Balance tables are included in the annex. Field challenges

Administration, Access to communities, Logistics, and Military incidence

The issues encountered during the survey process mainly centered on security concerns given the unrest in regions like Diffa. A number of safety precautions were taken before the enumerators left for the field to avoid any security issues. Some of the selected villages and communes were determined to be unsafe by Kantar Public standards and due to these concerns, the enumerators were not sent to those areas. This included two full communes in Diffa (Toumour and Bosso), where enumerators were not

allowed to enter. Seven communes in Diffa and 6 communes in Agadez were determined to only be safe in the commune centers and enumerators were not allowed to survey in the surrounding selected villages. Additionally there were some selected villages that were deemed unsafe. These villages were replaced with the previously randomly selected villages. Some communes only had a limited number of safe villages available to conduct surveys in, so those villages replaced the originally selected ones.

One of the teams did unknowingly trespass into a conflict zone, which led to a prompt response from the army. While there was some property damage, no one was hurt. Further villages in this area were not visited due to this incident and the enumeration team only worked in this commune's capital.

The survey firm also struggled to gain access to significant amounts of the local mayor's time. Due to this, the leader survey was broken up into the subjective questions, which were administered to the mayor, and a 'fact based' section, which was administered to departments within the commune district office that could provide the most accurate information.

Pre-Analysis Plan

The peer review of the evaluation design was facilitated formally through the Experiments in Governance and Politics (EGAP) group at Columbia University, of which USAID/DRG is an institutional member. Members of EGAP have signed full non-disclosure agreements to allow them to comment on in-design evaluation plans. The peer review will focus both on the technical soundness of the evaluation design as well as addressing USAID/DRG's own strategic criteria regarding impact evaluations. The comments from EGAP should be incorporated into or addressed in the final evaluation design document, and will be used by USAID/DRG to make final determinations regarding co-funding. This peer review is in addition to the review and commenting period by HESN, USAID/DRG, and USAID/Niger described above.

Timeline

Task	Y2				Y3				Y4		Deliverables
	Fall 16	Winter 16-17	Spring 17	Summer 17	Fall 17	Winter 17-18	Spring 18	Summer 18	Fall 18	Winter 18	
Impact Evaluation Plan Finalized	■										Finalized Evaluation Plan
Pre-analysis plan finalized and registered		■									Finalized household survey firm
Baseline survey			■								Baseline surveys (household, leader survey)
Baseline report					■						Baseline report
Endline survey									■		Endline surveys
Endline report										■	Endline report

Roles and Responsibilities

Research Team:

Ariel BenYishay, Lisa Mueller, and Phil Roessler will serve as co-principal investigators for the project. BenYishay, Mueller and Roessler will be responsible for the planning and execution of all phases of the impact evaluation. They will develop the evaluation design and coordinate with a survey firm to carry out the baseline and endline evaluations.

AidData:

AidData will be responsible for the reporting requirements of HESN, USAID/DRG, and USAID/Niger. In regards to the HESN award, AidData will be required to meet all obligations as previously outlined in its award, including but not limited to: financial reporting, HESN M&E indicators, annual reports, etc. In regards to USAID/Niger, AidData is responsible for coordinating with BenYishay, Roessler, and Mueller on the evaluation design report and analysis report at the completion of each phase of the evaluation, as well as for sharing with the Mission the reports required by HESN. AidData will review any reporting documents or any modifications to the scope of work prior to approval.

Implementing Partner (Counterpart International):

AidData will work closely with Counterpart International (CPI) to ensure the success of the evaluation. At least one of the PIs will meet with CPI to ensure the roll out of the program will coincide with the evaluation design. AidData will also hold weekly calls with CPI to ensure close coordination between treatment, AidData's evaluation, and CPIs program evaluation. As the evaluation design is carried out, the PIs will keep the implementing partner informed of the progress.

Survey partner (NORC):

NORC has been contracted by USAID to perform the baseline and endline survey for this project. AidData worked closely with NORC on the development and implementation of the baseline survey as well as on the review of the collection methodology and the baseline data. AidData staff will continue to work closely with NORC during the implementation of the endline survey to maintain a high level of data collection.

USAID/Niger:

The primary point of contact (POC) for AidData and for USAID/HESN will be Garret Harries. A secondary POC for AidData will be Abdourahamane Hassane, primarily for project-related technical concerns. The primary POC will be responsible for ensuring that communication is maintained between the Mission, HESN, DRG, and AidData, including through the required reporting listed above. Regarding reporting requirements, the primary POC will have final approval of the three required evaluation reports, and will review for information purposes, the reports required by HESN. The technical POC will be available to serve as liaison with the implementing partner and with any technical/field-based issues that may arise. The technical POC will be included in the Mission's approval of the three evaluation reports, and will also view the interim reports required by HESN. The primary POC, however, has the responsibility of

sharing these documents and soliciting the feedback and approval of others in the Mission, including the technical POC, as well as soliciting feedback from the primary POC in USAID/DRG.

USAID/DRG:

The primary POC for AidData and for USAID/HESN will be Morgan Holmes, Evaluation Specialist for USAID/DRG. The primary POC will be responsible for ensuring communication is maintained between the Mission, DRG, HESN, and AidData. The POC will also facilitate the peer review of the draft evaluation plan. The POC will be included in the Mission's approval of the three evaluation reports, and will also view the interim reports required by HESN. NORC will also have the opportunity to review the three evaluation reports. Final approval of all reports is held by the primary POC for USAID/DRG. The primary POC will also be responsible for liaising through NORC that will provide the sub-contracting and management for data collection activities.

USAID/HESN:

USAID/HESN will be responsible for the day-to-day project management for this research project until the end of the HESN cooperative agreement to AidData. This means that the AOR for the HESN award to AidData will comply with reporting requirements under the award. He/she will also conduct periodic M&E on the progress of AidData's PRG work to ensure that AidData is meeting its delivery timeframe on schedule. As necessary, the AOR will periodically communicate to USAID/Niger the status of AidData's progress, as well as immediately notify the Mission if any problems arise during the course of this impact evaluation project.

AidData Staffing and Management Plan

Principal Investigators

Dr. Ariel BenYishay—Dr. BenYishay is AidData's Chief Economist and Assistant Professor of Economics at the College of William and Mary. He previously served as Lecturer in Economics at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. He also served as Associate Director of Economic Analysis and Evaluation at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. He has served as the principal investigator on a variety of large-scale experiments in developing countries, including Malawi, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands.

Dr. Lisa Mueller—Dr. Mueller is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and African Studies at Macalester College. Her research focuses on civic engagement and political economy of development in

Niger. She has directed surveys in Niger on protest participation and citizen-politician linkages and has conducted additional fieldwork in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. During summer 2015 she will be a Visiting Scholar at the West African Research Center in Dakar.

Dr. Philip Roessler—Dr. Roessler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government and Co-Director of the Center for African Development at the College of William and Mary. He is an expert on African politics and has conducted qualitative, quantitative and experimental studies in a range of African countries, including Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe.

Additional Personnel

Bachirou Ayouba Tinni, Field Coordinator— Full-time staff member based in Niamey during baseline data collection, initial program roll-out, and potentially endline data collection. Staff member will be responsible for coordinating training of data collection team, monitoring during collection, and tracking program status and randomization compliance during initial roll-out. The coordinator would also be responsible for obtaining administrative data from relevant national sources. Depending on funding, coordinator may return to complete endline data collection. This individual will likely have a graduate degree or studies and have previous research experience in a similar setting.

Katherine Nolan, AidData Project Manager- AidData staff member who will assist with compliance with USAID/ HESN and USAID/Niger reporting requirements and coordinating among team members.

GIS Analyst—AidData staff member who will assist in merging existing georeferenced datasets on population, economy, agriculture, ecology and other factors to ensure matched pairs are most precisely formed for the randomization.

Policy & Communications Analyst—AidData staff member who will assist with drafting policy briefs and communications materials to promote learning from the evaluation.