

PROFILE: NIGERIA



Africa's most populous country, Nigeria is the world's tenth-largest producer of oil but 70 per cent of its 140 million people survive on less than US\$1 a day.

Despite a transition from military rule in 1999, national mismanagement and corruption have limited basic services to Nigeria's people.

Oil money (nicknamed Nigeria's 'curse in disguise') has suppressed investment in other economic activities such as trading and food production.

Nigeria has more than 400 ethnic groups and large Christian and Muslim populations. Poverty, unemployment and competition for land are inflaming ethno-religious tensions.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since 1999 and many more displaced – one of the world's highest casualty rates from internal conflict, despite no civil war.

Rural communities suffer unequal access to water, healthcare and education – and seasonal rains mean farmers go hungry for part of the year. Soil erosion is causing desertification and land disputes as Hausa-Fulani herdsman are forced south.

Ignorance and stigma are advancing HIV and deterring those at risk from seeking medical advice. Though access to anti-retroviral drugs has risen, drug-resistant strains of HIV have developed.

Meanwhile, women have a restricted role in society as a result of 12 states imposing Sharia law.

TEARFUND'S WORK IN NIGERIA

Tearfund has been supporting work in Nigeria since 1982. We currently have 13 partners in the country who are transforming marginalised communities through church mobilisation in integral mission, HIV care and prevention, health, nutrition and education projects and anti-poverty campaigning.

In just one example, Calvary Ministries is running an integrated poverty reduction programme in desperately poor villages in the Sahel region of northern Nigeria.

Marginalised communities are benefiting from efforts to improve food security, community health development, primary education and adult literacy.

As part of a holistic approach, beneficiary communities are helped to identify their own needs – and play a lead role in addressing them.

A key strand of Tearfund's response in Nigeria is to mobilise church networks to tackle poverty and the causes of poverty. The size and potential of Nigeria's church (Christians account for around 45 per cent of the population) and its involvement in community development mean it is well placed to lobby the government on behalf of poor people.

During the next four years, Tearfund will be equipping our church partners to campaign effectively on the following issues: HIV, food security, basic health provision and access to water and sanitation facilities.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Nigeria.**
- **Please pray for our Nigerian partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for Nigeria: for justice, peace, health and hope for everyone.**