

## Technical Solutions

**Country:** Niger

**Organization:** ONG FAD (Femmes - Actions et Développement) NIGER

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## Recovery of water hyacinth and its transformation for environmental purposes

**Description of the project:** The project focuses on reducing degradation of the Niger River ecosystem, raising public awareness and strengthening the capacity of women's organizations. It strives to prevent colonization of water hyacinth to local water bodies and exploitable lands by organizing the recovery of plants, and composting in a dedicated site by a group of 53 women, supported by youth and members of the Village Management Committee. They developed gardens and diversified and improved the quality of vegetable production. Women's organizations were established and strengthened through training in community life and composting techniques.

**Climate impact:** Preserving the Niger River ecosystem from the impact of water hyacinth is crucial, as this invasive plant suffocates streams and prevents the collection of water for irrigation. By supporting the use of water hyacinth-based organic fertilizer, village organizations are cleaning up the water, producing their own chemical-free fertilizer, regenerating soils through the use of natural compost, and improving their income and quality of life.

**Gender impact:** Women's empowerment is one of the key elements of this project associated with income generation from vegetable production, enhanced by land reclamation and the use of natural fertilizer. The structuring of women's organizations trained in community life and economic management, and sensitized to the environmental impact of water hyacinth, helps to strengthen women's rights, particularly for land acquisition and participating in local life and decision-making processes.

**Scalability / replicability:** The problems caused by the invasive water hyacinth, river pollution and land degradation impact the rural populations of the Niger Basin who depend mainly on fishing and off-season crops. The project can be adapted to any environment confronted with these problems. Its benefits (sanitation and water treatment, income generation, improved health) have been recognised and the project was awarded a prize as one of "100 Innovations for Sustainable Development", organized by the French authorities.



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