

High public awareness of the Niger crisis appeal

Contributed by BMRB
Saturday, 13 August 2005
Last Updated Saturday, 13 August 2005

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Niger crisis appeal has achieved very high visibility amongst the British public according to a survey by BMRB. Over three-fifths (62%) of GB adults (aged 16+) say they are aware of the crisis in Niger. Amongst these people, 30% say they have already made a donation whilst 41% say that they intend to do so in the near future. In total, 56% of adults who are aware of the crisis in Niger say that they have already made a donation or intend to do so – this equates to over 16 million people.

Far fewer are aware of the food shortages in the surrounding countries that are also included in the DEC appeal; Mali (26%), Burkina Faso (12%) and Mauritania (11%). While this can be explained by many not having a good geographical knowledge of Africa, there is also the worry that the pictures hitting the front pages of severely malnourished people simply embody “Africa”.

Men are more aware of the crisis in Niger than women (66% compared to 58%) but women are more likely to have donated or intend to donate (64%) than men (48%). People aged over 49 tend to be more aware of the crisis than younger people (72% compared to just 54%) but, amongst those who are aware, there is no real difference in likelihood to make a donation.

At 58% awareness, those in the middle of Britain are slightly less likely to have heard of the crisis in Niger than those in the north (64%) or the south (63%). However, residents in the south are less likely to say they have donated or will do so (just 51% compared to 59% in the north and 60% in the middle).

Amongst those who are aware of the crisis, TV is cited as by far the most important source of information. Almost all (96%) say they have got information about the crisis through TV. This is followed by Newspapers (72%), radio (51%), friends and family (18%), and websites (14%). Almost four in five (79%) of over 50s cite newspapers whilst websites provided information for over a quarter (27%) of 16-34 year olds. The power of peer pressure is evident; seven out of ten of those who say that they got information from friends or family either have made or will make a donation.

Amongst people who are aware of the Niger situation, there is a wide range of views on the causes of the food crisis. Over nine in ten (91%) mention drought whilst 65% mention locust plague (these were the two reasons cited most prominently by the BBC). In addition, 68% attribute the situation partly to government debt, 57% to crime or corruption, 55% to food prices and 48% to war. For a sizeable proportion of the population, the issue of food shortages in Niger appears to have fused with other Africa-related campaigns, such as Live 8.

People who have donated or intend to donate are the most likely to attribute the problem to the locust plague (68%, compared to 61% amongst those who say they haven’t and won’t donate). This may be an illustration of the role played perceived cause in the level of financial support for a crisis appeal.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bmr.co.uk/>