



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Country Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

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Location and Population

- Nigeria is **located in western Africa** on the Gulf of Guinea and shares borders with Niger, Benin, Chad, and Cameroon.
- Its **total area is 924k square kilometers**.
 - Approximately twice the size of California.
- Nigeria is divided into **36 states** with each state electing its own Governor.
- Since 1991, Nigeria's **capital city** has been **Abuja**, replacing Lagos (still Nigeria's largest city).
- The country's **total population is over 170 million people**
 - The most populous country in Africa, and 7th most populous in the world.



People, Languages, and Religion

- Nigeria's total population is over 170 million people.
- There are over 250 ethnic groups and a multitude of languages spoken.
- Nigeria's Constitution guarantees religious freedom. The country's religious beliefs include Muslim, Christian, and indigenous beliefs.

Ethnic Group	% of Population
Hausa and Fulan	29%
Yoruba	21%
Igbo (Ibo)	18%
Ijaw	10%
Kanuri	4%
Ibibio	3.5%
Tiv	2.5%
Other	12%

Language Spoken	% of Population
English (official)	
Hausa	
Yoruba	
Igbo (Ibo)	
Fulani	
Other Indigenous Languages	

Religions	% of Population
Muslim <i>(primarily in Northern part of the Country)</i>	50.4%
Christian <i>(primarily in the Southern part of the Country)</i>	48.2%
Indigenous Beliefs	1.4%



The Abuja National Mosque, Abuja, Nigeria

History and Government

- Nigeria's history dates back to the **5th Century BC** with the **Nok people**.
- Other kingdoms include the Hausa, Yoruba, Ife, Oyo, Benin, and Fulani.
- From 1901, until gaining independence on October 1, 1960, **Nigeria was a British colony**.
- From 1960 until 1999, Nigeria was ruled under a **Military Government**.
- Nigeria's Constitution was adopted in May 1999 and is now governed as **Federal Republic** (modeled after the US system).
- Currently led by President Goodluck Jonathan, a the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who was elected on May 5, 2010.
- The seats in the House of Representatives and the Senate are overwhelming held by PDP party affiliates.



Nigerian President
Goodluck Jonathan

Culture, Customs, and Etiquette

- Nigeria is considered a **super-power on the African continent** and thus Nigerians are generally proud of their country.
- Nigeria also has **vast natural resources**.
 - 6th largest oil producing country
 - Well educated (61.3% of the population is literate)
- **Family relationships are integral** to the social system.
 - Guided by hierarchy and seniority
 - Social standing determined by family connections
 - Family honor is important
 - Family is expected to **provide for all members** (financial and other supports)
 - Polygamy is legal and practiced, but is decreasing
- In general, **age and position earn respect**.
 - Oldest person is greeted and served first in social situations

Education System: Background

- The Christian Missionaries introduced **western style education** to Nigeria in the mid-1800's.
- It was not until the 1940's that the education system developed into a **3-tiered system** of Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary levels.
- **Primary education** (age 6-12) has been **compulsory** since 1999 and is free to all students.
- A **large portion of Muslim children** in the northern part of the country, almajirai's, **do not attend the government run schools**, but instead receive an Islamic education.



Today's Education System

- Today's Education System is comprised of:
 - **Basic Education** (Compulsory / Free)
 - Primary School
 - **6 years in length**
 - Generally begin when 6, graduate when 12
 - **Secondary Education** (Not Compulsory / Tuition Based)
 - **Less than 1/3 of students continue** on to Secondary Education
 - Top 3 reasons cited are:
 - 32% - Monetary Cost
 - 26% - Insufficient Interest
 - 16% - Labor Needed
 - **Junior Secondary School (JSS)**
 - **3 years in length**
 - Generally start when 12, graduate when 15



Today's Education System, cont.

- Secondary Education, cont.
 - **Senior Secondary School (SSS)**
 - 3 years in length
 - Required Exam – **Senior School Leaving Certificate (SSCE)**
- **Tertiary Education**
 - 36 Federal Universities, 37 State Universities, and 45 Private Universities
 - In 2010, **approximately 550,000 students** were enrolled in Universities
- **English Literacy**
 - English is the official language in Nigeria though is **generally not Nigerian's first language**.
 - English is **taught to all students** in Primary and Secondary schools.
 - However, **only 50% of students pass** the English portion of their SSCE.



Today's Education System, cont.

- The overall literacy rate in Nigeria is 61.3%
 - Significant differences between men and women, especially at the tertiary level.
 - Some reasons include:
 - Early marriage and perceived notion of age of marriage
 - Women are expected to marry young. Fear becoming an “old layer” (very old single woman)
 - Religious and cultural beliefs and practices
 - Women are expected to obey men. If too educated, there is fear that the woman will not obey
 - Birth order and socio-economic status
 - If there are limited funds, priority is given to males. If all females in the family, priority given to oldest.

Education System Challenges

- There are **many challenges** facing the education system in Nigeria
 - **Staff shortages** in all areas
 - Class size expected to be 30 students, sometimes up to 90+ students in the classroom
 - **High** rate of teacher **absenteeism**
 - **Poor teacher training** and development
 - Low proficiency in their own language
 - No system on on-going professional development for teachers
 - Significant “**brain-drain**” at the **University Professor level**
 - Approximately **1/3 of the children that should be enrolled in Primary school are not** (the almajirai)
 - Those attending school have **high absenteeism** rates
 - **Underfunding** / insufficient investment
 - **School facilities are deteriorating**
 - **Inadequate supply of books** and other resources
- However, education has recently been **identified as a government priority**
 - **Achieving Universal Basic Education by 2015** is one of Nigeria’s Millennium Development Goals.

Nigerians in the US

- In 2009, approximately 210,000 Nigerian's immigrated to the United States.
- One third of all Nigerian born US residents live in New York, California, Texas, or Maryland.
- **60%** of Nigerian immigrants reported having **earned a bachelors degree or higher**
- **87%** self-reported as **English Proficient**
 - Speak English only
 - Speak English “very well”



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