PDEV II Local Heroes Lead the Way in Niger

One of the main objectives of the Peace through Development (PDEVII) program is to support youth mobilization and engagement in local development, on issues related to social stability and cohesion. In Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad, PDEVII has been working with a core group of dedicated young leaders to reinforce their capacities in conflict management and to act as leaders in their social circles and beyond. Today, PDEVII is seeing the fruits of the capacity-building efforts as the young leaders are taking the initiative to undertake activities that tackle concrete challenges in their communities.

Maradi is Niger’s third largest town, a major economic center at the crossroads of national East-West trade and international commerce from Nigeria. The region is renowned as the breadbasket of the country. However, as in the rest of Niger, there is a manifest lack of basic services and opportunities for young people. Decentralization efforts are yet to translate into significant change and thus too many people remain with no avenue to express their concerns. The context is ripe for youth disaffection and potentially violence.

Ibrahim Seini Sambo is a youth leader who teaches in a rural primary school, 7 kilometers from Maradi city. With PDEVII support, he receives continuous training in leadership and conflict management. Conflicts among students and between students and teachers are common in schools. Ibrahim recognized that it is critical that the people given the responsibility of educating young people be well-equipped to provide a healthy social environment. He therefore decided to ensure that his personal development could benefit the community: As a member of the local official structure for coordinating teaching efforts, Ibrahim shared his new skills with his peers at a meeting with the district School Superintendent. He spoke about the unique value of youth leadership in conflict management and its particular relevance to the education sector. Impressed by his presentation and his potential to positively influence other teachers, the Superintendent invited Ibrahim to speak at other schools in the region.

So far, Ibrahim has spoken in 3 rural schools to 45 teachers and shows no sign of losing enthusiasm. In Maradi, Ibrahim Seini Sambo is a positive role model and a PDEVII Local Hero.

“If anybody needs knowledge of leadership and conflict transformation it is teachers, given our role in managing children and managing schools. By virtue of his career, a teacher is a leader. Ever since my training I have asked myself how to share my knowledge with other teachers. I found a way through the meetings and it worked. Now I feel even more useful.”

- Ibrahim Seini Sambo

A trained teacher addresses students at a high school in Maradi region, Niger