



PDev II

Enhancing Employment Prospects for West African Youth

Economically marginalized young people are more likely to embrace violent extremism. The Peace through Development II program (PDev II) is helping this at-risk group in Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger to increase their livelihood prospects and protect them against the attraction of extremist recruiters.

The activities in this program range from studying human resource needs, to enhancing access to education and providing vocational and literacy training. A study of Niger's extractive industry, for example, showed a significant mismatch between the skills employers were seeking (such as welding, electrical wiring and surveying) and the training young people were traditionally receiving (in such fields as accounting, business and marketing). It also found that most youth are poorly trained, have little professional experience and lack effective job-search skills. The results will guide government and international donors to develop and implement policies and programs that will train youth in high-demand subject areas.

Enhancing Education for All

Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack furniture and supplies, with 10 to 15 students sometimes needing to share one textbook, and several sharing a student desk and bench meant only for two or three. To overcome this fundamental challenge to learning and school attendance, the PDev II program has provided learning materials, textbooks, and school furniture that have benefited thousands of students throughout the three countries. It has also constructed classrooms in Burkina Faso and Niger.

To help motivate students to continue with their educations, "local heroes"—role models who stayed in school and went on to successful careers—have been recruited to share their experiences with students, and prizes have been awarded to the best-performing pupils.



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2015 SNAPSHOT

19,251
students
provided with
education
supplies

Vocational
Training for
574
young people
across Chad,
Burkina Faso
& Niger

1,342

train-the-trainer
participants,
each now able
to teach skills of
youth leadership
and community
engagement

128,655
attendees
of youth-led
events focused
on countering
violent extremism
and community
development

Functionally illiterate or innumerate members of society face greater barriers to making a living. To help remedy this situation, PDev II has provided functional literacy programs to enable youth, for the first time in their lives, to write, read and calculate in French and their respective national languages. Graduates of these programs are able to complete essential tasks, such as check credits on mobile phones, send and read text messages, and communicate in elementary French.

Equipping Youth with a Livelihood

Over 570 young men and women have completed PDev II's vocational and income generation training programs. Lasting from several weeks to several months, they help attendees build a useful set of skills in fields ranging from tailoring to auto mechanics and food preparation/catering. Community Action Committees (CACs) or Community Development Committees (CDCs) identify fields that can generate income for marginalized youth in their communities and also help identify individuals who can benefit from such training. The graduates receive a certificate and a start-up kit with materials that can help them get started and begin generating income. The programs have proven successful—in the fourth quarter of 2015, for example, 80 percent of the trainees in Burkina Faso were actively working.

PDev II has also provided welding equipment to vocational training centers and entered into public-private partnerships that have created opportunities for young people to complete internships that give them on-the-job training in areas such as banking and finance.

A Life Transformed

Bocar Douramane is a participant of the program, who learned carpentry skills at a PDev II vocational training program in Burkina Faso. Upon graduating, he received a start-up kit containing carpentry tools and safety gear, which allowed him to set up a small carpentry shop where he began making furniture—including tables, shelves, desks and chairs—to sell in his neighborhood.

"I've never been as happy as I am now," Douramane said. "The end of the year was always a stressful time for me, as I had to think of costs of year-end gifts and celebrations, and wonder where I was going to get the money for my family. This year, however, thanks to the USAID/PDev II training, I had enough money to buy my wife beautiful cloth for new clothes, and even had enough to buy a small motorbike for the family." PDev II, he adds, has "shown results and given me hope for a better future."



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