



PDev II

# Partnering with Local Governments to Promote Peace

Local government officials have both the authority and the resources to provide important services that can help make communities more resistant to extremist recruiters. Such responsibilities are carried out most effectively by well-trained officials who collaborate with citizens in an environment characterized by transparency and accountability.

One of the key objectives of the Peace through Development II (PDev II) program is to strengthen local governments in Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, by promoting greater citizen engagement, filling skills gaps within official ranks and fostering a culture that helps ensure that constituents' needs are being served.

In the course of implementing various PDev II activities to counter violent extremism, local government authorities have grown accustomed to working openly with youth and civil society organizations (CSOs). For example, they have helped young men and women to raise awareness and disseminate information on election rules and regulations in Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger, and to lead conferences on public health, security and tolerance in Niger. They have also appeared on call-in radio shows to discuss strategies used by extremist groups to recruit youth in Chad.

## Assessing and Filling Gaps in Government Processes

The Local Government Capacity Index (LGCI) is a tool that helps PDev II staff assess local government capacity to serve a community. The results are used to measure progress and to provide appropriate trainings, which might focus, for example, on participatory municipal budget development, or conflict prevention and management during electoral periods. The trainings involve both theory and practice—for example, several days might feature the development of a “trial budget” at village general meetings during which citizens identify their priorities and participate in the elaboration of the budget. Such sessions have drawn hundreds of community members and afforded them their first opportunities to review and discuss their municipal budgets and other aspects of local governance, and to make recommendations.



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**5-day training workshops in each of Niger's 20 core zones**

Hands-on training of  
**157 local government officials**  
& CDC members in  
**participatory budget development**

**713 participants** in community-level budget discussions

In Niger, PDev II staged a conference that allowed local government officials to come together and share lessons learned and best practices. Following the national conference, regional conferences brought together members of government-community liaison groups known as Cadres de Concertation (CDCs), local government authorities and local CSOs to enable exchanges on important issues in their municipalities.

The primary good-governance practices PDev II has implemented in Chad and Niger include participatory municipal budget development, interactive radio debates (featuring mayors responding to listener questions and suggestions), town hall meetings, sharing of annual municipal activity reports with citizens, best practice competitions among municipalities, and recording and broadcasting municipal council working sessions. Some of these practices have also been implemented in Burkina Faso.

Another way that local government is being strengthened is through grants awarded to Community Action Committees (CACs) and CDCs to carry out activities such as roundtables, forums, and workshops in order to improve communication and collaboration between local government and its citizens. Other grants focused on specific issues in the respective communities: one grant financed participatory theater performances encouraging peaceful coexistence between farmers and breeders; another financed a study tour for town hall staff, CAC and CSO members, and radio station personnel to learn how to use media outlets to communicate with the public; still another was given to help a CAC

resolve conflicts of land tenure, which resulted in a land management charter.

### Harvesting the Benefits of Greater Citizen Engagement

The dissemination of local annual development plans and reports has become a much-anticipated event in many communities. Community meetings—which have included traditional leaders, religious leaders, CAC, CDC and CSO representatives, youth leaders and community members—have also been well attended by local residents. Discussions during such meetings and during radio debates have focused on significant problems facing communities, such as public hygiene and sanitation, taxes, insecurity, urban traffic problems, corruption and conflict prevention.

One example of an outcome stemming from the greater awareness and participation of citizens in community development and in the management of resources is the establishment of a monthly clean-up competition in one community in Niger, in order to address concerns about public health and garbage. The mayor's office and members of the CDC established a committee to pay monthly visits to each neighborhood in the commune, rate its cleanliness and issue awards to the one considered to be the cleanest. Another municipality that began to incorporate greater citizen input saw an increase in its tax recovery rates.



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