

Bringing Youth from Communities of Awal and Ghadames Together to Lay Foundations for Safer Communities and Build Peace

In 2006, conflict broke out between the Tuareg and Arab communities living in Ghadames but this was swiftly halted, due to tough security measures. In 2011, conflict erupted again, resulting in casualties and damage to both sides. As a result, the Tuareg left Ghadames and moved to Awal, 40 kilometres away. Since 2011, there have been several reconciliation initiatives but none have been able to resolve the dispute.

In 2018, the Peacebuilding Network, with support from PCi, implemented the project “Its Safety by its Youth” involving 14 young people (5 females and 9 males) from Awal and Ghadames. In the first instance, the two groups met separately as there was a lot of suspicion and fear. Subsequently, a four-day workshop was held in Ghadames with 14 youth attending and focused on “Peacebuilding and Peaceful Coexistence, Conflict Analysis and an Introduction to UNSCR 2250”. This led to a low key four-day workshop in Tripoli on “Communication, Building Alliances and Civil Partnerships” where media were specifically not invited:

- The workshops enabled the youth to implement small peace initiatives in Awal and Ghadames respectively and this provided an environment that was conducive to meeting together in Ghadames and Tripoli where the youth were able to build their understanding of concepts such as human rights, conflict, violence etc. and how they relate to peace building;
- The youth acquired skills and knowledge to manage their differences and equipped them with the knowledge to claim their rights in a civil way;
- The youth became more aware of the role they have to play in making their communities a safer place to live, through peaceful coexistence. In one major breakthrough, the youth started to use Facebook to indicate they wanted to see more efforts focused on peace in their two communities;
- The youth set up a partnership/coalition which successfully received funding from an international NGO to support social peace initiatives between the two groups;
- The youth were able to open up channels of communication between the Tuareg and Arab communities and this synergy laid the foundations for the implementation of a dialogue forum on the importance of the Constitution, convened in Ghadames in November 2018, with support from PCi.

What is the Peacebuilding Network?

The Peacebuilding Network known as the “Network” fosters networking and collaboration opportunities between peacebuilders from across the country, so that they can build relationships between different communities, learn from one another and deliver on initiatives that cover a broad range of areas including conflict prevention and management between tribal groups, transitional justice and countering hate speech and racism.



PCI, worked to strengthen the peacebuilding capacity of Tuareg and Arab youth in Ghadames, with a view to building relationships and trust between the two groups who have previously experienced conflict

Abdulsami is from the community living in Ghadames and participated in the project, he said: "In 2011, I wanted no contact with Tuareg people especially those who were pro-Gaddafi. I use to have Tuareg friends but when the clashes between the pro-Gaddafi and the rebels broke out, I stopped talking to them and these relationships came to an end. In 2015, I began to become more open towards a positive change process as my ideas and desires were increasingly leaning towards the establishment of a country that respects the law, human basic rights and liberties which can only be achieved through national reconciliation as a solid foundation for building our country. From here, my desire grew to engage in the project "Its Safety by its Youth".



Participants at the workshop in Tripoli, August 2018

Hassan is from the community living in Awal and participated in the project, he said: "The positive change towards the other side started when I joined several reconciliation and dialogue activities in Misrata and Tunis and I began to leave behind my negative thoughts behind and embrace dialogue and peaceful demand of rights. I then joined "Its Safety by its Youth" as I was curious and wanted to learn about the perspectives of the other party. This was a very positive experience for me, it broke down my view of stereotypes."