



## RAIN NEWS

## SUMMER 2009

RAIN has just completed the fifth and final year of a USAID-funded scholarship and mentoring program. The program was designed to provide girls with academic tutors. In RAIN's region fewer than 15% of women are literate. We recruited these nonliterate women to teach afterschool classes in traditional skills such as leather work, knitting and sewing. We prepared them with classes in issues relating to health, hygiene and gender roles so they could be effective counselors. Introduced to school, sharing with students, gaining confidence, the women requested literacy classes for themselves. Now they've been studying their written language, Tifinagh, as well as Niger's national language, French, for 18 months.

The program has been a wonderful success. The students, from the poorest parts of the community, have surpassed the performance of their peers. The mentors are recognized as community leaders and have gained knowledge and self-esteem. We are thrilled.

We'd like you to meet a few of our RAIN mentors and their scholarship students.

*"I decided to be a mentor for the development of our region and our country and so that our children would not reject our cultures, so that they would learn valuable trades." Fournera Alassane*

*"I have been elevated by mentoring...I have had an experience beyond my normal life. I am proud to be a mentor." Tikna Ahmed*

*"The students gave me courage to be a good mentor... they also helped me to learn to read and write." Aboucka Ahmoudjiira*



"Thanks to the mentoring program I came to have before me a group of students who respect me. This is Fatima Wamalane. She is from a nomadic family displaced from Gougaram due to political insecurity in the region. When we met she did not work at school and was failing. Thanks to my counseling she became an average student and has learned the skill of straw weaving."  
Fatima Daya



"Due to the exchange of information between the mentors and the students my life has changed for the better. Our knowledge is multiplied many times. This is Azara Mohamed. Her friends told her not to go to school. She wanted to follow them but now that she has a mentor Azara attends to her studies very well. She is among the best students in her class." Tarbane Ewalwal

*"Education helps reduce poverty by increasing productivity of the poor, by reducing fertility and improving health, and by equipping people with the skills they need to participate fully in the economy and in society."*

Forum for African Women Educationalists

*"For every additional year girls go to school, they receive 20 percent higher wages and suffer 10 percent fewer child deaths."* UNICEF



"This is Habsatou Mahaman Iliassou who attends the Akokan high school. Her father is deceased. She follows my advice and she has learned how to embroider bed sheets. Today she is very contented." Hadiza Mahaman



"This is Oumarou Mahaman. He is 16 years old. Oumarou lives in the shanty town section of Arlit. Before he did not work at school; his parents weren't interested in his education. Today, thanks to mentoring, he works hard and has learned. Oumarou is very happy and satisfied with his work. His family now encourages him." Ibra Amoudou

*"A girl wanted to marry at a young age. I counseled her against this and the next day she remarked that I was completely right about this. She thanked me so much and now pursues her studies diligently."*  
Hadiza Mahaman



"This is Ichirif Ahmed. He is very intelligent and disciplined. His parents are poor. At first he did not like to go to school but with my mentoring he learned to cook. He is very brave. His dream is to be a chef." Mari Jasmine



"This is Hadiza Chaibou. She is an orphan. Since she's been in the mentoring program she has become very content and courageous. She has progressed very well in all her activities and she truly loves her studies." Foutchoukou Sidahmar

The USAID-sponsored scholarship program has come to an end. Seeing the impact we've had on the women and children in the RAIN program compels us to continue, and expand to all RAIN-supported schools in Niger. The cost of helping these children and mentors to succeed in school, and to learn skills vital to their future well-being, is only \$250 per student per year.

*We are grateful to Newman's Own Foundation which just awarded RAIN \$10,000 for next year's mentoring program. The Foundation is a private, independent foundation established by Paul L. Newman. The Foundation continues the commitment of Paul Newman to donate all net profits and royalties earned from the sale of Newman's Own products to charity. As of June 2009, over \$267 million has been donated to thousands of charities around the world. The Foundation has generously supported RAIN through annual grants since 2003.*

Please join Newman's Own Foundation in supporting RAIN's quest for literacy and livelihoods for Niger's nomadic peoples by sponsoring a scholarship child --- or two, or three.....