

2015

Annual Report



ON THE PATHWAY TOWARDS PEACE

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

Message from Our Founder & CEO

For too many communities around the world, 2015 was a difficult year. Millions remain displaced in Syria in the midst of a worsening civil war. Disease, hunger, and violence continue to threaten children, women, and men in South Sudan even after a peace deal supposedly brought an end to two years of armed conflict. And in nations around the globe, the threat of violent extremism grows.

But still, I remain hopeful for our world's future. I believe that there is a light that exists within every human being. It is a divine spark that gives all of us the capacity for extraordinary goodness—to love, to create, to help, to forgive. Where there is darkness in the world—wherever there is no peace—it is not because these sparks have been extinguished, but because there is not enough kindling for them to grow into a fire. In many ways, this is exactly the role of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals: to help communities around the world create the conditions that will allow these sparks to ignite and for peace and growth to take hold.

I founded the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for the same end—to help young women and men across the globe come together to drive out the darkness of violence and poverty in their communities. Our mission is to facilitate peacebuilding and reconciliation in parts of the world impacted by conflict. Three years after WPDI's founding we are already seeing powerful results. In South Sudan, over 2,750 young women and men have been empowered, committed, trained, or mentored by WPDI, including advanced trainers who will spread messages of peace and tolerance to other youths in local communities. In Northern Uganda, more than 600 youth, including former child soldiers,

have received training in conflict resolution, computer skills, and entrepreneurship. In Mexico, over 1,200 people have been positively impacted by our peacemakers' community-building projects, which include classes and rehabilitation programs for incarcerated youth. Across the globe we've built a worldwide network of youth peacemakers with in-depth training in conflict mediation, project management, computers and social media, and life skills.

These peacemakers inspire me. So many of them have suffered unspeakable hardships, and yet even though the world has taken so much from them, they still give so freely of their time and energy to the pursuit of peace. The world needs these young peacemakers, now more than ever, to carry the message that peace always prevails over war, that education and dialogue among people always wins out over ignorance and disengagement. I am grateful to them for all that they do in the service of peace—as I am to WPDI's committed staff and our dedicated partners from around the world who have worked tirelessly this past year to help our youth peacemakers achieve their objectives. Much work remains in 2016 and the years beyond. But, together, with our love and support, I believe that our peacemakers will come together in communities around the globe to build fires of peace that will drive out any darkness.



Forest Whitaker addressing speakers of parliaments at the United Nations

“When communities have been touched by darkness, when they have been shattered by violence or poverty, their energy must be rekindled from within. For these communities, recovery is always possible but never inevitable.”

Forest Whitaker

Why WPDI?

WPDI was born out of the belief that our single greatest hope for peace is to empower youths all around the planet to become leaders, thinkers, and agents of positive transformation in their communities. Violence has always had a major impact on the lives of young people—they are often among the first to be targeted as victims or recruited to join armed forces—but for too long, leaders and policymakers have seen youths as being only those things, victims or perpetrators, and not as partners, as equals, with the capacity to be voices for hope and forces for peace.

This can and must change. There are already encouraging signs. The newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals will help the world take important steps to achieve universal education, improve access to information, end the use of child soldiers, and reach other outcomes that will empower youths to participate in the

political and peacemaking processes. And just recently, in December 2015, the UN Security Council passed its first ever resolution on the role of young people in ending armed conflict. The Security Council is calling on nations to do more not only to protect youths living in areas impacted by conflict, but to engage them as leaders and decision makers who have an important part to play in shaping the future of their countries.

This is exactly what WPDI has been working toward since the beginning. Founded in 2012 by artist, social activist, and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation Forest Whitaker, WPDI seeks to bring young women and men together and to empower them to become peace leaders and agents of positive transformations in their countries and communities.

Our programs strive to:

- **Empower a new generation of peacebuilders with trainings in conflict resolution, computers and technology, entrepreneurship, and life skills.**
- **Harness the potential of the Internet and mobile technology to connect individuals and communities and provide them with valuable educational resources.**
- **Build social networks to empower young people as peace leaders who can disseminate values of tolerance and reconciliation.**
- **Mobilize international and local partners who can provide expertise in conflict resolution.**
- **Launch micro-funding initiatives to help youth leaders develop and implement projects in their communities.**



Youth peacemakers in Chiapas, Mexico collaborating on a team project

Our Support of the SDGs





In 2015, the world came together and adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that target global progress on some of the most difficult and stubborn international challenges, from ending poverty to taking action on climate change to achieving full gender equality. These goals set a universal agenda for governments, NGOs, and citizens around the world to take action in making meaningful development toward our shared realization of worldwide peace and freedom.

WPDI actively seeks partnerships at all levels of our work. These new SDGs allow us, and countless other

organizations, to align our operations with the broader global agenda. Indeed, much of WPDI's work—including our efforts to promote education and literacy, to empower women and men with Internet and connectivity, and to advocate for non-violence and the end to conflicts—falls squarely in line with several of the new SDGs. As UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, Forest Whitaker contributed to the global debate that led to the finalization of this new global agenda, the success of which will depend on the ability of governments, businesses, and civil society to harness the power of youth. Below are the SDG targets to which our activities and outcomes contribute.

The UN SDGs: Responding to the global challenge through partnership

A key aspect of WPDI's action is to work in line with partners at all levels. To achieve such synergies, WPDI makes effort to develop its strategies and activities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015. As UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, Forest Whitaker has contributed to the global debate that led to the finalization of this new global agenda the success of which will depend on the ability of governments, businesses and civil society to harness the power of youth. Below are the Sustainable Development Goals with which our activities and outcomes are tuned.

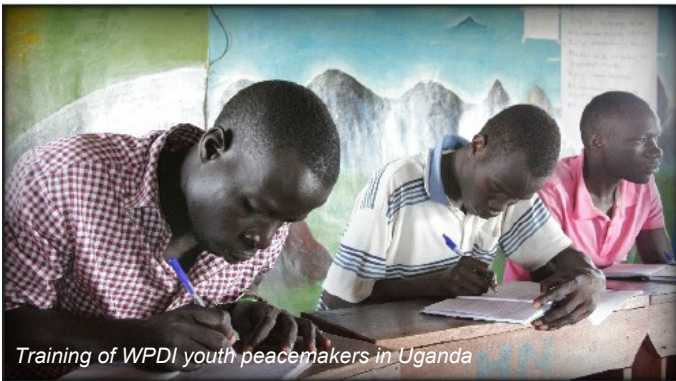
SDG Goal	SDG Target
 ISUPPORT GOAL 4 QUALITY EDUCATION  ISUPPORT GOAL 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
	4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
	8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms
 ISUPPORT GOAL 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE  ISUPPORT GOAL 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020
	12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature
 ISUPPORT GOAL 16 PEACE AND JUSTICE	16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
	16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
	16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
	16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime



WPDJ Peacemaker conducting a peacebuilding training for students at a school in Torit, South Sudan

WPDI: 2015 in Brief

*In nations around the world, WPDI's programs are **empowering thousands of young women and men**, engaging these youths in constructive educational and peacebuilding activities.*



Training of WPDI youth peacemakers in Uganda

UGANDA

Through the Youth Peacemaker Network, we are training a cohort of young women and men in conflict mediation, business management, and community building, and we are supporting them as they launch income-generating activities and development projects in their communities.

At Hope North Secondary School—a refuge for former child soldiers and orphans of Uganda's civil war—we have launched a Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program and have established a computer lab with daily classes.

Our training facility in Gulu has been fully renovated and will serve as a Community Learning Center beginning in early 2016.

We have launched expansions of our Peace Through Sports and Cinema for Peace programs in Northern Uganda, connecting young people on the soccer field and bringing people together through the power of film.

The Starkey Hearing Foundation has worked with several of our youth peacemakers, training them to provide support and maintenance for individuals with hearing aids in Northern Uganda.



Training of WPDI youth peacemakers in Mexico

MEXICO

The first cohort of youth from the Harmonizer Program in Tijuana graduated this May after over a year of comprehensive training in peacebuilding, conflict mediation, computers and technology, and life skills.

In Tijuana, these youths are now implementing the community-building projects they have been designing since early 2014. These projects are making progress on a wide range of social issues. Our peacemakers are leading anti-bullying classes, starting a community garden, promoting environmental awareness, and more.

We've established a new partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tijuana where our peacemakers are providing children ages of 6 to 16 with lessons on conflict resolution.

We launched a new deployment of the Harmonizer Program in Mexico in the state of Chiapas, where a new cohort of young women and men is currently engaged in comprehensive peacebuilding training.



SOUTH SUDAN

After a year of training, our first cohort of high-level trainers in the Youth Peacemaker Network completed our holistic peacebuilding curriculum and have recruited a group of over 150 young women and men to join them in launching community development projects in Eastern Equatoria State.

We are building a network of Community Learning Centers across Eastern Equatoria. These centers provide free Internet access and computer and literacy classes, open to the public, and serve as a hub of community activities and engagement.

Our Peace Through Sports initiative provides youths living in a camp for internally displaced people with a constructive outlet for their energy. This program brings people together on the soccer field and provides participants with trauma healing and peace education.

The Cinema for Peace program encourages people at these camps to come together to discuss movies with themes of hope and reconciliation and helps individuals understand how these concepts are relevant in their daily lives.

The Peace Road Initiative is a project undertaken by some of our youths to repair an important road in Eastern Equatoria that has fallen into disrepair. The refurbished road will connect tens of thousands of people to vital services.



UNITED STATES

We are working with sixth grade students at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Compton, California, infusing training in basic conflict resolution techniques with arts and drama lessons.

We have partnered with California State University, Dominguez Hills to create a new CRE program that can be implemented across an entire middle school and integrated with core academic subjects.



Nurturing the Seeds of Peace in South Sudan



A remote village in Wau, South Sudan

South Sudan remains in a state of humanitarian crisis following a nearly two-year civil war that's resulted in the displacement of millions of people and the deaths of tens of thousands. More than half the population of this fragile nation currently lives below the poverty line. Throughout South Sudan, WPDI is working with passionate young women and men to restore calm, strengthen communities, and spur development. In Eastern Equatoria State, we have re-launched the Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN), a program that empowers youths as leaders and peacebuilders and connects them to each other so that they can bring development projects to their communities. We are also building a network of Community Learning Centers throughout that state that offer Internet access and computer and literacy classes to the public. And we are actively involved at a camp for internally displaced citizens in Juba, promoting peace and reconciliation through WPDI's Cinema for Peace and Peace Through Sports programs.

The Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) in South Sudan is designed to connect young women and men from the country's 10 states so that they can work together as leaders and peacebuilders, serving as agents of positive change within their communities. The ultimate goal of the YPN is to equip youth peacemakers with the social and technical competencies necessary to mitigate conflict within their communities.



18 high-level youth leaders

in the Youth Peacemaker Network have graduated from WPDI's holistic peace-building training program

200,000+ people

in Eastern Equatoria will benefit from a group of youths' work to refurbish a 60-kilometer stretch of road that has fallen into disrepair

2,000+ youth

are participating in the Peace Through Sports program and are receiving life skills coaching and support coping with emotional trauma at the UN's protection of civilians (POC) camp in Juba



Training of WPDI youth peacemakers in South Sudan

Bringing Young People Together through the YPN

In 2014, following a year-long hiatus of the YPN given the civil war in South Sudan, WPDI re-launched the program in Eastern Equatoria State. We recruited 18 young women and men, two per county, and provided them with holistic peacebuilding training in conflict mediation, community building, project management, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and life skills. These youths are called “trainers of trainers” or “ToTs,” because they will train the next cohort of YPN youths who will in turn pass on these positive messages of peace and tolerance throughout their communities.

2015 was a pivotal year for the YPN in Eastern Equatoria, as a group of 18 ToTs graduated from WPDI's comprehensive peacebuilding curriculum after having completed 120 hours of trainings. This year, the YPN in Eastern Equatoria entered a crucial second phase where the ToTs will develop community-building projects with local youths they have recruited from across the state. This August, with the support of UN Women and WPDI, the ToTs were able to recruit a group of 156 youths from every payam—a political sub-division in South Sudan below the county—of the state. In

every county of Eastern Equatoria State, our ToTs have also established a Peace Council, a group of prominent community members who will advise and support the youth peacemakers' efforts. The purpose of the Peace Councils is to ensure that our youths' work aligns with the needs and attitudes of each community. Thanks to the support of UN Women, we have introduced gender-equality training into the YPN this year so that negative practices that block the participation of women and girls from activities will be eliminated.

This core group of 156 youth, selected from all across Eastern Equatoria, will be trained as peacebuilders and leaders by the ToTs in early 2016 and will assist them in creating community-building projects and income-generating activities in their villages.



156 youths
from villages across Eastern
Equatoria have been recruited to
join the Youth Peacemaker
Network



Literacy class at a WPDI Community Learning Center in Torit, South Sudan



Cinema for Peace Program at the POC site in Juba, South Sudan



Youth participants of the Peace through Sports program at the POC site in Juba, South Sudan

Support for South Sudan's Most Vulnerable

UN authorities have set up a series of protection-of-civilian (POC) sites throughout the country to host the almost 2 million South Sudanese citizens who remain internally displaced following the recent civil war. When Forest Whitaker visited some of the POC sites in 2014, he saw that many young people in the camps were growing restless and engaging in destructive behavior for lack of structure and purpose. Worse, feelings of hate and revenge were being allowed to fester.

WPDI created two programs at the POC site in South Sudan's capital of Juba to engage youths in productive activities and to sensitize them to values of peace and reconciliation. The Peace Through Sports program, operated with the support of the South Sudan Football Association, brings together more than 2000 young women and men every day on newly constructed athletic facilities. The program unites youths across ethnicities through the joy of sports and provides participants with crucial psychosocial support as well as lessons on peace and forgiveness. And thousands of the camp's residents participate regularly in Peace Through Cinema, a series of film screenings and discussions that WPDI organizes around the themes of tolerance, respect, and reconciliation. These initiatives have proven to be incredibly popular at the POC sites and are now being incorporated into WPDI's work elsewhere in South Sudan and around the world.



35 youths

became certified **soccer coaches** at the POC camp after completing 120 hours of trainings provided by the South Sudan Football Association



1,000+ people

at the POC camp in Juba regularly attend **film screenings and discussions** organized by WPDI on forgiveness and tolerance



Connecting Communities

Education opens doors to new worlds of knowledge and opportunities. But in communities impacted by violence and poverty, young people often do not have access to the educational resources they need to lift themselves out of these vicious cycles. WPDI—jointly with UNESCO, Ericsson, and Zain—is constructing a network of Community Learning Centers in South Sudan that serve as hubs for education, technology, and civic engagement where all are welcome.

In 2015, this network has continued to expand with centers now established in Torit and Nimule and three renovated in the Greater Kapoeta area that will be

fully operational in January 2016. The Internet access as well as courses in literacy and ICTs attract numerous users from neighboring communities and have proven to be very popular features of our work in South Sudan. Indeed, each center is routinely visited by over 200 people every month. Members of the YPN are using the centers as headquarters for their recruitment and community-building projects. In a field adjacent to our center in Nimule, South Sudan, a girls' soccer team has been established and holds weekly practices. Our vision for these centers is that they not only serve as locations for literacy classes and computer access, but also as vibrant hubs of community life where individuals can gather to participate in a wide range of activities and civic discourse.



Youth at WPDI's Community Learning Center in Nimule, South Sudan

Community Learning Centers

These Community Learning Centers are just one piece of WPDI's broader goal of helping to spur development in vulnerable, underserved communities. In Eastern Equatoria State, for example, work continues on the Peace Road Initiative, a joint project undertaken by WPDI and the state government to refurbish a crucial 60-kilometer stretch of road that had fallen into disrepair and become impassable. The clearing of the road will reconnect tens of thousands of citizens with the rest of the state and will give them newfound access to vital services.

200+ people per month
access the Internet and participate in
classes at each of the two Community
Learning Centers built in Eastern
Equatoria





Official advocacy mission for peace in South Sudan by Forest Whitaker and Valerie Amos

Official Visits and Advocacy

From February 6-14, 2015, Forest Whitaker visited South Sudan for the third time since June 2014. Part of his mission included a joint visit with Valerie Amos, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. They assessed the humanitarian situation on the ground and highlighted the importance of peace and early funding for the aid operation. During the three-day mission Ms. Amos and Mr. Whitaker met with communities affected by the crisis, senior government officials, and humanitarian partners to discuss ways of improving the security situation and the humanitarian operations in the country.

Following the official visit, on February 9, Forest Whitaker, attended a joint IGAD-UNOCHA-organized high-level meeting together with Ms. Amos and the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Ambassador Mahboub Maalim, in Nairobi. At the conference, US\$618 million was pledged, \$529 million of it new money, to support the humanitarian response in South Sudan.

“Our work for former child soldiers cannot end simply when they are freed from their armies. For so many of these children, war and violence are all they have known for the last few years, and if we do not take it upon ourselves to teach them something new—to reintegrate them back into society—then they are just soldiers-in-waiting. And if another conflict breaks out five or ten years in the future, they will be the first ones recruited to go back to the battlefield.”

From Forest Whitaker’s press conference with Valerie Amos in Juba



*A community ceremony in
South Sudan*

Testimonies



Lochebe Boniface Losike (30 years old), youth peacemaker

“Working with WPDI has inspired me not only to see the challenges that we face, but to also find solutions. During the past year of training and working with my fellow peacemakers, I realized that I have found my calling in life. I know that I want to do everything in my power to help the communities around me overcome their challenges and find peace. So I decided to enter politics, and recently, I became a Member of Parliament, sitting on the Peace and Reconciliation Committee. I will continue my work in the service of the people of Eastern Equatoria State and South Sudan, remembering always the lessons in peacebuilding that WPDI has taught me.”



Artha Akoo Kaka, South Sudanese student

“I had heard about computers before, but I had never seen one with my own eyes. Then I found out that WPDI had opened a community center and that free computer trainings were being offered. I was immediately interested to come and learn. Now, I come here almost every day. After a tutor taught me how to use the Internet, I began looking up everything I could and learning about people like Nelson Mandela and President Obama. I am so excited to be able to access any information that I need at any time, and this is only possible because of this center.”



James Gai (14 years old), Peace Through Sports participant

“I started playing in this WPDI field in January 2015. I am always happy especially when playing here. I wish to become the best football player in South Sudan. I would like to thank Mr. Whitaker for providing us with the opportunity to play football and providing us with equipment and fields. I come here every morning to play with my team.”

Strengthening Communities in Post-Conflict Uganda



WPDI youth peacemakers in Uganda attending a business training

For nearly 20 years, civil war raged in Uganda as the Lord's Resistance Army launched a violent insurgency. The fighting was concentrated in the Northern Region of the country, where over 2 million people were displaced and thousands of children were abducted and forced to serve as soldiers. Although a peace was brokered in 2006, communities throughout this post-conflict nation remain in a fragile state as they struggle to build a lasting prosperity.

WPDI has been active in Uganda since our founding in 2012, helping former child soldiers and vulnerable youths heal from the trauma of war and find inner-peace. Now, we are expanding our programs in Northern Uganda, supporting young women and men throughout the region as they seek to create harmony and spark development in their communities.

30 young women and men

in the Youth Peacemaker Network have been trained as **community builders and entrepreneurs** and are addressing their communities' most serious challenges as well as starting businesses that provide employment opportunities for at-risk youth

280+ students

at **Hope North Secondary School** are participating in WPD's Conflict Resolution Education program and are taking **daily computer classes** at a computer lab built by WPD

100+ students

have attended the **Cinema for Peace program** at Hope North, which will be expanded to other schools in 2016

200+ youths

have participated thus far in **Peace Through Sports'** recent expansion to Northern Uganda

15 youth peacemakers

have been trained by the Starkey Hearing Foundation in **community-based hearing health care**



WPD staff conducting an ICT training at Hope

New Expansions

As WPDI grows, major expansions in Uganda are underway. With the help of Ericsson, we have built a computer lab on Hope North's campus that holds daily computer classes for the school's 289 students. We have also developed a Conflict Resolution Education curriculum at Hope North, providing its students with actionable tools to cope with disagreements and challenges in their everyday lives. In the coming years, we would like to bring this program to additional secondary schools throughout Northern Uganda.

In 2015, we renovated a new national office in Gulu, a city where we have also recently built a Community Learning Center, bringing Internet access and free computer and literacy classes to adults and youths in the area. Thanks to our partnership with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, 15 of our youth peacemakers in Northern Uganda have been trained to provide assistance to community members who need support or replacement with their hearing aids as part of Starkey's After-Care Program. The Gulu Community Learning Center serves as a base for these activities.

We have plans to build a network of 30 Community Learning Centers across Northern Uganda over the next five years, which will function not only as sites for computer and literacy classes but also as hubs for productive community activities.

WPDI has also started branches of Peace Through Sports and Cinema for Peace in Northern Uganda. Both of these programs were piloted at camps for internally displaced persons in South Sudan, but they proved to be incredibly popular and effective in engaging individuals in discussions about tolerance and reconciliation. Peace Through Sports uses soccer to bring people together on the playing field and to educate them about inclusion, forgiveness, and peace. Cinema for Peace gets people talking about similar themes and ideas through the power of film. Free movie screenings are followed by group conversations and other activities for children. Initial launches of the programs in Uganda have been very positive. We anticipate that tens of thousands of people will participate in Peace Through Sports and Cinema for Peace over the coming years.



WPDI staff member providing guidance to youth peacemakers in Uganda



WPDI youth peacemakers in Uganda attending a business training

Economic Opportunities Through the Youth Peacemaker Network

One of our most significant developments in this nation is the launch of the Youth Peacemaker Network in Northern Uganda. We've trained and certified 30 young men and women as peace-builders, entrepreneurs, project managers, and conflict mediators, and now these youths are working with other young people in their villages to implement community-building projects that combat alcoholism, encourage students to stay in school, and more.

One of the largest root causes of conflict in Northern Uganda is a general lack of economic opportunity among youth. That's why several of our youth peacemakers' projects are conceived as

small businesses—such as a local electronics store, Internet cafes, or small-scale farming enterprises—that will provide jobs and income for unemployed youths in the area. Many of the trainings offered to our youth peacemakers this past year focused on business management and entrepreneurship so that they had the practical skills in those areas necessary to oversee these projects. WPDJ is supporting our youths' businesses with a micro-loans program, but one of the ultimate goals of the projects is that they become self-sustaining. This revenue will support our peacemakers' efforts throughout the region and will spur further development and opportunity across Northern Uganda.

DISTRICT	MISSION STATEMENT	INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES
Wakiso	To promote peace in Wakiso by reducing unemployment among youth through vocational trainings	Hair and beauty Salon Craft making Electronics shop
Gulu	To build peace in Gulu by reducing alcoholism and drug abuse through sports programs and ICT trainings	Selling produce
Kiryandongo	To promote peace in Kiryandongo by reducing the school dropout rate through community outreach and sports programs	Selling produce
Pader	To build peace in Pader by reducing alcoholism and drug abuse among youths and by addressing their effects through a music, dance, and drama program as well as through a sports program	Growing sunflowers and rice
Abim	To reduce the school dropout rate in Abim District by creating awareness on the dangers of dropping out through community outreach and ICT training	Stationery, ICT, and secretarial services



Testimony

Cissy Namatovu (27 years old), youth peacemaker

“The biggest challenges in my community are unemployment and idleness among young people. After attending the first WPDJ workshop in December 2012, I became motivated to start an income-generating project—first a poultry farm, then a vegetable garden. Eventually I was able to purchase a fridge to begin selling cold soda and water at a nearby trading center. With continued WPDJ training in business skills and project planning and management, I, and two WPDJ colleagues, started an electrical appliances and repair shop, a joint venture with a small grant from WPDJ. These trainings gave me skills in communication, group dynamics, and conflict resolution. I have been able to work with my community to start businesses that, in addition to giving me income, have also changed my life.”

Spreading Hope Across Mexico



Youth peacemakers in Chiapas and trainers

As Mexico continues its rapid industrialization, on the way to becoming one of the planet's largest economies, vast sections of the population are being left behind, with many regions throughout Mexico still mired in stubborn poverty. What's more, crime and violence—much of which is brought on by Mexico's long-standing drug trade—continue to take lives and devastate communities across the nation. At Mexico's geographic extremes—from the city of Tijuana in the north, to the state of Chiapas in the south—WPDJ is working with committed groups of young women and men who come from two very different places, but who share a passion for peace and a desire to work together to make life better for their friends, families, and neighbors.

The Harmonizer Program in Mexico aims to provide to vulnerable youth in conflict-affected communities training in conflict resolution, community building, wellness and life coaching, and information and communications technology (ICT). Over the course of their trainings, the Harmonizers work together to identify the root causes of the challenges impacting their communities. And then they collaborate in designing and implementing projects that address these challenges in some meaningful way. The Harmonizer Program in Mexico was launched in Tijuana in 2014 and expanded to Chiapas in May of this year.

Creating Change in Tijuana

After over a year of trainings with more than 200 hours of instruction in conflict resolution, life and wellness coaching, breathing and movement techniques, project management, and computer skills, the 32 participants of the Harmonizer Program in Tijuana graduated in May 2015. They are now working in teams to implement their six community-building projects all of which were conceived of and designed by the youths themselves. Each team is supported and guided by WPDI local staff as well as a Peace Council, a group of community members and experts on the team's project topic that provides oversight and feedback on the youths' work.

The table below summarizes the six community building projects launched in Tijuana.



Youth Peacemaker Tijuana delivering a bullying workshop at a school

TEAM	MISSION STATEMENT
Community Being One	To organize presentations for children and youth to orient students about bullying, environmental awareness, and human rights.
To Care For, Protect, and Serve the Community	To help incarcerated teenagers by providing orientations and courses that encourage and motivate them to successfully reintegrate into society: to be able to find jobs, to fully immerse in their communities, and to promote peace through education and communication.
Youth with an Optimistic Conscience	To create educational interactions that promote a culture of peace among students by creating awareness about bullying in Tijuana.
Cultivarte	To provide accurate and helpful information so youth can take actions to care for the environment at home or school.
United Hands Weaving Lives	To support the community through the establishment of a community garden that will promote teamwork, unity, and a sense of community in Camino Verde.
Culture and Sports for Peace	To provide orientations to youth and children about conflict resolution so they can implement these teaching in their everyday life.

Over the first seven months of implementation, these projects have impacted more than 1,200 students and youths. But more important than the number of people our Harmonizers reach, we see every day the depth of the interactions and the strength of the connections they are making in their communities. They are demonstrating to a generation of children in their neighborhoods that young people can be involved and create major transformations in community life.

WPDI operates the Harmonizer Program in Tijuana thanks to the support of our national partners Svenska

PostkodStiftelsen, Ericsson, and UNESCO as well as our strategic partners in Tijuana, the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, the government of Baja California and the municipality of Tijuana, the Association of Advancement for Mexico, and Instituto Mexicano de Yoga, all of whom are essential to the program's success. WPDI also formed a new partnership this year with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tijuana, where our youth peacemakers will work to provide conflict resolution training to over 500 youths, ages 6 to 16.



A New Launch in Chiapas

In 2015, WPDJ launched the second branch of the Harmonizer Program in Mexico in the state of Chiapas. Located at the very southern tip of Mexico, Chiapas is the nation's poorest state—over 75 percent of the population lives in poverty and more than half of households lack access to running water or electricity. Chiapas has also been a historical site of conflict in Mexico. The high ratio of indigenous peoples throughout the state has often caused tensions that have, at times, boiled over into violence.

Through the Harmonizer Program, WPDJ seeks to help youths in Chiapas create a spark of development in their communities and bring people together across cultures and ethnicities. We have

recruited a group of 28 young women and men who have already participated in over six months of rigorous training similar to what our youths in Tijuana completed. Our Harmonizers in Chiapas have begun designing their community-development projects to be implemented when they finish their training. So far, these projects are focusing on bringing job skills to unemployed youths, providing sexual violence seminars for children and teenagers, and preventing alcohol and drug addiction.

The Harmonizer Program in Chiapas operates with support of our regional partners including, the Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas (Chiapas Intercultural University), Escuela Taller de Artes y Oficios (School-Workshop of Arts and Crafts), CORECO, and Educreando.



Youth peacemakers in Chiapas



Youth peacemaker in Tijuana

32 youths

in Tijuana graduated from WPDI's holistic peacebuilding program and have begun implementing six community-building projects across the city

1,282 community members

throughout Tijuana participated in and were positively impacted by our youths' projects

28 young women and men

in Chiapas were recruited for the Harmonizer Program expansion and have undergone over six months of peacebuilding training



WPDJ youth peacemakers in Chiapas attending a life skills training

**Elihu Ruíz Pérez (19 years old),
youth peacemaker, Chiapas**

“In the program, I have learned to coexist with my colleagues in order to create an atmosphere of peace between us and to cooperate with their projects. I have put into practice the tactics and methods of conflict resolution.”

**Jesús Alberto Niebla (20 years old),
youth peacemaker, Tijuana**

“Thank you, Mr. Whitaker, for your help and for the spiritual, ethical, and technological support for us to go out and make things happen for our community. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. and I am very grateful. Thank you for believing in us, on behalf of all the peacemakers.”

Supporting At-Risk Students in the United States

Nelson Mandela once said that “education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” To this end, much of WPDI’s work in the United States takes place in our schools. For several years, WPDI has worked with the Turnaround Arts Initiative of the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities—of which Forest Whitaker is a member—to support arts programs in America’s most low-achieving schools. In 2015, WPDI worked with Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Compton, California, delivering lessons in conflict resolution infused with art and drama. Over the course of the year, WPDI has worked with sixth grade classes at this school and emphasized basic communication skills, the importance of uncovering unmet needs as a way of positively resolving conflict, and that conflict can be an opportunity to make improvements in relationships and circumstances.

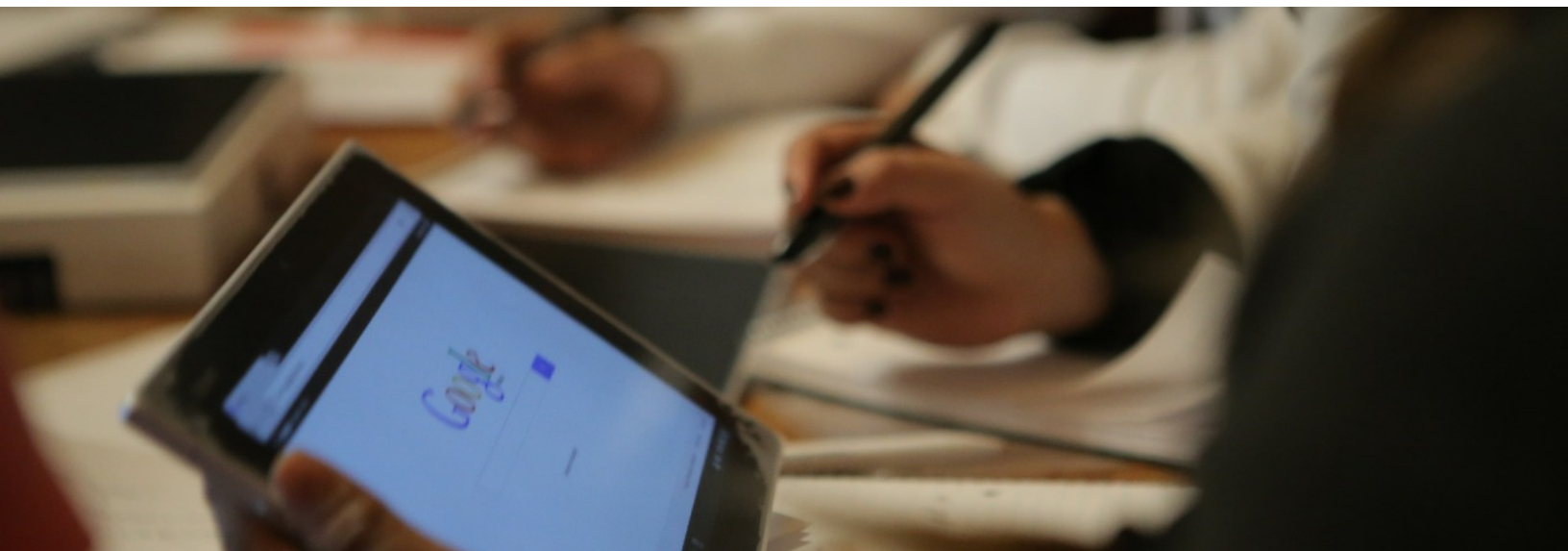
Learning to cope with conflict in a productive, healthy way should be an important aspect of all children’s education. Unfortunately, too many students—espe-

cially those who are living in communities impacted by poverty and violence—never receive these lessons. In 2015, WPDI partnered with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) to develop a high-impact middle school Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) curriculum. What sets this program apart from other CRE curricula and programs in Los Angeles and elsewhere is that WPDI’s program integrates and capitalizes upon the core academic subject areas in which students are engaged on a daily basis. WPDI is working with CSUDH to implement and evaluate a three-year pilot of the new CRE curriculum in Carson, California, a community that has seen its fair share of violence, bullying, and behavioral problems among students. This CRE curriculum will enhance students’ learning environments and promote the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts on campus among students. By building school cultures where students are expected to engage their classmates respectfully and settle their differences peacefully, we can help reinforce positive attitudes and behaviors that will stay with youths their whole lives.



Forest Whitaker with 6th grade students at MLK Jr. Elementary School following the students conflict resolution presentations

The Intersection of Peace and Technology



In the 21st century, when we talk about “education,” we are not only referring to the learning that takes place from books, school, and universities. Modern technologies have revolutionized our ability to connect to each other and find information, and we are living at a time when accessing knowledge and seeking out educational resources are easier than ever before. But these technological gains have not been equally distributed around the world. According to the International Telecommunication Union, in developed countries, 82 percent of individuals use the Internet. In developing countries, this figure is only 35 percent. And in the least-developed countries, as categorized by the UN, it is only 10 percent.

WPDI seeks to increase connectivity in communities throughout the developing world so that young women and men in these areas have access to the educational resources and communication tools that their counterparts in developed countries take for granted. With these technologies, youths will be able to expand their horizons, opening new doors of knowledge and learning that will enrich their lives and shape their desire and ability to build peace in their communities. And, through social media and digital platforms built by WPDI, youths from the same village or opposite sides of the planet will be able to form friendships, exchange ideas, and create coalitions that will change the world.

Information and communications technologies (ICTs), therefore, are central to every program designed and implemented by WPDI. Throughout 2015, WPDI worked side-by-side with Ericsson to design and deliver

ICT classes in our programs in Uganda, South Sudan, and Mexico. We have also established a network of Community Learning Centers—two in Uganda and five in South Sudan—that provide community members with Internet access and computer and literacy classes. ICTs also play an important role in assessing each WPDI program, as they allow us to monitor the participants’ progress.

WPDI has a private platform on our website developed specifically for our youths (www.youthpacemakernetwork.org). In 2015, we expanded our main website (www.wpdi.org), which generates monthly traffic in the thousands, and features blog posts from Forest Whitaker with his personal reflections on peace, conflict, and significant international events as well as videos that illustrate the work our youth peacemakers are engaging in around the world.

Global Outreach and Visibility

In 2015, WPDJ established an increased presence in the media and at the United Nations, thanks to the advocacy of our CEO & Founder. Forest Whitaker was invited to deliver a keynote address before the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from August 31 to September 2. This conference series was convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to promote dialogue and cooperation between parliaments at the highest level.

On September 29, Forest Whitaker participated in a high-level event on South Sudan organized for heads of state attending the UNGA. The event was hosted by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and co-chaired by the African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson, Erastus Mwencha, and the Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia. President Salva Kiir Mayardit addressed the event from Juba via videoconference, and Vice-President James Wani Igga, Riek Machar, and Pagan Amum Okech attended the event in person. Mr. Whitaker was invited because of his status as UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation and his efforts to promote dialogue among parties in South Sudan, including in the context of IGAD.

On September 27, Mr. Whitaker served as a speaker at the Social Good Summit jointly with Hans Vestberg, CEO of Ericsson, on the power of ICT for humanitarian response at the UN. The Social Good Summit is a two-day conference examining the impact of technology and new media on social-good initiatives around the world.

In December 2015, Mr. Whitaker contributed to the launch of the new HeForShe UN Women website, which features prominent personalities whose actions are creating impact around the world for girls, female adolescents, and women. Mr. Whitaker had the privilege of being one of the personalities invited to participate in this high-level advocacy platform. The HeForShe campaign was launched by UN Women to mobilize and address men and boys as change-makers for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, by encouraging them to take

action against the discriminations and injustices faced by women and girls in all countries.

In addition to these advocacy efforts, Mr. Whitaker also conducted a number of special media and TV interviews in 2015 to showcase the work of WPDJ and his role as a UNESCO Special Envoy. These interviews include:

- ◆ Al Arabiya News in October
- ◆ BBC Africa radio and TV in September
- ◆ BBC Newshour in September
- ◆ The Real Leaders in August
- ◆ Periodico El Mexicano in May
- ◆ TV Azteca in May
- ◆ Televisa Tijuana in May
- ◆ Telemundo in May
- ◆ Agencia Fronteriza de Noticias in May
- ◆ The Heat, interview about South Sudan in March
- ◆ BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera in February at the UNOCHA-IGAD pledge conference for South Sudan in Nairobi



A Look Ahead

From East Africa to the Pacific coast of North America, our peacemakers have made tremendous strides in 2015. Thousands of youths in these regions have made the choice to educate themselves about peace and non-violence and have committed themselves to spreading these messages of hope and tolerance throughout their communities. But these young women and men know that much work remains, and they are already looking eagerly toward 2016. Next year, we will continue to support our peacemakers as they deepen connections in the communities where they are engaged. As WPDJ grows, we are constantly finding new, innovative ways to educate and empower young people, and we will expand some of our most successful and popular programs—like Peace Through Sports and Cinema for Peace—throughout our current countries of action.

In addition to continuing to strengthen our existing programs, WPDJ is preparing to expand its reach in

2016. Following a joint assessment mission with UNESCO in May 2015, WPDJ will launch a new branch of the Youth Peacemaker Network in Myanmar this coming year. Throughout the mission, Mr. Whitaker and his team met with youth organizations, government officials, UN representatives, civil-society organizations, private-sector partners, as well as local community members to discuss how best to promote peace and reconciliation in Myanmar and the importance of youth empowerment. After decades of an autocratic regime that silenced political opposition, Myanmar has finally elected a truly democratic government. Our aim in launching a program in this nation is to support this new birth of freedom by empowering youths as leaders and peacemakers. This expansion to Myanmar is part of our ongoing effort to bring our programs to parts of the world touched by conflict and violence in their many forms. Over the next decade, we will be launching programs in several new countries, from East Asia to the Middle East and beyond.





WPDI is also poised in 2016 to broaden its work in the United States. In collaboration with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), we are launching a Conflict Resolution Education curriculum this year at a middle school in Carson, California. This program contributes to the development of youth leadership through classroom and school-wide coursework and initiatives that promote better communication, problem-solving, and interactive learning. CSUDH will aid us in evaluating this pilot before it is expanded to other middle schools in the Los Angeles-area and beyond.

Another new project that WPDI is undertaking in 2016 is the production of *Peace Warriors*, a documentary series about conflict, hope, and how young people around the world are coming together to create powerful change. Thanks to a generous grant from our partner Svenska PostkodStiftelsen, production on *Peace Warriors* will begin this coming year in South Sudan. WPDI will work with R2, a digital design

studio with operations in two dozen countries, and Significant Productions, an independent-film production company, to craft a documentary of 60 to 90 minutes as well as complementary web shorts that will be featured on YouTube and other social media platforms. *Peace Warriors* will follow members of WPDI's Youth Peacemaker Network, as they embark on their journeys to build peace in their communities, as a lens through which to explore the resilience of South Sudan's citizens during an ongoing humanitarian crisis and to illustrate how youths across the nation are working together to rebuild the country following a violent civil war. We also see this as an opportunity to enlighten an international audience on the dire situation in South Sudan.

All of our planned initiatives and expansions in 2016 seek to advance WPDI's core objectives: to empower young women and men across the planet to become leaders in their communities and to spread messages of peace and tolerance throughout the globe.

Leveraging the Power of Partnership

When communities live in harmony, enjoying peace and prosperity, it is never the result of just one person's or one organization's efforts. Rather, peace is born from a culture of cooperation. It requires the hard work and dedication of many individuals and entities, coming together to create

WPDI could not exist without the generous financial, logistical, and strategic support of our partners. We are proud to work with a wide range of organizations—private companies, NGOs, and governmental agencies—that share our belief that young women and men in conflict-impacted communities around the world have the capacity to come together to create extraordinary transformations. Our partners' dedication to our mission and expertise in the regions and spheres we work in has been absolutely crucial to the success of our youth peacemakers.

WPDI is honored to have joined forces with the following new partners in 2015 to strengthen and expand our programs:

- ◆ IKEA Foundation
- ◆ MasterCard Foundation
- ◆ KLM Royal Dutch Airlines
- ◆ UN Women
- ◆ One World Play Project
- ◆ South Sudan Football Association
- ◆ SCORE

We are also very thankful to our long-term partners for their continuous support:

Strategic Implementation Partners

Ericsson; Zain Group; Hope North; California State University, Dominguez Hills; Universidad Autonoma de Baja California; ASUME; Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas; Educreando; CORECO; The Earth Institute; Chadbourne & Parke; The Handel Group; The Brain Optimization Institute; Instituto Mexicano de Yoga; International Institute for Peace; Ringling College of Art and Design

Governmental organizations

UNESCO; Turnaround Arts Initiative; Office of the Mayor of the City of Tijuana, Mexico; Office of the Governor of Baja California, Mexico; Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture of South Sudan; The Youth Union of South Sudan; Gulu District, Uganda

Funding partners

Bright Future International / Unite:4Good; Svenska PostkodStiftelsen; Starkey Hearing Foundation



Our Founder

Artist and Social Activist, Forest Whitaker



Forest Whitaker believes that, in order to attain peace and prosperity, communities and nations must heed the voices of their diverse and vibrant youth. He and WPDI are committed to providing educational tools and better living conditions to young women and men living in regions touched by violence, war, and poverty.

Whitaker is the founder and CEO of WPDI, co-founder and chair of the International Institute for Peace, and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation. Whitaker is dedicated to cultivating youths' artistic talents. As a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, he is working closely with elementary school students to demonstrate the limitless power of the arts to express their voices and creative energies.

In addition to his social activism, Whitaker is one of Hollywood's most accomplished and versatile figures. Through his production companies, Significant Productions and JuntoBox Films, he aims to support young, talented filmmakers. He believes that film can enlighten people across the globe and can start meaningful dialogues about important subjects. He has produced several award-winning documentaries that touch on a wide range of social issues. He has also received many distinctions for his acting, including the 2007 Academy Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in *The Last King of Scotland*, a performance for which he also received a BAFTA Award, SAG Award, and Golden Globe. In

addition, Whitaker received the Best Actor Award for *Bird* at the 1988 Cannes Film Festival.

Whitaker's artistic and humanitarian contributions have been widely recognized at home and abroad. In 2007, he received the Cinema for Peace Award for his ongoing advocacy for child soldiers and his work with inner-city youth. He was awarded the Humanitas Prize in 2001. In 2008, he was a member of Barack Obama's Urban Policy Committee.

Whitaker currently serves as a senior research scholar at Rutgers University and a visiting professor at Ringling College of Art and Design. In 2013, Boston University's Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center appointed Whitaker a Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellow. That same year, he was made a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French government in recognition of his work serving those affected by conflicts and violence. Over the past few years, he has also received awards honoring his humanitarian work from the Los Angeles Press Club, the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the NAACP, Refugees International, the MLK Health Foundation, and more.

Whitaker's commitment to peace and social justice has led him to work in close collaboration with UNESCO. In 2011, Whitaker was designated a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation. In this role, he works toward global peace and community building through non-violence education, research, and training. In 2012, in recognition of his contributions to the values embodied by the UN, Whitaker received the United Nations Correspondents Association's Advocate of the Year Award. In 2014, he started collaborating with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict as an Advocate for Children Affected by War, a topic on which he was invited to speak before the UN Security Council in September of that year. Also in 2014, in line with this new partnership and following his increased work in conflict-impacted regions, he was designated a UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation.

Above all, Whitaker believes that ordinary people can and must come together to change the world. In his own words, "Even a seemingly small action can cause ripples that make an enormous impact."

WPDI Staff

WPDI Headquarters

Forest Whitaker, Founder and CEO
Caroline Descombris, Director of Operations and UNESCO Liaison Officer
Monya Kian, Program Manager
Jeremy Patashnik, Research and Communications Specialist
Laura Longoria, Administrative Assistant

WPDI South Sudan

David Dagu, Program Manager
James Caden, Program Coordinator
Paul Levi Wagbia, Program Assistant
Stella Oyet, State Coordinator
Alexander Moro, Sports Facilitator
Suzy Gulliver, Administrative Officer

WPDI Uganda

Joyce Sebit, Program Manager
Sylvia Amoding, Program Assistant
Lukwago “Joseph” Hassan, Program Support Assistant

WPDI Mexico

Francisco Diez, Latin America Director

Tijuana

Heriberto Garcia, Program Manager
Tanya Alejandra Moto, Program Assistant
Martin Toledo, Program Support Assistant

Chiapas

Kathia Loyzaga, Program Coordinator
Sophie Weber, Program Support Assistant



**1000 North Alameda Street, Suite 104
Los Angeles, California
United States of America**

www.wpdi.org

