

2016 Annual Report



Youth Transforming Our World



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

WPDI youth peacemakers
from Uganda and South Sudan



“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.”

Forest Whitaker, Founder & CEO, WPDI

Message from Our Founder & CEO

2016 was a difficult year for young people in too many regions of the world. In South Sudan in particular, where we operate several of our programs, conflict continues to prevent millions of people from living normal and peaceful lives. But in South Sudan and beyond, I feel blessed to be working directly with hundreds of committed young women and men who consistently put their communities' interests ahead of their own and work tirelessly to foster peace in the midst of extremely difficult circumstances.

Their strength and resilience inspire me. I've seen a young man in South Sudan, forced from his home in the midst of war, who returned to his village to help guide others to safety. I know a young woman in Tijuana, not even twenty-years-old, who's taking care of two siblings by herself and still finds the time to run a training program for teenagers in a local drug-rehabilitation center.

These are remarkable young women and men. And yet I think their courage is the rule, not the exception. Around the world, 250,000 boys and girls are serving as soldiers. Millions more live in communities crippled by poverty or violence. Too often, these youth are viewed simply as troubling statistics in need of a solution. I see them differently. Among these millions of young women and men, I see artists and doctors, presidents and prime ministers. I see the next Mother Teresa, the next Nelson Mandela.

Inside each of these youth is a precious seed waiting to transform itself into something extraordinary. We have to water these seeds and ensure that every child everywhere can receive a quality education. We have to give them sunlight and ensure that every youth everywhere has real economic opportunities to succeed. These are not luxuries reserved only for the privileged few. These are necessities that every individual in every community requires to survive and thrive.

And if we do all these things—if we nurture and support these seeds, they will grow into the next generation of thinkers, leaders, and doers. They will transform our world, and the youth of today will build a world that they will be proud to pass on to their children.

Over the coming years, let's stand up for the most vulnerable among us. WPDJ remains committed to the proposition that, together, we have the ability to ensure that every child is born into a world where she can shape her own destiny.



Forest Whitaker

WPDJ Founder and CEO

UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocate



WPDI 2016 Year in Review



WPDI programs are advancing
11 of the UN
Sustainable
Development Goals



58 youth peacemakers

in Tijuana and Chiapas, Mexico have designed and led programs that:

- Reduce bullying in schools
- Help rehabilitate teenage drug users
- Promote literacy and learning
- Educate young people about sexual health and violence
- Raise awareness about environmental action



868 middle school students in Carson, California as well as

331 middle school students from three schools in Northern Uganda are enrolled

in WPDI's **Conflict Resolution Education**

program and are learning how to identify and resolve conflicts in their daily lives



4,000 vulnerable youth

are receiving psychosocial support and peace education as participants in WPDI's Peace Through Sports program.



200 youth peacemakers

in South Sudan and Uganda are developing and implementing community building development projects that will:

- Provide vital services for individuals in vulnerable communities
- Promote sustainable agricultural practices
- Train hundreds of unemployed youth in a new vocation



Over 10,000 community members

visited our **6** community learning centers in 2016 to:

- Learn how to use computers and IT skills
- Take business-development classes
- Participate in community and peacebuilding activities
- Read and check out books and other educational materials
- Participate in the Peace Through Sports program
- Attend peacebuilding events



Tens of thousands of refugees

will be supported by a new WPDI program in Kiryandongo, Uganda that aims to foster community and provide vulnerable youth with the skills they need to live peaceful and productive lives.



Hundreds of thousands of people

reached through Advocacy initiatives including interviews & Op-Eds on global media, local/national radio messages and peace engagement days

Why WPDI?

WPDI was born out of the belief that our hope for peace is to empower youth 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 youth to participate in the political and peacemaking processes.

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.



A student graduates from WPDI's CRE program held at Hope North School in Gulu, Uganda

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.

WPDI: 2016 in Brief

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

South Sudan

- 18 high-level youth peacemakers continued their peace and business education and led the effort to train 156 youth, coming from every payam of the Eastern Equatoria State, as new members of the Youth Peacemaker Network.
- Seven youth-led community-building and income-generating projects have been approved for launch in 2017. These projects will bring vital services and employment opportunities to youth in underserved and vulnerable communities.
- 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. There are currently five operational centers that collectively serve approximately 1000 community members every month.
- Our Peace Through Sports initiative provides more than 4000 youths living in a camp for internally displaced people in Juba 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.
- Several WPDI youth peacemakers have partnered with local authorities in Eastern Equatoria to serve as mediators in their communities. These youth leaders have become a vital resource in promoting peace in the midst of a volatile conflict situation.
- Hundreds of thousands of individuals in the Eastern Equatoria region will be benefitted by the imminent completion of the Peace Road, which will connect isolated communities to vital markets and services.



ICT training class at the CLC in Nimule



Peace Through Sports continues to expand in South Sudan

ICT training class at the CLC in Gulu, 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.
- We expanded our Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program to two new secondary schools, and are working with district authorities to standardize the curriculum for broader integration in Ugandan primary and secondary schools.
- Our training facility in Gulu officially opened its doors to the public as a Community Learning Center in January 2016. Hundreds of people visit the center every month for free ICT, literacy, arts & crafts, and business classes.
- 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 is working with several of our youth peacemakers to provide support and maintenance for individuals with hearing aids in Northern Uganda.
- We launched a new branch of the Youth Peacemaker Network at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.



Starkey Aftercare session



Wakiso Youth Peacemaker's Salon is a community-building project supported by WPDI

Mexico

- All youth peacemakers from the Tijuana and Chiapas branches have graduated from their training programs with over 200 hours of practice in conflict resolution, life and wellness coaching, breathing and movement technologies, project management, and ICT.
- Youth peacemakers in Tijuana have designed and implemented six community-building projects that have directly impacted thousands of people.
- Youth peacemakers in Chiapas have developed seven community-building projects to be launched in the coming year.

WPDI works with local trainers like CORECO and Educreando to conduct its CRE courses in Mexico



Children participate in WPDI's International Day of Peace activities in Chiapas in September

Erubiel Hernandez and Aida Zurita at Madre Assunta Refugee Center



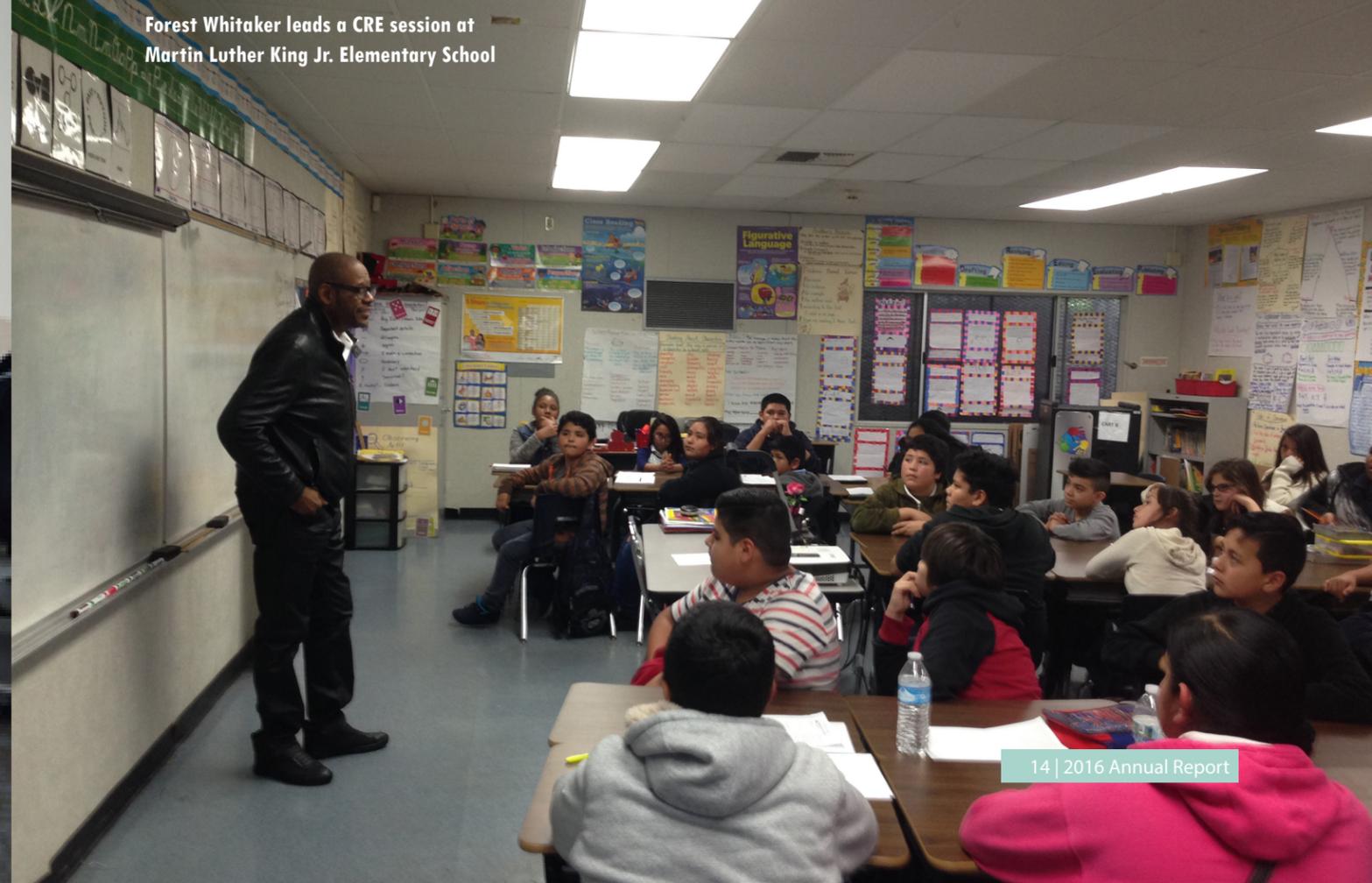
Students ask questions during the launch of the Domestic Harmonizer Program at Carnegie Middle School in California



United States

- In collaboration with California State University, Dominguez Hills, in 2016, WPDI finalized and launched a new conflict resolution education curriculum for middle schoolers. The curriculum integrates with California Common Core standards, allowing teachers to lead important lessons in conflict resolution without taking away class time from state-mandated curricula. The new curriculum was launched in 2016 at Andrew Carnegie Middle School in Carson, California.
- Working with Turnaround Arts, WPDI continued its arts-based conflict resolution education program for elementary schoolers, working with a new cohort of sixth graders at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Compton, California.

Forest Whitaker leads a CRE session at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School



Teachers at Carnegie Middle School participate in CRE training



South Sudan: Building Community Amidst a Conflict

2016 was an eventful and troubling year in South Sudan. In April, the country was full of hope and promise when, finally, a key provision of the 2015 Peace Agreement was implemented with the return to Juba of the then First Vice President Riek Machar. The hope, however, was short lived. In July, clashes erupted between soldiers loyal to Machar and presidential guards. Since then, intermittent fighting has continued, resulting in many casualties and massive population displacement. According to reports from UNOCHA, as of October 2016, over 1.8 million people are internally displaced due to violence, and the UNHCR estimates that an additional 1.2 million people have fled South Sudan to neighboring countries.

Against this backdrop, WPDI is working with passionate young women and men throughout South Sudan to restore calm, strengthen communities, and spur development. Challenging as the year has been, the spirits of WPDI's staff and of the youth peacemakers we work with have not dampened. Through our Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN), WPDI is working to help fill South Sudan's education gap and, at the same time, provide means for young people to earn a livelihood and engage productively in their communities. In 2016, the YPN continued to have an important impact in the Eastern Equatoria region.



Payam youth training conducted by WPDI youth peacemakers in Torit

Impact

18 high-level youth peacemakers

continued their peace and business education and spearheaded the effort to train the next cohort of youth leaders.

156 youth coming from every payam

of the Eastern Equatoria region have begun their training to become members of the Youth Peacemaker Network.

4000+ youth

participate in the Peace Through Sports program at WPDI's sports complex at the protection-of-civilians site in Juba, and 5000+ community members attend WPDI's Peace Engagement Days.

Five Community Learning Centers each one visited by **200 to 400 people per month** have been built in the Eastern Equatoria region.

Seven youth-led community-building and income-generating projects

have been approved for launch in 2017.

18 WPDI youth peacemakers

have partnered with local authorities in Eastern Equatoria to serve as mediators in their communities.

Hundreds of thousands of individuals

in the Eastern Equatoria region will be benefitted by the imminent completion of the Peace Road, which will connect isolated communities to vital markets and services.

Training a New Tier of the Youth Peacemaker Network

For two years, we have been working with 18 trainers of trainers (ToTs), high-level youth leaders who form the heart of the YPN. After successfully recruiting a new cohort of 156 youth peacemakers—two from every payam of Eastern Equatoria—our ToTs began training these payam youth in 2016, imparting the knowledge and skills they've acquired to the next tier of the YPN. By May 2016, the ToTs, with support from WPDI, had already conducted two of the series of four trainings planned for the payam youth for 2016. The trainings were supposed to be completed by December 2016, but because violence flared up again in July 2016 and the general deterioration of security in most parts of South Sudan, the remaining two trainings were suspended for safety reasons. The third training session was conducted in early 2017, and the final session will be completed by May.

With the payam youth trainings mostly completed in early 2017, the payam youth will then be ready to engage in the next phase of the YPN, which is the implementation of community-level income-generating activities. Six projects have already been reviewed and approved by WPDI experts as ready for launch. The approved projects focus on providing produce and vital goods to their communities. The ToTs and payam youth leading the projects will train vulnerable youth in their communities in sustainable agriculture techniques and will provide employment opportunities in newly established stores.



Torit Peace Briefings



WPDI youth peacemakers

Youth Peacemakers Partner with State Leaders for Peace

In November 2015, following the creation of Imatong and Namorunyang States, the newly appointed governors launched large campaigns to sensitize their populations to the values and benefits of living together in peace. This was quite a difficult undertaking, given the available resources and the expanse of the area. To accomplish this task, the governors requested the support of the ToTs and drafted them to accompany them to all the localities for this outreach campaign. The ToTs helped to facilitate sessions in the tour on mediation, reconciliation, peacebuilding, and conflict mitigation, putting into use their skills and knowledge thereby contributing immensely towards pacifying warring communities. To date, the ToTs have become an important resource for the government and for other stakeholders' initiatives on peace in Eastern Equatoria.



WPDI Youth peacemakers conducting trainings on human rights at our CLC in Kapoeta North

Expanding Peace Through Sports

Since its inception in 2014 at the protection-of-civilian (POC) site at the UN House in Juba, the Peace Through Sports program has become one of WPDI's most successful initiatives in South Sudan. The program seeks to use sports as a means to encourage individuals to be good citizens and to inculcate the spirit of tolerance and peace among the youths in the camp. Using a sports complex built at the POC site in Juba as a platform, the program has managed to mobilize thousands of youth who gather on daily basis to engage in sporting, cultural, and peacebuilding activities. Sports are used as a platform to engage the youth to build various interpersonal skills, and through this process, WPDI has managed to implement several important new initiatives with the youths.

- Youth participants study a life-skills training curriculum.
- The South Sudan Football Association (SSFA) provides the youth with comprehensive coaching and refereeing training. Because of their work with SSFA, four of the youth beneficiaries from the POC received a FIFA-specialized training in Juba to further their skills and understanding of the sport and enhance their career prospects.
- WPDI has partnered with UNFPA to lead classes for the youth on reproductive health.
- WPDI has also entered into a partnership with VISTAS, a USAID-supported organization that is helping WPDI enhance the sports program with materials to encourage female participation as well as by organizing the monthly Peace Engagement Days in the POC.

Creating a Hub of Community Involvement

WPDI's Community Learning Centers (CLCs) have become one of the most important initiatives of the YPN in the Eastern Equatoria region. These centers offer literacy classes and computer trainings that provide important skills to community members of all ages. Many individuals in these communities, especially those who have dropped out of school, would never otherwise be exposed to these topics. WPDI has been gradually launching CLCs in different counties throughout Eastern Equatoria. So far, five CLCs have been established with four more to be opened in the first quarter of 2017.

Slowly and steadily, the established CLCs have become a hub of community involvement and participation. Each center serves as headquarters for the ToTs and payam youth from that county, and between 200 and 400 individuals visit each center on a monthly basis. Through partnerships with Ericsson, Zain and UNESCO, the CLCs continue to have well-maintained equipment and Internet connectivity. Small libraries provide reading material for community members and are also used in adult literacy classes, especially those for out-of-school children and young mothers.



Team from WPDI's Peace Through Sports program at the Protection of Civilians site in Juba



ICT training at the CLC in Nimule



Entrepreneurship and Business skills training for ToTs

Testimony From A WPDI Youth Peacemaker

Hidita Scovia - South Sudan

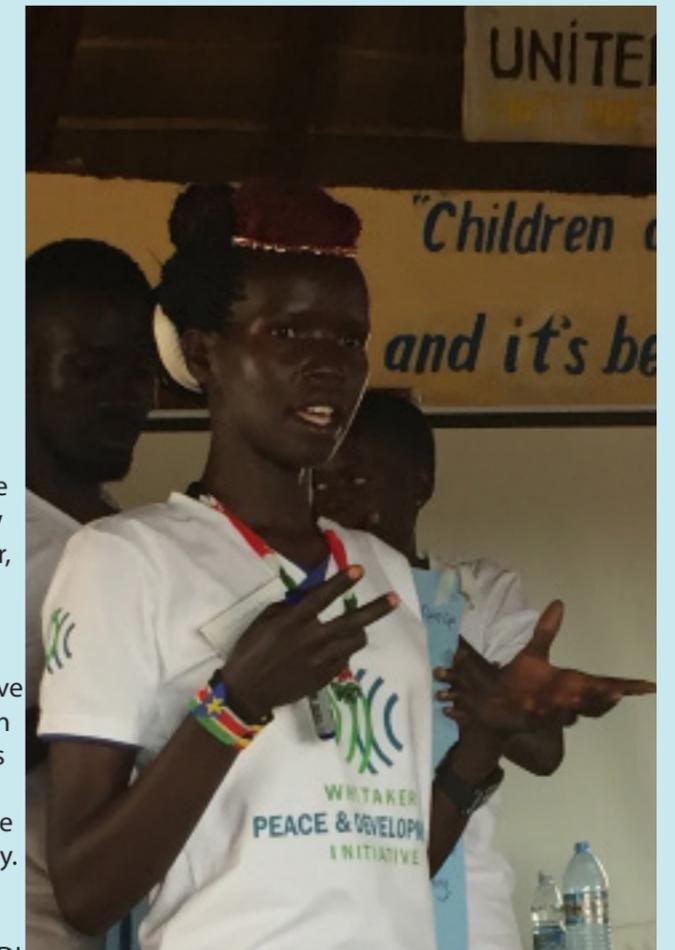
I was born during the conflict between the north and the south of Sudan. When I was four, my family was forced to move to Uganda, where we lived in a refugee camp. I still remember how tough this journey was. My mother had to carry both me and my younger brother as we walked. I later came back to South Sudan to complete primary school. But there were no resources for education in South Sudan, so I had to move back to Uganda where I studied agriculture at the university.

Since joining the Youth Peacemaker Network, I have learned many things and have connected with new friends all over the world through Facebook, Twitter, and email. I have developed my ICT skills, and I am now an ICT consultant for my colleagues at home, in school, and in my community. WPDI's trainings have taught me how to mediate conflicts and resolve disputes in our communities. These skills have given me a new confidence that makes me feel great. This is very important for me as a woman: people are sensitive to the fact that I have been trained in these areas, so my being a woman does not get in the way. I have become a resource and a role model.

I have always wanted to be a peacebuilder, and WPDI has helped me become one. It was a great honor for me to have been enrolled as a mediator by the newly elected governor of Imatong State to help him foster dialogue at a series of peace conferences he organized in the state. We have done some mediation on land and other territorial issues. In some villages, the fighting had been going on for some time because revenge killings had become regular. Our mediation can help put an end to the bloodshed. Recently, an armed group killed a young boy, which started a cycle of conflict between two communities. The two communities have accepted a mediation process that is still ongoing, but we have managed to put an end to the fighting.

As promoters of peace, we also worked to inform people on the peace agreement that was signed between the conflicting parties of the 2013 civil war. This was important because many people did not know that a peace process had been started and that an agreement had been reached.

When I go to communities, I advise young people to be peaceful. They must see that if they engage in violence, people will not listen to them. Problems are solved by forgiveness and by sharing ideas. It is very important to educate youth and people in general on the value and dignity of every human being—and especially, to promote values of gender equality.



Uganda: Spurring Peace Through Economic Opportunities

A nearly two-decade long civil war caused untold suffering and destruction in Northern Uganda, resulting in over 2 million people displaced and thousands of children 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 youth heal from the trauma of war and find inner-peace. In 2016, we continued to expand 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.

An electronics store in the Wakiso District run by our youth peacemaker, Simon, and supported by WPDI



Impact

30 youth peacemakers

have designed nine community-building projects that provide important services for their communities and bring employment opportunities to vulnerable youth.

Four projects

were funded and launched in 2016, with the remaining projects to be funded in 2017.

300+ students

participated in the expansion of our Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program to two new secondary schools, and we are working with district authorities to standardize the curriculum for broader integration in Ugandan schools.

600+ community members

have enrolled in classes at our newly established Community Learning Center, which offers free ICT, arts & crafts, and business trainings and is becoming a hub of community involvement.

150+ Community members

are seeking monthly assistance for their hearing aid at the Starkey After-Care location established at the WPDI Community Learning Center in Gulu.

2000+ youth

participate in new launches of the 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.

1000+ community members

participated in the celebration of the International Day of Peace.

Supporting Community Building Projects

Community-building projects are an integral part of the YPN, the primary purpose of which is to empower young women and men. Inviting young people to envision, develop, and implement social and economic projects helps to nurture their capacity for leadership while enriching the community.

The youth peacemakers have already developed their community-building projects, and four projects have been funded. One component of the projects is that they are partially self-funded through income-generating activities that the youth peacemakers design and execute. These income-generating activities simultaneously provide important services to the communities and play a role in alleviating poverty and providing vulnerable youth with productive employment opportunities. The projects illustrate WPDI's learning-by-doing, project-based approach, according to which young people are expected not only to become future leaders, but also to act and commit to their communities. The youth peacemakers have identified crucial potential areas for community development and have established community projects that make meaningful progress in addressing these areas. For example, some of the projects involve electronics stores, hair salons, or small-scale farming, all of which are providing much needed goods and services to individuals in Kiryandongo, Gulu, and Wakiso. In 2016, WPDI provided a total of US\$11,000 as startup capital for four youth projects, with the remaining projects to be funded in early 2017.



Focus Ahead Youth Peacemaker's Group in the Kiryandongo District



Wakiso Youth Peacemaker's Salon in Wakiso



Reading session for children at our CLC



Starkey Aftercare session with WPDI youth peacemakers



WPDI Community Learning Center in Gulu



Graduation ceremony for students of business and ICT training

A New Community Learning Center

Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are a cornerstone of our programs, as they offer our participants access to connectivity and allow for local community members to access the Internet, library services, and other educational resources such as literacy and ICT courses. The establishment of the CLC in Gulu in January 2016 was an opportunity for vulnerable youth, who did not previously have access to these resources, to be empowered and acquire skills to change their lives for the better. Many of the youth who were trained in ICT and business skills have testified about the outcome of their learning and the change in their mindset that has resulted. Establishing this center has also brought visibility and publicity to WPDI, and has been important in educating community members about the services that WPDI has offered. The CLC is a hub for youth to access education and trainings, and the center in Gulu has had a significant impact on the community thus far. At the end of 2016, the CLC had 105 individuals enrolled in business trainings, 259 enrolled in ICT trainings, 157 monthly users of the Starkey After-Care hearing center established at the CLC, and several hundred taking part of the CLC's other services including children's activities, arts and crafts, Cinema for Peace, and a small library.



Expanding the Conflict Resolution Education Program

Having successfully piloted a Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program at Hope North Secondary School in Northern Uganda, WPDI expanded it the program in 2016 to the Gulu Sacred Heart School, with which WPDI collaborates regularly, as well as to Gulu North Secondary School. The program curriculum is designed to build on itself over several years of students' secondary-school careers. Students are first introduced to basic concepts on the meaning of conflict and how to identify them. Next, they move into intermediate mediation techniques for resolving differences peacefully. And finally, students engage with more-advanced concepts and techniques like restorative justice and victim-offender mediations. The overarching goal is to give students both the ability to recognize sources of conflict in the disagreements and challenges that arise in their lives as well as the skills to be able to move past them without resorting to violence.

This year, WPDI also developed a CRE manual to support schools implementing this program. This manual has been submitted to the District Education Office, and the chairman is reviewing the material for approval. If approved, the curriculum may be expanded to other schools throughout the district. We are also planning to expand the CRE program to primary schools in Gulu and Kiryandongo.

New Programs to Foster Community

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.

CRE courses held at Sacred Heart School



Arts & Crafts time



Additional space created for arts & crafts training at our CLC in Gulu

Books at the CLC donated by Niteo Africa



Youth Peacemaker Cissy Namatovu following ICT training



Testimony From A WPDI Youth Peacemaker

Monday Collins - Uganda

My name is Monday. I was born and I grew up during the war. I was abducted when I was nine and forced to be a child soldier for two years. I saw people being killed. I saw girls being forced into marriage. Being a child soldier does terrible things to you because you are, at the same time, a victim and a perpetrator. Nobody knows where to stand on this, including yourself.



I had the opportunity to study at the Hope North school where many students are former child soldiers like me. It was through Hope North that I could recover from my trauma, and I eventually joined WPDI. I learned a lot thanks to the trainings in ICTs, in business, and in mediation. I feel privileged to have been able to learn all these skills.

I received a lot, and now I want to give back. Presently there is no war in Northern Uganda, but we still do not have peace. We have problems with HIV/AIDS, youth unemployment, and youth violence. It is important to work at the community level to address these issues.

WPDI has helped me become an active promoter of peace. It has taken me from the worst part of my life to the best part of it. My mental growth has allowed me to become a leader. I know I can make a difference. If I can change the lives of two people, who can in turn change the lives of two other people, together, we can change the world.

Promoting peace is not always easy though. A big challenge when we go into remote communities is the perception among many people that only money matters. Their sole idea is that the knowledge and the support provided by WPDI should help them make money quickly. We try to change these notions. We try to identify activities that young people will be interested in and that will not necessarily involve receiving money—like sports. For adults, we use other channels, like drama, or we try to blend WPDI's work into their preexisting activities.

In the end, we find ways to make it work by engaging communities on concrete issues that matter to them, such as school dropouts, forced marriage, or drug abuse. We work to give community members business skills that will help them translate their ideas into jobs. The biggest lesson I have learned from WPDI is that you must work together to address your problems before they become overwhelming.

Mexico: Creating Youth-Led Community Development

Now in its third year, the Harmonizer Program in Mexico is WPDI's first program in Latin America and part of our ongoing effort to expand into regions throughout the globe impacted by poverty, violence, or conflict. Mexico is, in many ways, caught between two worlds. The nation continues to rapidly industrialize and is becoming one of the planet's largest economies. Yet 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.

That's why we feel the Harmonizer Program can have such an important impact here. The program targets teenagers and youths who have shown a history of leadership and are committed to making a positive impact in their communities. These youths take part in a yearlong program of trainings and lessons designed to bolster their skills as peacebuilders, conflict mediators, project managers, and community organizers. 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.

Impact

68 youth peacemakers from Tijuana and Chiapas graduated from their training program with **over 200 hours** of practice in conflict resolution, life and wellness coaching, breathing and movement technologies, project management, and ICT.

1300+ children and youth were directly impacted in 2016 by the six youth-led community projects being launched in Tijuana.

2000+ children, youth and community members in Tijuana were directly impacted by youth peacemakers' summer community-service projects.

Seven community-building projects, developed by Youth peacemakers in Chiapas, will be launched in the coming year.

400+ community members in Chiapas participated in the youth peacemakers' celebration of the International Day of Peace.



Youth peacemakers in Chiapas during the International Day of Peace Celebrations



Carlos Martínez leading a workshop at the Loma Dorada Boys and Girls Club

Peacemakers Complete Training in Chiapas

Chiapas is Mexico's poorest state and has a long history of conflict and violence. The Harmonizer Program in Chiapas seeks to respond to the protracted post-conflict situation in this state by empowering youth leaders to launch community-building projects that engage their peers and neighbors. Most of the Harmonizers' training content had been completed in 2015, so only the first half of 2016 was dedicated to training. The 25 Harmonizers finalized their training in conflict resolutions and mediation, life skills, ICT and yoga, and in parallel, they continued developing their community-building projects. Some of the workshops they attended featured special speakers that helped them deepen their knowledge in business and social media.

The Harmonizers also participated in a three-day retreat in late April, during which they developed their skills as teachers and learned how to run participative workshops. The rest of the year was mostly dedicated to learning how to develop strong project and business plans with a realistic budget. Harmonizers then put this knowledge into practice by developing their community-building projects and budgets. The Harmonizers have developed seven community-building projects that focus on empowering unemployed youth with vocational skills, leading sexual violence seminars, and promoting environmental awareness. The Harmonizers will launch their projects in 2017.

Youth Transforming Tijuana Communities

In 2016, the Harmonizer Program in Tijuana continued to positively impact communities throughout the city. All six of our youth peacemaker teams in the Tijuana program moved forward with their community-building projects and, for the second consecutive year, exceeded our expectations through their work and dedication. Through their projects, our peacemakers led anti-bullying workshops at middle schools, ran a training program for young women at a drug rehabilitation center, taught seminars on environmental awareness and action, raised money to start a community garden for at-risk youth, and led after-school sports programs. Collectively, these six teams directly engaged more than 1300 individuals in their communities in their peacebuilding and education projects.

Every year, the Tijuana program participates in different activities during the summer, given that the schools where many of the youth peacemakers present their projects are closed. In July and August we visited two different organizations: the Padre Chava Community Diner and the Madre Assunta Refugee Center. Both visits were very enlightening for our youth volunteers, who learned a lot from the experience. Given the success of these activities, the youth decided to volunteer again on the International Day of Peace. The peacemakers also commemorated the International Day of Peace by holding special group conversations at two Boys and Girls Clubs in Tijuana, where several of our peacemakers work year-round.





María Yolanda, a youth peacemaker from Chiapas, brainstorming on her community project



Testimonies From WPDI Youth Peacemakers

María Yolanda Hernández Gómez - Chiapas Rafael Flores Alaguna - Tijuana

As a young girl, I had few friends because I faced discrimination due to my skin color and my family background. My family faced discrimination because we were considered unusual and poor. I started working at the age of 5 and lost my father when I was 7 years old. Despite these and other challenges in my life, I was able to attend elementary school and participate in various activities such as dance. My mother encouraged my sisters and me to keep studying, and that helped me to secure scholarships in middle and high school to further my studies. It is the challenges that I faced that helped me to become resilient and to take action and pursue every opportunity available to me, rather than sit idle and accept discrimination and rejection alongside some of my relatives who remain demoralized.



What made me eager to become young peacebuilder with WPDI was the desire to learn and to meet other young women and men who are working to build a different society. Now, I do not feel so alone, and I know that I have a core group of youth in the Youth Peacemaker Network Program who I can turn to for support if I ever need it. My teammates and I are working on a project that will make a big difference. Our goal is to create a public space for people to come together, and have access to books and knowledge on a wide variety of topics. We aim to serve children and our community as a whole by exposing them to new ideas and ways of thinking. We aim to bring together women, men and children from our community. My team and I are trying to include youth of all ages into our project, while also being respectful of those who are older than us. WPDI's program has made me believe in myself and grow as a person. It has filled me with hope and made me a stronger person. In fact, after each session, I am eager to share what I learn with my family!

Some of the biggest challenges I faced in my community are apathy among youth and working with older women who have different views. I am overcoming these challenges by working with my teammates to mobilize youth from Zinacantan, and encouraging them to get involved in our initiatives. I know that change takes patience. My message to other youth is to dream of the extraordinary!

I have attended some schools that have supported my personal growth and those that have not. In Elementary School, I was encouraged to pursue science and art, both of which strengthened my character. In Middle School, I faced an identity crisis; I did not know who I was, where my life was going or what I wanted to accomplish. Eventually, I realized that I could find contentment through doing something positive with my life and serving my community. WPDI plays a pivotal role in my life because the program helps me to fulfill my goal of bettering my community. The Youth Peacemaker Network Program in Mexico bridges a gap in our community by empowering youth like me who want to have a role in peacebuilding. I knew I had to be a part of WPDI from the moment I learned about it, and undoubtedly, my involvement has changed my life in the most positive way. One of the biggest challenges that I face when I work in my community is a lack of interest by some, while others know about the issues that we are facing but still, they do not want to do anything about it. But, I have come to realize that when the community decides to work together, that is enough to get any job done.



It is important to understand that the act of serving does not have anything to do with gender; men and women alike can participate. Age and sexual preference do not matter either. We all need to participate and show our interest in serving others. Raising awareness of social issues among youth is one of the most important actions we can take to create change. Awareness inspires and motivates others. Creating awareness creates a better world for us all.

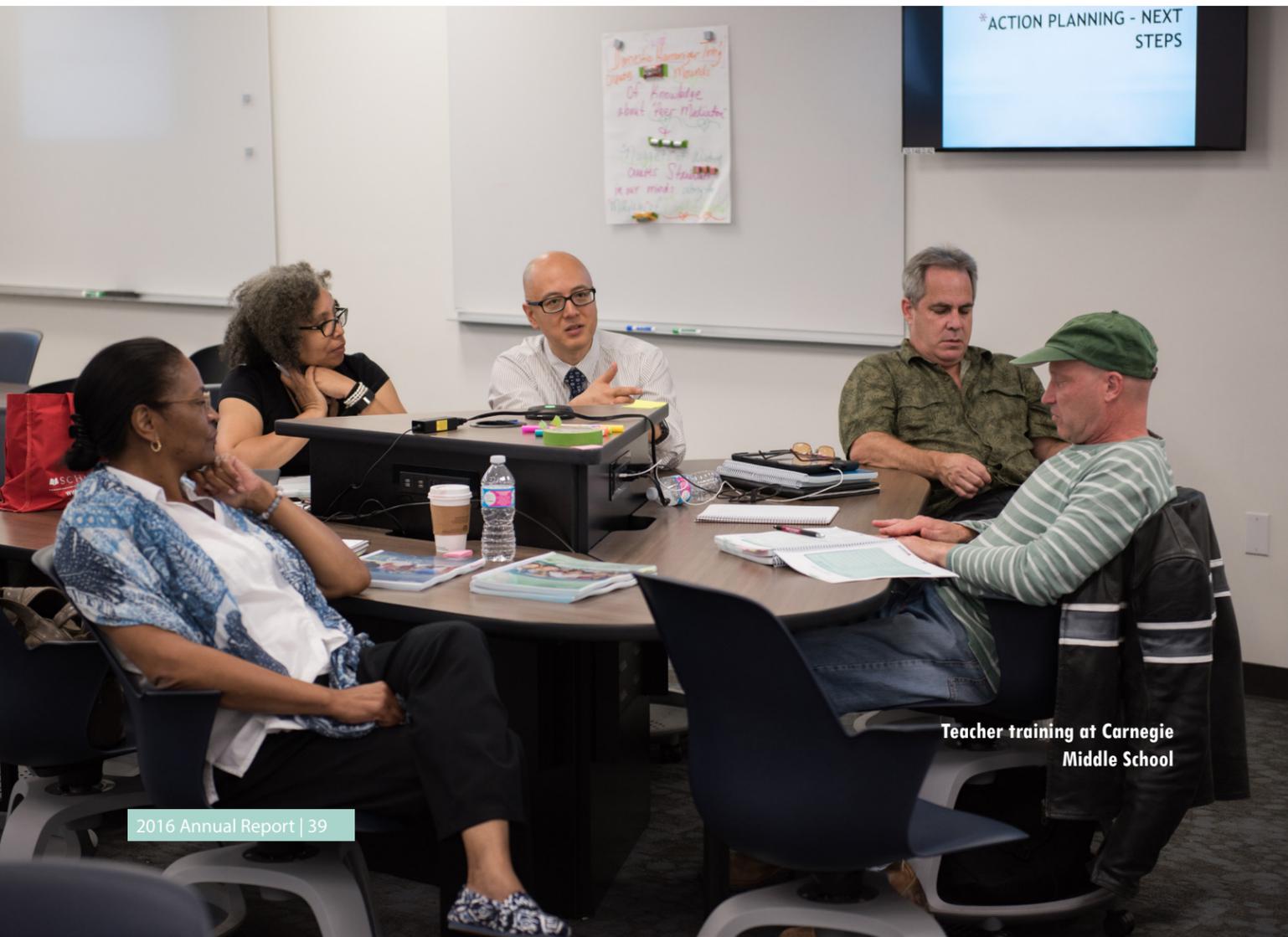
United States: Teach Peace in Schools

The Domestic Harmonizer Program is a unique initiative that was envisioned by Forest Whitaker to address the problem of youth violence, conflict, and unsafe learning environments in schools across the United States. At WPDI, we believe that resolving and transforming conflict is a skill that needs to be taught in classrooms just like any other subject. Conflict resolution skills are not innate—we need to learn from a young age how to solve problems and work collaboratively with others. This is true for all of us, no matter who we are or where we live.

WPDI's school-based conflict resolution education (CRE) programs work with both elementary and middle schools. WPDI's elementary school program is designed to integrate arts education with basic CRE principles, while our middle school program encompasses a comprehensive curriculum designed to integrate CRE with Common Core subjects. While both our elementary and middle school initiatives carry the same message of peace and non-violence backed by interactive educational activities, our middle school program aims to transform the entire school environment, rather than a single classroom. Our CRE programs are aimed at engaging students in skills, conversations, and activities that encourage them to think introspectively about how they can be peacemakers in their own lives and how they can apply CRE skills and concepts in various social-justice contexts.



Teacher training at Carnegie Middle School



Teacher training at Carnegie Middle School

Impact

850+ students

at Andrew Carnegie Middle School in Carson, California participated in WPDI's new conflict resolution education curriculum, which is integrated into students' core academic classes.

30 sixth-grade students

at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Compton, California participated in an arts-based conflict resolution education program.

A New Conflict Resolution Education Curriculum in Middle Schools

While other CRE programs geared toward the middle school audience produce positive results in improving students' understandings of peaceful conflict resolution, many of these programs fall short in producing a school-wide cultural shift. The Domestic Harmonizer Program for the middle school audience solves this problem by creating interactive modules that infuse CRE with the Common Core. This program seeks to build the social and emotional health of middle school students by fostering a peaceable school climate. Our program is unique because it integrates CRE concepts, skills, and processes as well as Positive Youth Development into a curriculum designed to fit with the middle school Common Core standards for English, mathematics, social studies, and science.

WPDI's middle school program is a collaboration with California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH). WPDI and CSUDH jointly decided to launch the middle school program at Andrew Carnegie Middle School in Carson, California. The school is a part of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which is the nation's second largest school district. Founded in 1853, LAUSD enrolls more than 640,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade at over 900 schools and 187 public charter schools. For the 2016–17 academic year, Carnegie Middle School enrolls 271 sixth grade students, 281 seventh grade students, and 316 eighth grade students. All students enrolled at Carnegie Middle School participate in the Domestic Harmonizer Program.



Teacher training at Carnegie Middle School

How does communication affect conflict?

CONFLICT happens when you have unmet needs		unmet needs	
+	-	+	-
bravery valor forgiving apologize problem solving peace affection love happiness thankful learning lessons friendly solution joy	depressing argument fight war disagreement abuse threats anger holding a grudge cussing bullying cruelty aggressiveness hate envy malice	avoid violence be respectful give good compliments debate treat people how you want to be treated be responsible when someone drops something give it back polite	fighting calling names shouting out in class bad behavior talking back disrespect people break rules ACADEMIC archeologist historian geographer artifact prehistoric

LAUSD and Carnegie Middle School will be the pilot site of this program, which aims to serve as a model for other schools in the district as well as for other schools in California and throughout the nation. Students have an opportunity to learn about peaceful conflict transformation techniques that can improve the school culture and enhance their learning, while also reducing the incidences of violence, conflict, and bullying. Furthermore, students can implement peer mediation and restorative justice projects and programs on campus that can provide additional ways for them to exhibit leadership and conflict resolution. Teachers at the school have been supported through a three-day training event over the summer to introduce them to the curriculum and through ongoing professional development sessions.

WPDI and CSUDH will share our findings at the end of each academic year for each of the three years that this program will be implemented, beginning in the 2016–17 academic year and ending in the 2018–19 academic year. This data will be provided through a comprehensive report to LAUSD's Superintendent for the South District and to Carnegie Middle School's teachers and administrators.



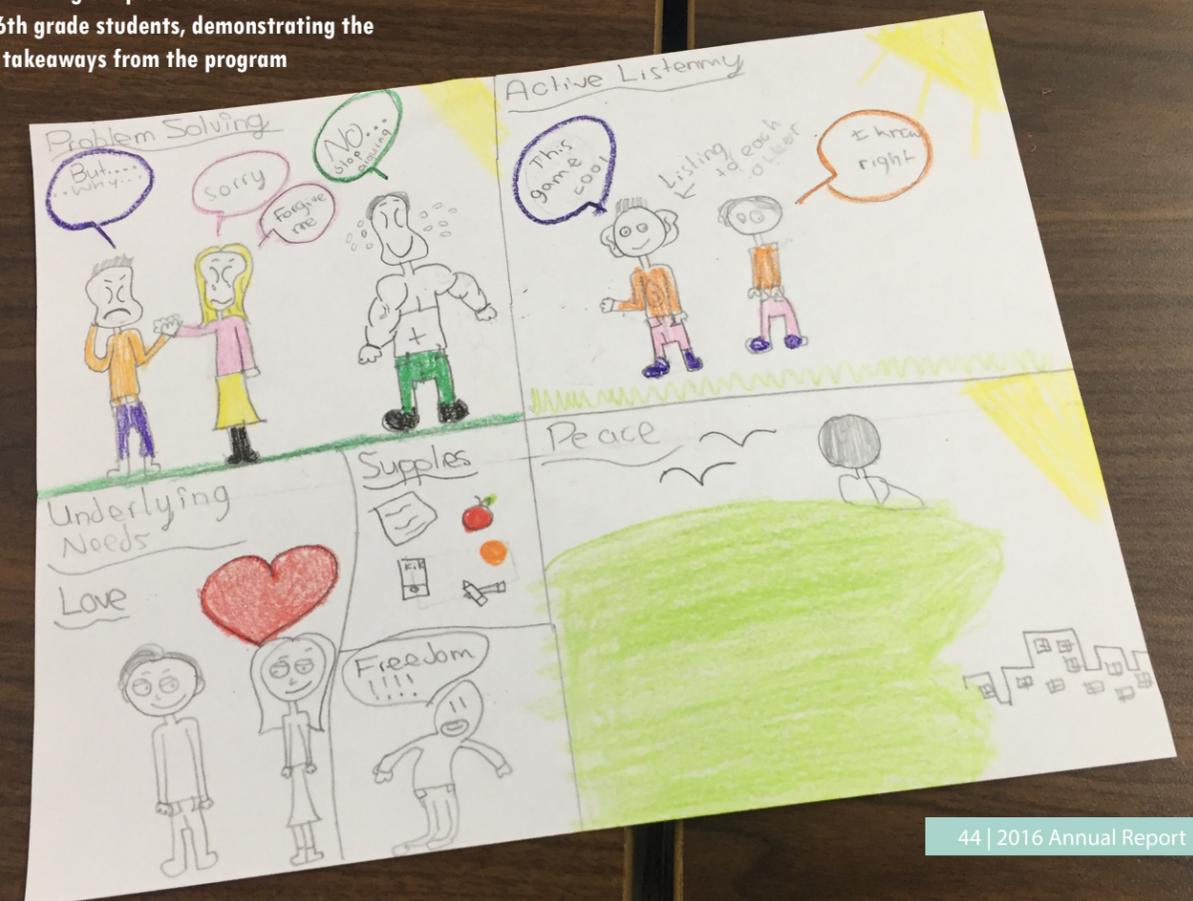
Forest Whitaker conducting a CRE class at MLK Elementary School

Providing Arts Enrichment in Elementary Schools

WPDI's elementary school program is a collaboration with Turnaround Arts—an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities—and provides a basic overview of CRE principles to our students. WPDI's approach to peace education in the elementary school context is unique, as we primarily integrate arts-based learning and proven techniques geared towards problem solving. Our work with elementary school students focuses on interactive games, role-plays, drawing, group and classroom discussions, and skits geared towards peace education. Since the program's inception in 2012, WPDI has implemented this approach and reached a total of 110 elementary school students at Findley Elementary School in Des Moines, Iowa and Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Compton, California.

In 2016, WPDI introduced basic conflict resolution skills through arts-based activities to a cohort of thirty 6th grade students at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. At the end of the school year, Mr. Whitaker visited the students and shared a conversation with them about what they learned during the program. Students were interested to learn about WPDI's work and hear from Mr. Whitaker about why he started the organization. Students were keen to learn from Mr. Whitaker about his encounters with conflict locally and globally, and asked him many questions about his personal experiences. Many students made connections between WPDI's work and broader conflicts around the world, such as the crisis in Syria. During this visit, Mr. Whitaker also had a chance to participate in the first ever Turnaround Artist music video, featuring the song "Everyday People." The video featured a number of other Turnaround Artists, and made its debut at the White House Talent Show on May 25. Mr. Whitaker sang along with several students from Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School's music program.

A culminating art piece created by a 6th grade students, demonstrating the main takeaways from the program



Global Outreach and Visibility

In addition to his role as WPDI's Founder and CEO, Forest Whitaker is a UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation and a member of the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Advocacy Group. In these capacities, Mr. Whitaker devotes a significant amount of time to raising global awareness about how young people can be empowered to contribute to building peace and sustainable communities.

In 2016, Mr. Whitaker participated in a number of UN-sponsored events that emphasized many of WPDI's broad program goals. In March, Mr. Whitaker and UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson participated in a discussion on gender equality to commemorate the launch of HeForShe Arts Week. Mr. Whitaker spoke about the importance of empowering women to take part in peacebuilding processes around the world. "You can't really find peace if 50 percent of the world is women and they're not included in the conversation," he said.

In April, Mr. Whitaker played a major role in the opening ceremony of the UN General Assembly's High-Level Thematic Debate on Achieving the SDGs. Mr. Whitaker delivered a keynote address to the group of assembled dignitaries, including more than 30 heads of state, where he stressed the holistic, interconnected nature of the SDGs and the role that ordinary people can play in achieving them. During that week, he participated in a conversation with high school students at the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics about the role that the SDGs could play in their everyday lives. "Every person can start with a small act or join a big movement," Mr. Whitaker said.



Forest Whitaker speaking at the UN High-level Thematic Debate on SDGs



Forest Whitaker discusses gender equality with Emma Watson during HeForShe Arts Week.

"You can't really find peace if 50 percent of the world is women and they're not included in the conversation."

Forest Whitaker

In May, Mr. Whitaker addressed the opening ceremonies at the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, appearing alongside Victor Ochen, a survivor of Uganda's civil war. His message to the conference participants was that we must view individuals living in conflict-impacted communities—especially youth—as partners and not just as victims. The Summit also featured an "Innovation Marketplace," where organizations displayed new, technology-driven approaches to humanitarian aid. Ericsson and WPDI had a joint booth in the Marketplace that showcased our collaboration on the Connect To Learn Initiative and featured messages from WPDI's youth peacemakers about their commitment to peace and their work in their communities.

Mr. Whitaker participated in a variety of events surrounding the UN General Assembly in September. He delivered a joint special address with Alaa Murabit at the opening ceremony where he spoke briefly about the progress achieved in completing the SDGs, and he took part in a high-level event entitled "Solutions to Achieve the SDGs for Children." In his remarks, he emphasized that quality education must be the part of any solution to the global humanitarian crisis. He also gave a keynote address at the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund Pledging Conference, as well as at the launch of the 2016 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. Mr. Whitaker ended the General Assembly week by co-hosting the Global Citizen Festival with Hugh Jackman.

"Every person can start with a small act or join a big movement."

Forest Whitaker



Joint special address with Alaa Murabit at the opening ceremony of the UN General Assembly on the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs)

Mr. Whitaker also participated in the Southern California Grantmakers' annual conference in September, where he gave a keynote address entitled "Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies." He spoke about the intrinsic connection between the humanitarian work being done in Southern California and global efforts to reduce poverty and increase standards of living. In November, Mr. Whitaker delivered a Centenary Lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Mr. Whitaker shared a conversation with Valerie Amos, Director of SOAS and former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, on WPD's work in conflict zones.

Finally, last May, WPD held a concert in New York City to raise awareness for our work and raise funds for our programs. More than a dozen Broadway stars came together for Forest Whitaker's Performers4Peace concert, which over 250 guests attended, including several WPD partners and 40 high school students from the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics. The concert was produced by Julie Boardman at Untitled Theatricals in association with Jacob Langfelder and was directed by Olivier Award-nominee Stafford Arima, with music directed by Anastasia Victory. Tony Award-winner James Monroe Iglehart and Sirius XM Radio's Julie James emceed the festivities.



Global Citizens Festival in Central Park in New York



Forest Whitaker speaking at WPD's Performers4Peace concert in New York

Our Shared Commitment

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 something greater than the sum of their parts.

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 2016 to strengthen and expand our programs:



Western Union Foundation

The Western Union Foundation is dedicated to creating a better world, where the ability to realize dreams through economic opportunity is not just a privilege for the few but a right for all. Through its signature program, Education for Better, and with the support of The Western Union Company, its employees, Agents, and business partners, The Western Union Foundation works to realize this vision by supporting education and disaster relief efforts as pathways toward a better future. Our combined social ventures efforts make life better for individuals, families and communities around the world.



Education Above All

WPDI and Education Above All (EAA), through its legal advocacy programme Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict (PEIC), have launched a partnership to support the delivery of youth leadership, rule of law and education programmes in South Sudan and in Uganda. Both organisations have joined forces to pursue their common ideals and support the work of our young leaders on the ground and strengthen youth advocacy for peace, development, and adherence to international human rights, humanitarian norms and the rule of law.



Earth Institute at Columbia University

The Earth Institute at Columbia University is working with WPDI to conduct a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Peacemaker Network in South Sudan.



Niteo Africa

Niteo Africa, an organization dedicated to promoting literacy and education in Uganda and beyond, has generously donated hundreds of books and educational resources for our Community Learning Centers in Uganda and South Sudan.



USAID

USAID has identified the POC population as a group particularly at-risk of post-traumatic stress and militarization within Juba, and prioritizes addressing psycho-social needs there in response. WPDI was identified as a key partner who provides healthy activities for residents through their sports programming. USAID has provided in-kind support for WPDI in the form of sports equipment and office equipment, which allowed WPDI to resume Peace Engagement Days in Juba POC – a combination of sports, cultural dance and conversations on peace topics and conflict resolution.



Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Akin Gump Strauss is a leading global law firm providing innovative legal services and business solutions to individuals and institutions. Akin Gump provides invaluable legal support to WPDI.



Youth Peacemakers from Uganda and South Sudan share the SDGs experience



The Sustainable Development Goals: A Framework for Peace

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 SDGs to which our activities and outcomes contribute.



SDG 1: NO POVERTY

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Poverty is one of the greatest barriers to global peace. Through our programs, WPDI seeks to empower young people to develop income-generating and community-building projects that break entrenched cycles of poverty and violence.



SDG 2: ZERO HUNGER

End hunger, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

Fresh and healthy food is scarce in many of the communities where we work. Several of our youth peacemakers are developing community gardens and small-scale agricultural businesses to promote sustainable farming practices and provide a healthy source of food for their neighbors.



SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

WPDI takes a holistic approach to peacebuilding. We try to instill healthy lifestyles and lifelong self-preservation habits in all our peacemakers so that they are better equipped to build peace in the world around them. We partner with the Starkey Hearing Foundation to provide community-based hearing healthcare to victims of Uganda's civil war.



SDG 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

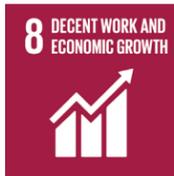
We believe that our youth peacemakers' ability to learn—from WPDI trainers, from their peers, and from their own experiences—is central to their success as leaders. WPDI's programs and Community Learning Centers promote education and literacy among youth and adults.



SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Empowering women and achieving gender balance in WPDl's programs is one of our top priorities. In South Sudan, we are partnering with UN Women to ensure that our youth peacemakers understand how they can work with community members to break down gender stereotypes.



SDG 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all

Our programs help local leaders and community organizers create income-generating projects and employment opportunities for vulnerable youth. In line with SDG 8, WPDl works to raise awareness on the use of child soldiers, and several former child soldiers are enrolled directly in our programs.



SDG 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Through the Youth Peacemaker Network and our Community Learning Centers, WPDl and our partners seek to increase Internet access among vulnerable populations in developing nations, in an effort to strengthen connectivity and spark creative development. ICT lessons are an important aspect of all our programs and trainings.



SDG 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within and among countries

Our programs, both in the United States and around the world, are deployed in low-income communities where young people often do not have the same educational and employment opportunities as their higher-income counterparts. We consider ourselves part of a global effort to level the playing field and give low-income youth the tools they need to succeed.



SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

In line with SDG 12, we try to impart to our youth leaders how they can contribute to responsible and sustainable development. Several of our peacemakers' community-building projects are attempting to raise awareness of how citizens can do their part to protect the environment.



SDG 16: PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies

Our fundamental goal is to empower a generation of peacemakers to lead their countries away from conflict and to help build dynamic, fair, and inclusive societies all over the world. Helping our youth leaders build peace in their communities is at the heart of what we do.



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIP FOR THE GOALS

Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

WPDl believes that humanity is at its strongest when we work together. At every stage of our programs, from conception to implementation, we seek out a variety of governmental, private-sector, and non-profit partners who believe, like we do, in the promise of youth to promote peace and development.



WPDl workshop on the SDGs

Looking Ahead

From East Africa to North America, our peacemakers have made tremendous strides in 2016. 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 2017 and beyond. Next year, we will continue to support our peacemakers as they deepen connections in the communities where they are engaged. As WPDI 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 South Sudan, we are excited to be expanding our Youth Peacemaker Network into the Western Equatoria region. Capitalizing on the success and lessons learned in Eastern Equatoria, the new launch of the program will see a new cohort of high-level leaders recruited and trained in peacebuilding, mediation, business, and ICT. Staff members in South Sudan are currently hard at work making final preparations for the program launch in mid-2017. We will also open five new Community Learning Centers in the country and launch the CRE program in primary and secondary schools.

In Uganda, we are excited to launch a new branch of the Youth Peacemaker Network in the Acholi sub-region with a new cohort of 30 youth peacemakers from all the different counties of Acholi. We will launch as well beginning of 2017 a new branch of the YPN at the refugee settlement in Kirynadongo that will impact more than 10,000 refugees over the next 3 years. In addition, WPDI is looking forward to funding and supporting five additional youth-led community-building projects in 2017.



Hidita, WPDI Youth Peacemaker, conducting a training for young youth



ICT training at the CLC in Gulu

Those projects that were launched in 2016 have successfully engaged dozens of youth in productive employment activities and are providing important community services for hundreds. WPDI is also developing new programming at our Community Learning Center in Gulu and is engaged in securing agreements to establish additional Community Learning Centers throughout Northern Uganda.

In Mexico, our initial three-year commitment in Tijuana is coming to a close, with many of the youth peacemakers there well-equipped to take full ownership of their community projects. Meanwhile, in Chiapas, the youth peacemakers are prepared to launch their community initiatives and are looking forward to engaging their colleagues and neighbors in their endeavors.

In the United States, we look forward to the second year of engagement with Carnegie Middle School, as students continue to work with our unique and newly designed conflict resolution education curriculum. This three-year pilot at Carnegie Middle School will provide crucial data that will allow WPDI and CSUDH to improve the program and hopefully integrate it into additional Los Angeles-area schools over the coming years.

All of our planned initiatives and expansions in 2017 and beyond 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.

Our Founder

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 WPDJ 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 WPDJ, co-founder and chair of the International Institute for Peace, UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, and a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Advocacy Group. Whitaker is dedicated to cultivating youths' artistic talents. As a member of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, he worked 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.



“Even a seemingly small action can cause ripples that make an enormous impact.”

Forest Whitaker



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, the World Childhood Foundation, and more. Most recently, he has been honored with the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum and was named Peacemaker of the Year by the Southern California Mediation Association.

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. In 2016, he was appointed to the Sustainable Development Goals Advocacy Group by the UN Secretary-General.

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 Board of Directors



Forest Whitaker - President of the Board of Directors

Forest Whitaker is the founder and CEO of the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, co-founder and chair of the International Institute for Peace, the UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation and member of the UN SDG Advocacy Group. In addition to his humanitarian work, Whitaker is one of Hollywood's most accomplished and versatile figures. He has 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*.



Baroness Valeria Amos

Valerie joined as Director of SOAS University of London in September 2015. From 2010, she served as Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the UN. She served in a number of roles in the public sector including in local government and as Chief Executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission. Valerie was an adviser to the Mandela Government on leadership, change, management and strategy issues between 1994 and 1998. She was appointed a Labour Life Peer in 1997 and became a member of the Government in 1998. She was a Foreign Office Minister, Secretary of State for International Development, Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council. She also served as UK High Commissioner to Australia before joining the UN. In June 2016, she was made a Companion of Honour in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.



Millette Elicano

Millette Elicano is a psychotherapist who runs her own private practice in Los Angeles. She began her career as a social worker working on crisis intervention and substance abuse issues and then rose to become the Director of Foster Care at the Bienvenidos Center (provides a comprehensive range of low cost social services in medical, mental health, community services and foster care throughout Los Angeles). Most recently she was the Social Work Director at Guadalupe Homes in Long Beach, where she developed treatment and casework programs for emotionally disturbed children and teenagers.



Dana Frix

Dana Frix is the CEO of the Frix Advisory Group, which makes investments in and provides business advice to the technology, media and telecommunications (TMT) and Internet of Things (IoT) sectors and to investors in them. Until forming the Advisory Group in April 2016 Dana was Managing Partner of the Washington, D.C. office of the international law firm of Chadbourne & Parke, LLP. From 2002 until 2016 Dana was a partner in Chadbourne's corporate practice and Chair of its TMT practice. In that capacity Dana maintained a business advisory practice that provided corporate, finance, IP, and litigation advice to clients primarily in the TMT and IoT sectors, or to financial service firms investing in these sectors. Previously Dana was an Equity Partner with the international law firm of O'Melveny and Meyers LLP, where he co-headed that firm's Telecommunications practice.



Erik Hersman

Erik Hersman is an entrepreneur and technologist focused on advancing the use of technology in Africa. He is the CEO of BRCK a rugged wireless WiFi device designed and engineered in Kenya for use throughout the emerging markets. In 2010 he founded the iHub, Nairobi's innovation hub for the technology community, bringing together entrepreneurs, hackers, designers and the investment community. He is also a co-founder of Ushahidi, the free and open source software for crowdsourcing crisis information, and also established afrigadget.com and whiteafrican.com as key online communities promoting creative solutions entrepreneurship and development challenges across Africa.



Hans Vestberg

Hans Vestberg is Chairman of the Swedish Olympic Committee and board member of the UN Foundation. Since 1991, Vestberg has held various management positions for Ericsson, culminating with the position of President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ericsson Group from 2009 to 2016. He is a founding member of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, and chaired the Commission's climate-change working group as well as the Commission's task group on the post-2015 development agenda. He is also a member of the Leadership Council of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Solutions Network. In Sweden, Vestberg has been part of the Prime Minister's National Innovation Council between 2015-2016. In 2014, Vestberg was ranked #10 on Global Telecoms Business' list of the 100 most powerful people in the telecoms industry.



Jocelyn Wyatt

Jocelyn is the Co-Lead + Executive Director of IDEO.org, the nonprofit design organization that she cofounded in 2011 after leading IDEO's social innovation practice. As Executive Director, Jocelyn spends her time sorting out the vision, strategy, funding, and growth plans for IDEO.org. She heads up partner development with foundations, nonprofits, and social enterprises and builds networks by speaking widely on how design is changing the social sector. Prior to joining IDEO in 2007, Jocelyn worked in Kenya as an Acumen Fund fellow. Before that, she served as VisionSpring's interim country director in India, where she helped increase the distribution of low-cost reading glasses to the poor. Before that she did training, project management, and business development for Chemonics International, a contractor for USAID.

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Vikram Singh: Administrative Assistant

WPDI South Sudan

David Dagu: Program Manager

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