



WHITAKER PEACE & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Giving Tuesday Newsletter 2025



Foreword



As we approach the end of 2025, I am reflecting on a year defined by both **profound need** and **extraordinary resilience**. Across South Sudan, Uganda, Mexico, South Africa, the United States, and France, communities of all ages and backgrounds continued working with us to build peace, strengthen livelihoods, expand access to education, and restore social cohesion.

This October, the Paris Peace Forum highlighted our work in South Sudan as part of its exhibition on peace and resilience initiatives, an acknowledgment of how locally driven programs can help fragile communities navigate conflict, displacement, and recovery. A few weeks later, we were honoured to receive the Changing Lives Award at the Africa Tech Festival in South Africa, in recognition of our partnership with SES in bringing reliable internet connectivity to underserved communities. From Paris to Cape Town, having our work recognized is a real source of pride for everyone at WPDI. **It gives motivation in this challenging global context, as our teams continue to deliver impact with remarkable dedication:** mediating conflicts, supporting entrepreneurs, expanding peace education in schools, and providing mental health services, all while ensuring that our Community Learning Centers remain vibrant, safe spaces for learning and opportunity.

None of this work happens alone. It is made possible by a community of partners, allies, and supporters who believe in the power of grassroots peacebuilding. On this Giving Tuesday, we invite you to continue walking alongside us with a donation. Every contribution counts - even \$50 can make a difference. **Your generosity directly fuels our mission and helps transform lives.**

As we look ahead to 2026, our commitment remains unwavering: *to empower people, strengthen communities, and make peace happen from the ground up.*

With deepest gratitude,

Caroline Descombris
WPDI Executive Director





PEACEBUILDING

At WPDJ, Peacebuilding action embodies our commitment to fostering resilience and concord through grassroots initiatives and community involvement.

We recognize that sustainable peace begins at the local level, where individuals and communities are directly engaged in addressing and resolving conflicts. Our peacebuilding approach focuses on empowering local actors, including leaders, students, and teachers, to become active participants in creating a culture of peace.

We approach peacebuilding by integrating conflict mediation, advocacy for peace values, and conflict resolution training into our programs on the ground. By working closely with community members, we help to bridge divides and build mutual understanding. Our goal is to transform conflict into opportunities for dialogue and cooperation, ensuring that communities are equipped to handle disputes and motivated to work together toward lasting peace.

164,676

Participants in peacebuilding events at our 16 community learning centers across the world

13,081

Individuals participated in 93 community dialogues

36,018

Students, teachers, school administration staff and parents trained in Conflict Resolution Education

SUPPORT OUR PEACEBUILDING PROGRAMS

\$10

Buy supplies to create a peace club in a schools

DONATE

\$200

Fund 1 year of school fees for a pupil

DONATE

\$3,000

Fund 1 year of Youth Peacemaker Training

DONATE

*"I used to react aggressively towards prisoners, but thanks to this training from WPDJ, I'm determined to be a better officer. **I now understand that peace is contagious and it starts with me as the officer.**"*

– **Matwell Saunders, Pollsmoor Correctional Service Official in South Africa**

*"WPDJ stands out as one of the foremost organizations supporting the Ministry of Peacebuilding and the people of South Sudan. **These initiatives have empowered our communities and fostered a climate of relative peace.** We are grateful for their unwavering commitment to our shared goals."*

– **Hon. Gerald Francis, Minister of Peacebuilding, South Sudan**



LIVELIHOOD

WPDÍ's Livelihood Initiative promotes economic development through local empowerment, spanning five countries across three continents.

In 2025, we continued to cement our role as a driver of sustainable development, demonstrating how vocational training and entrepreneurship can transform lives in some of the world's most vulnerable communities. This year builds on the achievements of the previous one, when WPDÍ supported the creation of 308 new local businesses in France, Mexico, Uganda, South Africa, and South Sudan, bringing our global total to 1,020 active enterprises.

Beyond the encouraging numbers, these enterprises represent opportunity, hope, and resilience, changing not only individual lives but entire communities.

57,226

Total beneficiaries participated in WPDÍ's Livelihood programs

13,373

Graduates from vocational training in Business, ICT, and Arts & Crafts at WPDÍ's centers

1,020

Businesses are supported, including 308 newly created in 2024

SUPPORT OUR LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS

\$200

Buy supplies for Vocational Training Programs

DONATE

\$1,000

Support expansion of promising Businesses

DONATE

\$3,000

Provide start-up capital for a women-led business

DONATE

"The business training was exciting indeed. I had to leave school at the age of 15 years to get married, so I have been out of school for over 30 years... I gained knowledge, skills and self-confidence. I'm inspired to better myself and support women who went through similar problems."

– Ntombizanele Binase, Business Trainee, South Africa

"I came to Uganda as a refugee and the first challenge that I faced was speaking English... I registered for Functional Adult Literacy Class. I registered and now I can speak some English and am very eager to enroll in the business class so that I can learn about business."

– Business & Literacy Trainee, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Many of the communities we operate in have suffered years of conflict, instability and a total lack of supportive infrastructure. People in these communities have often experienced various forms of trauma, and are in need of support.

Very early on, providing mental health and well-being services has been part of our work, notably in refugee contexts, eventually realizing the extent of the need. **This is why in 2023, WPDJ created a new Health and Well-being pillar to include trauma healing as a core part of our action.** In the framework of this pillar, we set up and develop trauma healing initiatives, mental health training programs and informative programs on health, notably sexual and reproductive health, in the marginalized communities where we operate in order to help vulnerable people heal and find peace. Our ambition is to provide community members tools that are adapted to their ages and conditions so they can regain their resilience capacity, achieve inner peace and, in turn, contribute to making peace happen among people and communities.

18,779

People benefited from Health & Well-being programs in 2024

9,397

Individuals accessed Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

9,382

Individuals received Trauma Healing Services

SUPPORT OUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMS

\$10

Purchase sanitary pads for school pupils

DONATE

\$50

Support an awareness-raising campaign on GBV

DONATE

\$1,000

Support our Trauma Healing Programs

DONATE

*"High school is already hard, but not having pads made it worse. I used to stay home because I was scared other kids would laugh at me. Now, with the pads we get every month, I don't have to miss school anymore. **I feel normal and proud to be myself.**"*

–Beverly, High-School Student in Hanover Park, South Africa

*"Working with vulnerable populations has been intense, and I developed vicarious trauma, which caused a physical limitation in my right arm. **This workshop has impacted me by helping me recognize my limitations and motivating me to transform them.**"*

–Guadalupe del Carmen Cruz Díaz, 27-year-old Law Graduate, Mexico



PEACE THROUGH SPORTS

Sports have a fundamental human appeal. They can connect people across cultures, religions, nationalities, languages, and other divides.

Recognizing the potential of sports as a vector for peacebuilding, WPDJ created the Peace Through Sports program to empower young men and women to embrace and practice positive values in dynamic and inclusive environments. **The program combines life skills training with the excitement of organized competitions, community events, and regular training sessions led by qualified coaches.**

Beyond the joy of participation, these activities inspire young people to shine as leaders and agents of positive change in their communities. Together, we can use the universal language of sports to foster peace and unity.

135,344

People participated in Peace Through Sports activities

131,779

Individuals took part specifically in community-level sports events

3,565

Team players and coaches were trained to use sports for resilience and unity

SUPPORT OUR SPORTS PROGRAMS

\$10

Purchase soccer balls or basketballs

DONATE

\$50

Contribute to sports uniforms purchase

DONATE

\$1,000

Organize a Whitaker Peace Cup

DONATE

*"It has helped me to realize how potential I am in basketball and **taught me to keep pushing in life and never give up on my dreams.**"*

–Nkosinathi Fundakubi, Basketball Clinic Participant, South Africa

*"I have learned to appreciate people from different backgrounds, **coexist peacefully with individuals from diverse cultures, races, and tribes, and work together as a team.**"*

–Koul Atem Koul, 14, Peace Through Sports participant, Uganda



On this Giving Tuesday, we invite you to stand with the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative in whatever way feels meaningful to you. In this time of unprecedented uncertainty — when communities around the world are facing rising needs and shrinking support, **your engagement truly matters.**

Whether by sharing our work, partnering with us, amplifying our message, or choosing to give, every form of support helps ensure that people of all ages have access to the skills, tools, and opportunities they need to build safer, more resilient futures. Each action taken in solidarity strengthens the chain of change that begins within individuals and grows throughout entire communities.

Together, we can continue connecting people, uplifting communities, and advancing the vision of a more peaceful, prosperous, and resilient world.

DONATE

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