

Meet our Youth Peacemakers

They are the true engine of WPDI. Young women, young men from underprivileged and underserved communities that have been plagued by years, sometimes decades, of marginalization, poverty, armed violence, and conflict. But they never cowered before adversity. Their dreams of improving life in their communities led them to WPDI. We gave them skills and resources, nurturing their self-confidence and trust in better futures for their fellow citizens. As mediators, entrepreneurs, trainers, and grassroots leaders they work every day to make their communities more resilient, peaceful and prosperous. Their individual stories tell us about their personal courage and dedication; but they tell us about something bigger, also: they reveal this universal truth that everyone can play a part in transforming the world – one initiative at a time.



SOUTH AFRICA

Khadija Mayman

Khadija was born in the Cape Flats, South Africa, within Bonteheuwel, an area plagued by high rates of school dropouts, youth unemployment and gang violence. She has always sought to work for the community and became a founding member of the Bonteheuwel Youth Movement Against Violence even before she joined WPDI as a Youth Peacemaker. Her energy and talent impressed us so much that we eventually enrolled her among our staff as trainer and spokesperson.



SOUTH SUDAN

Nandegge Magdalena Lokoro

One of the first youth to join our Leadership program in Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan, Magdalena is a determined Youth Peacemaker who became a midwife with the very objective of saving women’s and infants’ lives. She is an exceptional mediator who made the news in her region after succeeding in bringing to peace two tribes locked in years of lethal conflict. Magdalena is also a charismatic speaker who addressed UN platforms to alert world leaders on the fates of her fellow South Sudanese citizens.



UGANDA

Duerel Olanya

Because his childhood was engulfed by civil war, Duerel chose to never let adversity derail him away from his ambition: to make his community more peaceful and prosperous. This dream took him to the doorstep of WPDI. “Joining WPDI has been one of the most important things that happened to me. They have taught me a lot and helped me become an educator, an entrepreneur – a leader.” Today, Duerel has begun to make a lasting imprint in the lives of the hundreds of youths he has trained in conflict resolution and entrepreneurship – the beginning of highly promising journey.



SOUTH SUDAN

Emad Rajab Said

Rajab, a radiating South Sudanese youth has been living for years in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement in Uganda, where he joined our Youth Peacemaker program. His unique capacity to handle conflicts quickly set him apart, leading us to trust him with components of our programs in Kiryandongo, including the management of our Peace Through Sports program or the tutoring of fellow young refugees enrolled in program on global history led by Princeton University.



UGANDA

Cissy Joy Namatovu

After studying to become a teacher, Cissy joined WPDI in 2012, expanding her skillset and her very perspective on how to enact social transformation. The teacher in her meshed with the entrepreneur she had become, leading her to open a salon that doubled as a vocational center for hairdressing and cosmetology. To this day, Cissy has trained dozens of young women at her shop, creating opportunities for them to find jobs and improve their livelihoods.



MEXICO

Víctor Sántiz Garcia

“Being a young leader represents an opportunity to serve as an agent of change.” This is the motto of Victor, who after joining WPDI, launched the Production of Healthy and Nutritious Food Initiative with a fellow peacemaker, which benefits 300 indigenous families and received national and international awards. Moving forward, he launched a community learning center on our behalf in his hometown of Mitontic, Mexico, to reach even more people.

