

GENERAL REPORT 2024

PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT: HOPE AND RESILIENCE IN MOTION



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

Table of Contents

Foreword by Forest Whitaker	03
Our Mission	04
Executive Summary	05
2024 Overview	07
Post-training Questionnaire	09
Stakeholders Tell us What They Think of WPD	10
Vectors of Change	12
Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots	14
Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity	16
Our Programs in Action	19
Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment	20
Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace	22
Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace	26
Bringing Skills and Values for Peace Into Schools	28
Training Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education	34
Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice	39
Cinema for Peace	41
Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment	42
Vocational Skills for Personal and Career Development	43
Business and Entrepreneurship	47
Information and Communication Technologies	49
Arts and Crafts	51
The Business Bootcamp	53
The Women's Livelihood Program	57
Health and Wellbeing: Pathways to Inner Peace	60
Trauma Healing Services for Improved Resilience	61
Sexual and Reproductive Health	64
Peace Through Sports	67
Faces of Hope Gala	71
Financials	73
The SDGs	75
Conclusion	77
WPD Board of Directors	79
Our Founder	82
Our Partners	84
Become a Partner	85
Act for Peace	86



Foreword

by Forest Whitaker

The present era is marked by heightened conflicts and mounting challenges, particularly climate change, manifested in growing numbers of extreme weather events impacting populations and hurting economies. Global peace is at stake. But however daunting the large-scale picture, we must never forget that peace starts with decisions made by individuals in their context and that contexts are always local. This has always been my approach with WPD: empowering individuals from conflict-affected and marginalized places so they can be the ones who enact peaceful transformation directly from within their communities. Like many other organizations, we are on the ground every day, reaching out to local stakeholders, enrolling people from remote areas, organizing training workshops, providing advice to project-bearers, gathering communities to bridge divides, and many other activities. Unlike the fury of war and the relief cease-fires, the work of peacebuilders does not make the headlines. Ours is a work of patience with rewards so intangible that they often boil down to smiles on faces: the smiles of refugee women selling their produce on a local market, of two young men from different tribes shaking hands before engaging each other in a soccer game, of young people staging a play on gender equality during a peace festival at their school. Those smiles do not make it to the headlines because they express the simplicity of normal lives. This is what we do: bring back normalcy where it had been shattered down to shards and rubble. This is what we have been doing for 13 years.

In this light, 2024 has been a landmark year for WPD, as we have reached 2 million beneficiaries since our inception in 2012. This milestone is a vindication of

a vision that was set in motion with barely more than a handful of dedicated individuals at my side. And it grew – we made it grow, and it made us grow. I am immensely proud of my teams and the leadership provided by Caroline Descombris, who, as Executive Director, has steered WPD on this path from a start-up to a flourishing organization. Our success is even more gratifying because of the ripple effect of our empowerment-based model. Many of the 2 million beneficiaries I just mentioned have, in turn, positively impacted the lives of many more people in their communities. This is notably evident with our young leaders, school programs, and the jobs created through our business initiatives, which have provided essential services in areas where they were nearly absent.

As I look towards the future, I am more committed than ever to stepping up efforts, recognizing the support of my partners, whose constant trust has been invaluable. Together, we will strive to build a more peaceful and sustainable world for all. Even if peace is admittedly always at risk, the normal thing for us at WPD will always be to reaching out to people with good will, finding ways to make peace happen against all odds. Peace is an unending quest, yet its pursuit is never in vain.

Peace and Light,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Forest Whitaker'.

Forest Whitaker,
CEO and Founder of WPD



Our Mission



The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) was founded in 2012 by artist, social activist Forest Whitaker, who is the UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace & Reconciliation as well as member of the United Nations Advocacy Group for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). WPDI is a non-governmental organization that operates in countries and regions impacted by violence and poverty. Our mission is to empower young women and men living in these vulnerable places to become peacemakers, leaders and entrepreneurs in their communities. We help them become (a) mediators who will address tensions and conflict between and within communities with competence and confidence, (b) community organizers who are equipped to reach out to other youth to undertake educational and cultural projects to promote peace, dialogue and tolerance, (c) entrepreneurs who can create economic opportunities for themselves and for their communities. WPDI has created and manages programs promoting lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa (South Africa,

South Sudan, and Uganda) the Americas (Mexico, the United States), and Europe (France).

Our work is guided by the philosophy that, in communities affected by endemic violence and long-standing poverty, change must come from within. Our Theory of Change bears that, *IF*, in conflict- and fragility-affected places, key beneficiaries from vulnerable segments of their society, are trained and supported to take initiatives in peacebuilding and entrepreneurship, *THEN* these communities have increased chances of strengthening their capacity for resilience, lasting peace and sustainable development. Our overall strategy is therefore to work closely with local stakeholders and to empower beneficiaries as partners in the design and implementation of solutions to the challenges faced by their communities. This approach ensures that our programs are responsive to conflict situations as perceived by local actors which also ensures that our programs are recognized and endorsed by target communities.

Executive Summary



In 2024, WPDl continued to expand its impact, achieving remarkable results that helped strengthen the resilience capacity of underprivileged communities in 12 locations, across 6 countries and 3 continents. Growing enthusiasm and support from local stakeholders have propelled the momentum of the programs, reflecting the trust and value placed in WPDl's work by the communities it serves. Working in close collaboration with local players, our programs are designed for impact that is both meaningful today and sustainable. The 164,676 individuals who participated in our Peacebuilding programs were not just empowered for today, they have received seeds of transformation that will grow for many years in the future, especially for the 33,975 pupils and students from our 299 partner schools. The same can be said for the 57,226 beneficiaries of our Livelihood program, whose economic prospects have been uplifted by the vocational skills they acquired, leading to jobs found, improved revenues or businesses supported. Indeed the 467 managers and 195 employees of the 308 businesses that we helped create this year face positive prospects since our incubation program boasts a survival rate of 88% of the supported ventures two years after their creation.

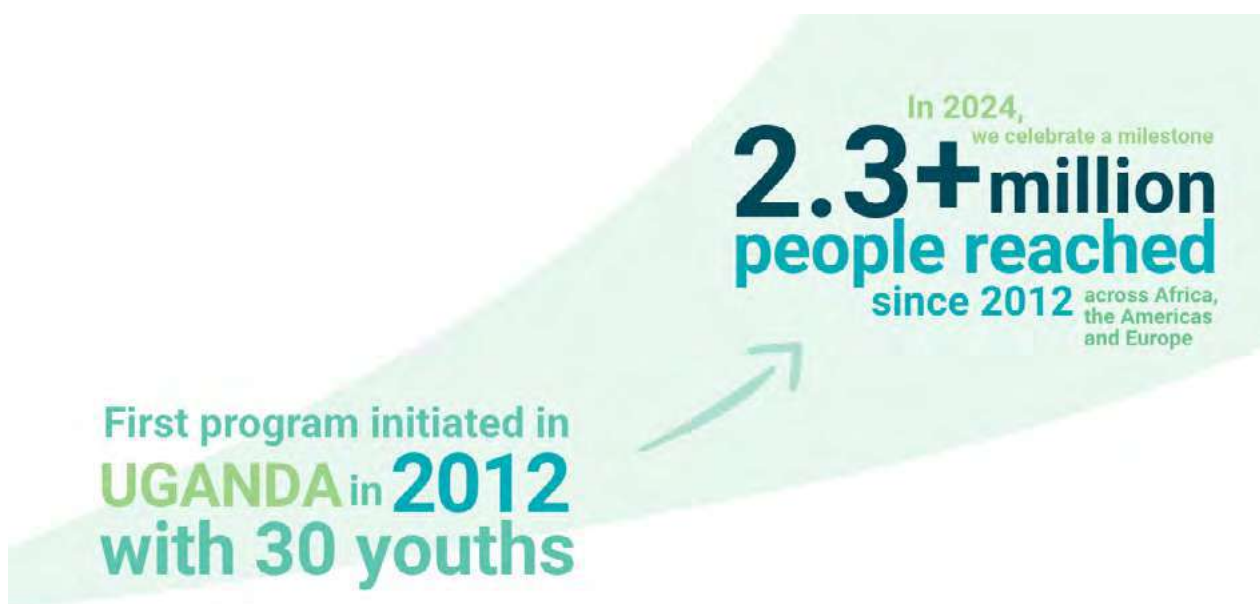
On other fronts, 2024 has been a year of growth and diversification, with a renewed focus on peacebuilding, education, and economic empowerment. We have also brought novelties into existing programs, such as advanced conflict resolution education in primary schools, the mainstreaming of trauma healing in Africa and the United States, and expanded ICT workshops for youth, including training in cutting-edge technologies like robotics and 3D printing. These efforts have helped equip participants with practical skills for personal and professional development, fostering both individual resilience and community cohesion. Furthermore, WPDl has made strides in integrating environmental and climate concerns into its global strategy. Recognizing the intersection of peacebuilding and sustainability, we have initiated programs aimed at enhancing the environmental resilience of vulnerable communities. This includes promoting eco-friendly business practices among entrepreneurs and incorporating climate awareness into our educational curricula that are detailed in this report.

More generally, we believe that these strategic innovations could yield positive results in a rather



short time thanks to the versatility of our intervention model which assumes that change is best driven when those concerned with it has a direct role in it. This is the common thread that runs through the diversity of programs that we implement on the ground – for and with the communities. Building on this inclusive approach, our programs have grown over the years, our programs have continued to grow in scope and reach. In this respect, we are proud not only that WPDJ reached over 375,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries in 2024, but also that, combining this result with those of the past years, we have reached more than 2,339,000 beneficiaries since the launch of our first program

in 2012, when we enrolled our first cohort of Youth Peacemakers in Uganda. We want to stress that this is a collective journey: it started with the vision of Forest Whitaker; it was pursued by a team that grew more and more not just in size but also in confidence and dedication; and it was prolonged by the thousands of beneficiaries who became our vanguard on the ground. We also want to warmly recognize the commitment of the many partners who have supported our work through this journey. WPDJ and its successes stem from the combination of all these energies that we will continue to mobilize in the coming years behind our initiative for peace and development.



2024 Overview



2,248
PEACEMAKERS

16 COMMUNITY
LEARNING CENTERS



299

SCHOOLS

host our Peace Education program

1,020

BUSINESSES

are currently supported, including



308

NEW BUSINESSES

supported since 2024

33,975

LEARNERS

trained in Conflict Resolution

93 COMMUNITY
DIALOGUES

were held by our youth peacemakers with



13,081
PARTICIPANTS

1,753

COMMUNITY LEADERS

were trained in Conflict Resolution

21,488

vocational and peace education

TRAINEES

249,952

PARTICIPANTS

at CLC events



3,565

TEAM PLAYERS
AND COACHES



9,397

BENEFICIARIES

of our Sexual and Reproductive
Health services

131,779

SPORTS EVENT PARTICIPANTS



9,382

BENEFICIARIES

of our Trauma Healing Services



51%

of our beneficiaries are

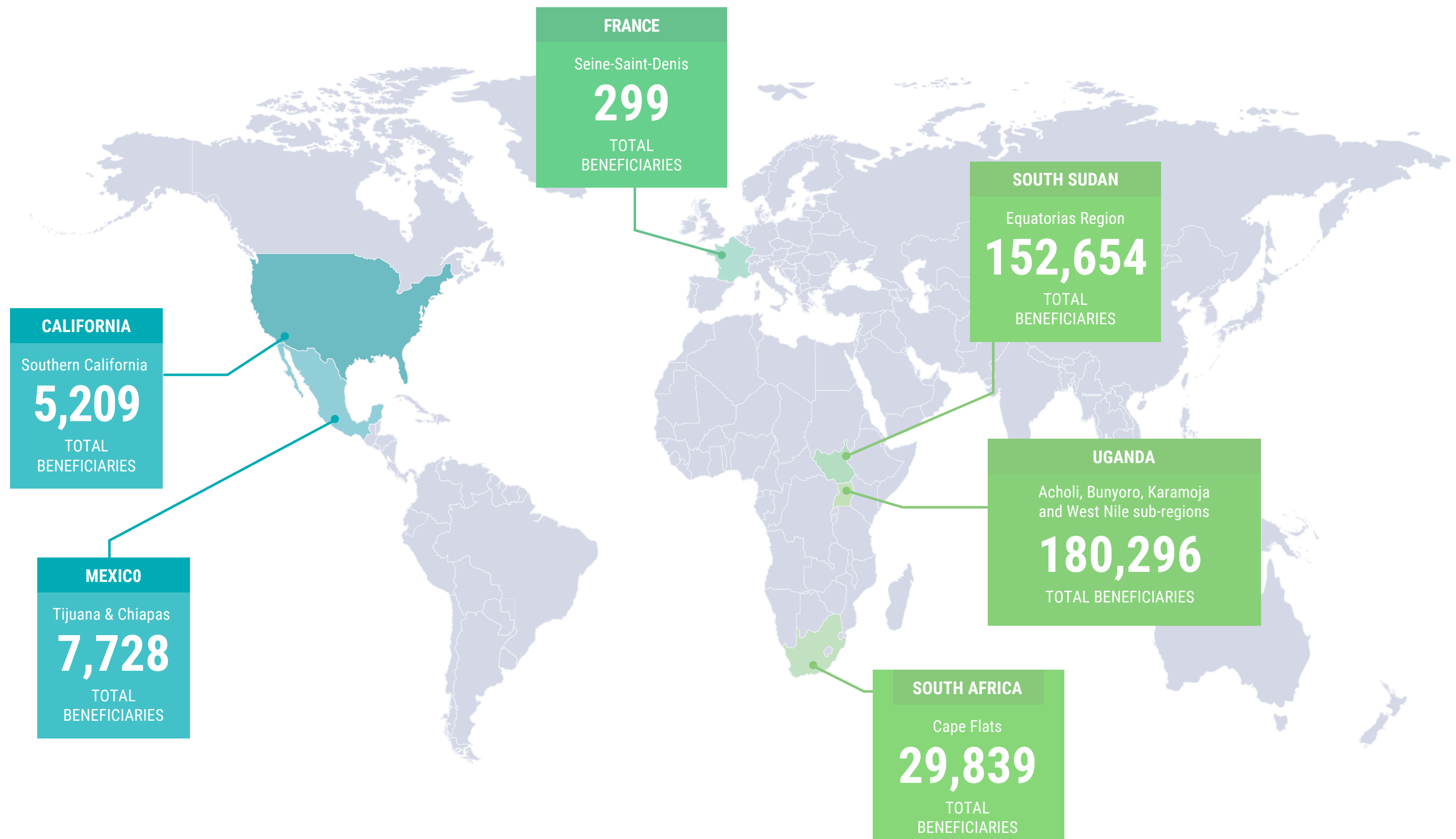
WOMEN AND GIRLS

Our programs have reached a total of 376,025 beneficiaries



WHERE WE WORK

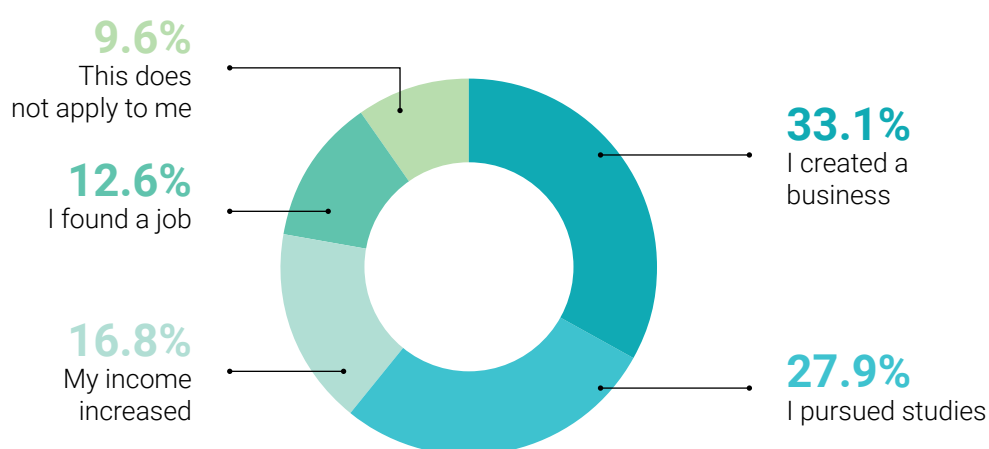
Total
beneficiaries **376,025**



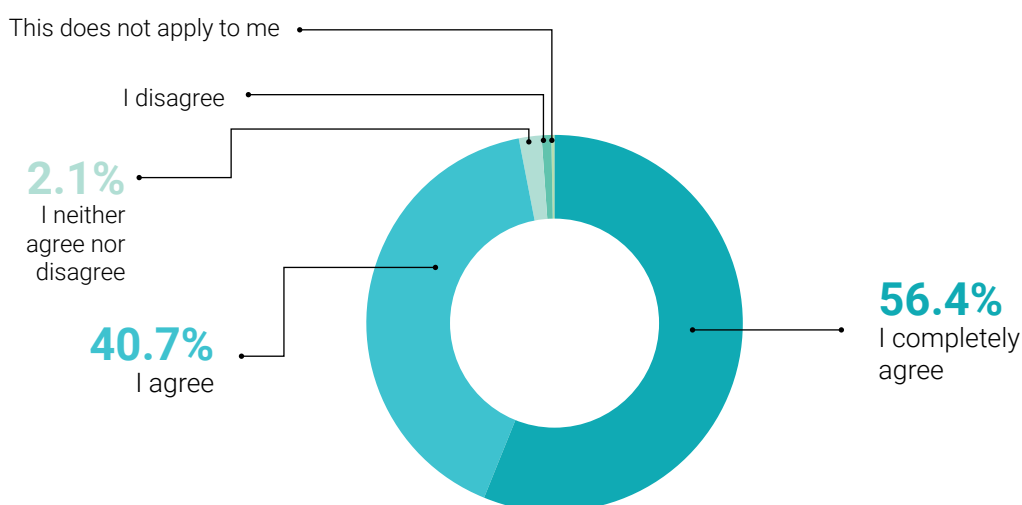
Post-training Questionnaire

Results of a post-training questionnaire delivered to trainees six-months after graduation to assess the impact of the courses. 3,923 beneficiaries responded to the questionnaire.

In what ways has the program improved your career prospects?



To what extent do you agree that you have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in your personal or professional life?



Stakeholders Tell us What They Think of WPDI

South Africa

"It gives me great pleasure to write this letter to endorse the work done by the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative within the City of Cape Town. This Initiative is particularly active in 14 of our Mayoral Urban Regeneration Programme (MURP) nodes which we have identified as areas needing various types of investment including into the people of those Communities. The programmes are strategically offered to persons, especially women, living in vulnerable circumstances. Notably at every graduation ceremony I have attended, the women thanked the programme and staff for the invaluable investment into their lives. The women are always appreciative of the opportunity to invest in themselves and to be able to provide a better life for their families, which in turn, I believe, uplifts their communities. The focus on entrepreneurial skills also empowers the women to grow their own generational wealth."

Eddie Andrews,
Deputy Mayor, City of Cape Town



South Sudan

"I am thankful to WPDI for empowering us with knowledge and skills in the areas of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. We are very satisfied with the training program, and I believe that lawmakers will be effective in their work and ensure the state attains the required peace. The conflict analysis tools, especially the conflict tree tool, are what we are going to use to analyze the numerous conflict issues and pass bills that will safeguard security and peace in the state."

Honorable Lorna,
Member of Parliament, Central Equatoria State



Uganda

"WPDI is one of the partners in the Karamoja region whose work in the socio-economic transformation of Karamoja is very transparent, involving, and community-focused. The way they involve the respective district stakeholders and government infrastructure in the implementation of their programs is commendable. WPDI has greatly contributed to the security and peace that we enjoy in Karamoja through support and participation in inter- and intra-community Barazas (public meeting places). They have supported a number of peace dialogues with conflicting communities, and there is peaceful coexistence between many previously conflicting communities over the sharing of natural resources. The skilling program and support to community livelihoods through grants is one of the best things that WPDI has done, and we are happy for it. As the RDC of Nakapiripirit and Chief Whip for RDCs of the Karamoja region, I want to applaud partners like WPDI for having our region at heart. We are happy to be associated with you and with the peace and security being enjoyed today. We are confident that we can revive the glory and untapped economic, mineral, and tourism potential. Please continue with the good work you are doing."

George E. Owanyj,
Regional Chief Whip Karamoja, Resident District
Commissioner, Nakapiripirit



Mexico

"With the Conflict Resolution program conducted by WPDI for Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC) students, future professionals were able to learn about resilience, tolerance to frustration, emotional handling, and mediation tools, which are very important at this stage of their lives when they have so much uncertainty about their future and are still developing as people. The signing of the general agreement with UABC, and later, a specific one with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, helped formalize this alliance so that it would not remain just a pact between friends who seek peace, but rather a formal commitment of this academic unit with international efforts such as the one carried out by Forest Whitaker and his WPDI team in Tijuana. This organization has already worked for many years to pacify our vulnerable population, and UABC, being the highest educational institution in the state, could not be left behind. We also want peace, and it is part of the UABC institutional development plan."

Carlos Reyna,
Professor at Universidad Autónoma de Baja
California



United States

"We are thankful for the partnership developed between the Little Lake City School District and the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative. Originally, the Domestic Harmonizer Program (DHP) began at two of our schools and has now expanded to six of our nine schools. The skills that our trained student peer mediators have learned have helped de-escalate conflict and tension between students in a respectful and understanding manner. Additionally, our peer mediators have gained self-confidence and a greater sense of self-efficacy to affect change at their school and with their fellow students. The DHP aligns perfectly with our district's mission of preparing students to reach their full potential so they can positively contribute to their communities."

Jonathan Vasquez,
Superintendent at Little Lake City School District



France

"Since its establishment in Aubervilliers, WPDI has played a crucial role, particularly in supporting women and young people. Through its concrete and committed actions, the organization opens new opportunities and empowers those who need it most. I had the honor of attending the graduation ceremony and the Business Plan Competition winners announcement organized by WPDI. It was a powerful moment where we celebrated the determination and ambition of the participants, showcasing the vitality and potential of our community. With the support of the City, WPDI has been able to develop comprehensive training programs, notably for women through their women entrepreneurship program "Les Battantes". I look forward to continuing this collaboration in service of our population."

Karine Franclet,
Mayor of Aubervilliers





Vectors of Change

Fragility means that communities affected by it will face significant challenges in mobilizing internal resources to navigate adversity sustainably and resiliently. Building this internal capacity requires access to an array of resources like skills, expertise, and information, which empower a critical mass of individuals to drive meaningful and positive change. This becomes especially crucial in both everyday situations and during crises like natural disasters, economic disruptions, or instances of violence.

To address this need, WPDJ implements key aspects of its programs through “vectors of change,” that are locally-established platforms designed to deliver essential resources at the grassroots level. These include two core initiatives: cohorts of Youth Peacemakers, who are equipped to lead transformational efforts within their communities, and Community Learning Centers (CLCs), which offer safe spaces for learning, collaboration, and personal growth.

62,334 total individuals reached
by WPDI through CLCs

Community
Learning Centers

16

CLC
visitors

15,506

CLC training
participants

11,350

CLC event
participants

35,478



339

Youth Peacemakers
+1,909 local youths
= 2,248 peacemakers



224,642

beneficiaries
impacted by
Youth Peacemakers



Close to

663

beneficiaries are
reached by 1 Youth
Peacemaker, on average



Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

Lead Youth
Peacemakers

339

Local Youth
Peacemakers

1,909

Total
Peacemakers

2,248



224,642 individuals reached by WPDI through Lead Peacemakers

The ability of individuals to effectively respond to shocks and crises is key to ensure that they are resilient and can address the challenges faced by their communities. However, prolonged exposure to armed conflict, pervasive violence, economic hardship, and social or geographic marginalization can erode the strengths that individuals need to foster dialogue, promote peace, or spearhead initiatives for collective growth. By WPDI's observation, the lack of such internal capacities is often a characteristic of communities affected by fragility and vulnerability.

The Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) addresses this gap by empowering young men and women from these communities. Through training in Conflict Resolution Education and other vocational skills, these youth leaders are equipped to drive positive transformation and advocate for peace within their communities. Since WPDI's inception over a decade ago, the YPN has been our flagship program, designed to empower communities toward long-term resilience.



Building a New Cohort of Youth Peacemakers in Chiapas

WPDI, with the support of the Inter-American Foundation, has expanded its Youth Peacemaker Network YPN) establishing a new cohort of young leaders in Chiapas, a region of Mexico known for both cultural richness and challenges related to conflict. This initiative is part of WPDI’s broader mission to equip young people in fragile areas with skills in conflict resolution, dialogue facilitation, and community development.

Following a call for applications published in June 2024, 160 young people from various municipalities expressed interest in joining the program. After a thorough selection process, 42 individuals from 11 municipalities were chosen to become Youth Peacemakers. Their training began in September 2024 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, where they discovered our Community Learning Center (CLC), which will be a second home for them in the coming years.

The training covers key areas, including:



Learning Community

Encouraging collaboration and shared growth.



Education for the People

Applying a people-centered approach to learning.



Positive Resolutions to Conflict

Developing skills to mediate and resolve disputes peacefully.

This new cohort represents a significant step in WPDI's efforts to foster sustainable peace in Chiapas. By equipping young leaders with essential skills and knowledge, the program is creating agents of change who will contribute to long-term community resilience.

"I've always been interested in humanitarian issues, which is why I was drawn to this program. What I liked most about the workshop was the dynamic approach based on constructivist education, with a focus on community and human values. It is helping me to better understand myself and build stronger connections, while also preparing me for a career in humanitarian organizations."

Rodrigo Alejandro Corzo Hernández,
a 24-year-old from San Cristóbal de las Casas



"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. I want to continue learning and eventually facilitate this process for others."

Guadalupe del Carmen Cruz Díaz,
a 27-year-old law graduate





Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

At present,
we operate in

16

Community Learning Centers

across Uganda, South Sudan, South Africa, Mexico, and France

Community Learning Centers (CLC) are spaces where individuals can access knowledge, develop vocational skills to enhance employability, adopt transformative civic values, initiate projects, engage with others, or gain awareness on issues that affect their community.

WPDI's CLCs are established in remote or underserved areas to help residents access essential resources.

At the CLCs, community members can take advantage of free internet access or take one of the available certified courses in WPDI's core curriculum such as Conflict Resolution Education, Business and

Entrepreneurship, or ICT. Building on this knowledge, WPDI supports selected entrepreneurial projects through its Business Bootcamp.

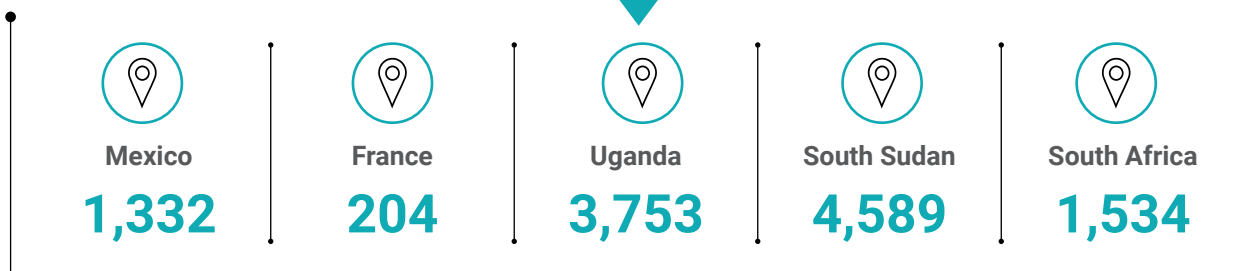
Trauma healing services and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) support are available for individuals to gain precious information to improve their wellbeing.

The centers also host peacebuilding activities, including sports, film screenings, advocacy campaigns, and cultural events. Ultimately, these centers are designed for communities to take ownership of and use as a foundation for driving positive change locally.

16 Community Learning Centers



11,412 CLC training participants



35,478 CLC event participants



Mexico

727



France

20



Uganda

17,705



South Sudan

15,506



South Africa

1,520

15,506 other CLC visitors



Mexico

1,100



Uganda

4,332



South Sudan

8,709



South Africa

1,365

62,376 individuals reached by WPDl through CLCs



Mexico

3,159



France

204



Uganda

25,790



South Sudan

28,804



South Africa

4,419







Our Programs In Action

Our programs, structured under four key pillars—Peacebuilding, Livelihood, Health and Wellbeing, and Sports—are designed to equip young people and communities with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to break cycles of violence and fragility, aiming at a brighter future. By focusing on youth and women empowerment, civic education for peace, economic development, vocational training, and wellbeing, WPDI works to create lasting change in conflict-affected regions around the world.

Grand total for people
reach in 2024 by WPDI:

376,025



Peacebuilding

164,676

beneficiaries



Livelihood

57,226

beneficiaries



Health & Wellbeing

18,779

beneficiaries



Sports

135,344

beneficiaries

Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment

Guided by our commitment to grassroots action and community ownership, our teams and Youth Peacemakers work to mediate conflicts, promote the values of peace and resilience, and equip community members with conflict resolution skills. This includes direct training for local leaders, students, and teachers in their schools. By doing so, we enable our beneficiaries to become active partners in advancing peace and fostering resilience within their communities.

164,676 total beneficiaries under
the Peacebuilding pillar



Lessons for Innovation: South Sudan and Uganda Peacebuilding Pillar from 2021-2023

An Africa-based consultancy, QDATAMS, evaluated WPDI's peacebuilding project in South Sudan and Uganda from 2021 to 2024. The evaluation is an important document in that it covered all Peacebuilding pillar activities. The evaluation was highly positive, with local stakeholders advocating for the continuation and expansion of WPDI's efforts.

Key lessons from the QDATAMS report include the importance of empowering local individuals for sustainable peacebuilding and integrating educational initiatives with peacebuilding efforts. This approach highlighted youth as key agents of change, in line with the UN Security Council agenda on Youth Peace and Security. The engagement of all sorts of stakeholders was crucial for the effectiveness, sustainability, and acceptance of the programs. The project addressed the needs of conflict-affected communities by equipping youth with mediation skills and training community members in conflict resolution. WPDI's integration with local actors, such as the police and community leaders, bridged trust gaps and supported local government priorities. The project engaged over 511,935 beneficiaries and was praised for its efficiency, particularly through the Trainer of Trainer (ToT) model. The transformative impact was evident in improved student behavior, academic performance, social interactions, strengthened inter-community relations, and economic and social empowerment. The ToT approach and continuous engagement of local leaders ensured the sustainability of the project's achievements.

The evaluation recommended continuing WPDI's work, emphasizing the need for ongoing training programs for community leaders and enhancing activities in CLCs. They also advised to scale up peace education and conflict resolution initiatives to

more schools and communities to foster a broader culture of peace. Another key recommendation was to expand mentorship, training, and networking opportunities for youth peacemakers to promote leadership and peer learning. Additionally, broadening vocational training programs and linking participants to market opportunities were suggested for improved economic empowerment. The evaluation concluded that WPDI's project significantly contributed to building resilience in fragility-affected areas. Such focus on resilience is integral to WPDI's mandate which assumes that the response to fragility cannot consist only in external assistance but mainly in the creation of strong, self-sustaining communities capable of addressing their own challenges.

In sum, the evaluators' report was generally very positive, notably highlighting particular strengths in our implementation:

Coherent: strong coherence on how it enhances efforts of local and national actors

Effective: we were able to fully achieve the objectives of the project

Efficient: remarkable financial and human resources efficiency through carefully designed and executed strategies

Impactful: the project has a transformative impact on targeted communities

Sustainable: the sustainability of the project achievements is supported by several strategic elements, including ToT approach and continuous engagement of local leaders and institutions



Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

93 community dialogues held



Mexico

2



Uganda

61



South Sudan

21



South Africa

9

13,081 participants in dialogues



Mexico

120



Uganda

10,594



South Sudan

1,775



South Africa

592

1,753 local leaders trained



Mexico

30



Uganda

246



South Sudan

1,171



South Africa

306

14,834 total participants in community level peacebuilding



A community cannot be fully resilient if it lacks safe spaces for dialogue and exchange on collective challenges and prospects. Such safe spaces are often what conflict or marginalization tend to reduce or eliminate as they undermine the trust that community members have among themselves and for institutions. To reinject or strengthen trust between and within communities, WPDI has developed a program designed to open spaces for transparent and respectful exchange, which is always done in close collaboration with local stakeholders. The goal of these discussions is to remain attuned to local realities and ensure that every voice is heard, taking the time needed to foster genuine understanding. This is why our Community Dialogues are primarily led by our peacemakers, who have a near-innate understanding of local realities and are therefore better positioned than external actors to build trust with local populations and leaders.

Equipped with the skills and tools provided by WPDI, our Youth Peacemakers play a crucial

role in mediating conflicts and addressing long-standing tensions. Beyond convening a space for discussion, an essential component of the process is to collectively elaborate resolutions participants agree to. The implementation of these resolutions are monitored and follow-up dialogues ensure that necessary steps are taken as per discussed during a dialogue.

A key objective of these dialogues is to create a lasting ripple effect throughout the community. To this effect, our staff and youth invite participants, especially among the community leadership, to share the conclusions of the dialogues with their peers and within their networks. Another powerful vehicle for promoting the results of the dialogues is local radio, which peacemakers often use to introduce their work and share outcomes with a broader audience. By fostering openness and transparency in addressing conflicts and challenges, these dialogues help build resilience and self-confidence within communities.

"WPDI stands out as one of the foremost organizations supporting the Ministry of Peacebuilding and the people of South Sudan. We recognize and appreciate the significant contributions WPDI has made through impactful Community Dialogues and peace conferences. 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

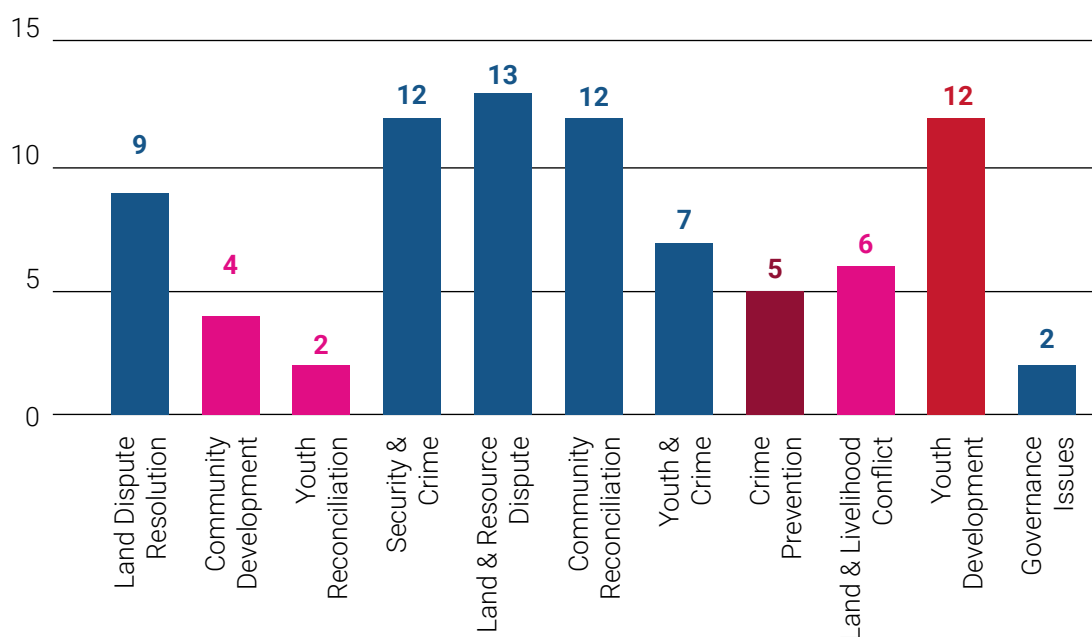


"I would like to thank the WPDI team for prioritizing our community and bringing the dialogue process closer to us. The first conflict we faced was intense, but when one of WPDI's Youth Peacemakers, Martha, reached out, we had the opportunity to mobilize a large number of community members. I am grateful that this effort helped bring the conflict to an end. We truly appreciate the incredible work being done."

Hon. Felix Nyero,
chairman LC 3. Madi Opei Sub-County,
Uganda

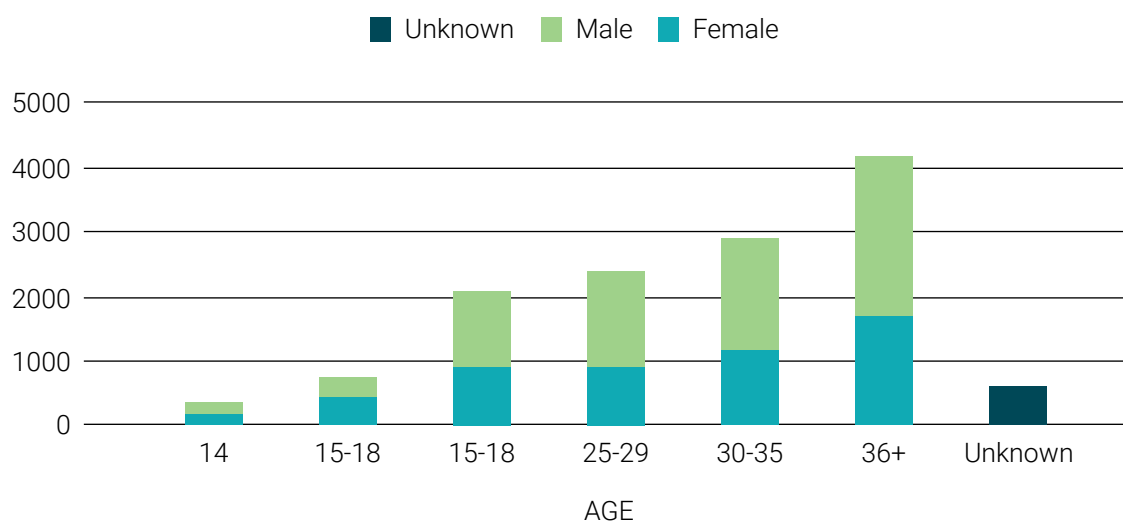


Number of Community dialogues per issues raised across all countries



13 Community Dialogues included Gender-Based Violence as a sub-theme

Gender and age breakdown of participants



39.5% of participants are between the ages of 15 and 29
41% of participants are young women



Community Dialogues: Facing Down the Growing Scourge of Kidnappings in the Cape Flats

WPDI is active in the Cape Flats, one of the most violent and crime-ridden areas in the world, plagued by high levels of violence, criminality, and pervasive poverty. Recently, there has been an unsettling surge in abduction cases, as gangs have moved into the ransom business. These kidnappings, particularly targeting women and children, are driven by various motives including financial gain, drug-related conflicts, and, in some instances, the use of human body parts for traditional medicine (muti). Despite several arrests in connection to these incidents, the community faced the troubling reality that some suspects have been released on bail, a factor believed to contribute to the continued attacks.

In response to these alarming developments, WPDI has mobilized its Community Dialogue platform as a vector for the community to address these issues. In May, women from Mitchells Plain and nearby communities including Tafelsig, Beacon Valley, Eastridge, and Lenteguur, convened at our Athlone Community Learning Center (CLC) for a meeting that we organized with the support of WPDI Youth Peacemakers and in collaboration with various

NGOs and community members, to discuss pressing issues affecting resident women and children, chiefly the abductions.

As a solution, the women emphasized the urgent need for early education on safety measures. It was widely agreed that self-defense classes would be beneficial for recognizing safe and unsafe situations. Looking ahead, these women decided to start learning self-defense techniques, with sessions scheduled to begin at the CLC as soon as this summer.

These women have demonstrated the relevance of Community Dialogues as a means to nurture resilience both for individuals and their communities. Indeed, their collective decision to initiate self-defense classes highlights a proactive approach to enhancing safety and resilience in their communities, and an intrinsic desire for long-term peace. By coming together and supporting each other, these women are taking meaningful steps towards creating a safer environment for themselves and their children, showcasing the vital role of grassroots efforts in driving positive change in the Cape Flats.



Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace

1,753 local leaders trained

Mexico

30

Uganda

246

South Sudan

1,171

South Africa

306

As part of its commitment to fostering sustainable peace and community resilience, WPDI provides specialized training for local community leaders, equipping them with essential mediation and conflict resolution skills. This training ensures that the progress achieved through Community Dialogues and other programs under the Youth Peacemaker Network is maintained and strengthened over time, become part of the grassroots culture.

The program covers a range of critical topics, including Human Rights, Gender Mainstreaming, Conflict Analysis, Mediation, Leadership, Community Development, and Advocacy. Through this training, leaders gain a deeper understanding of human rights principles, the importance of inclusive leadership, and equitable participation in

decision-making. They also develop the skills needed to analyze and address conflicts, mediate disputes, and lead with fairness and accountability. Additionally, the program introduces leaders to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which provides them with a framework to effectively identify key issues, mobilize resources, and drive meaningful change.

By empowering local leaders with these skills and insights, these trainings not only add an array of peacebuilding skills to the quiver of local leaders, thereby allowing them to improve their leadership capacity, they also constitute a very effective way of ensuring that the results of our work on the ground will be fully appropriated and sustainable.

"This is an excellent course with insightful readings that deepen our understanding of present realities and equip us to build peace. The content is comprehensive, and the presentations are exceptionally well-explained. The course truly conveyed the peace and energy it advocates for. Congratulations!"

Ulises Alonso,
Human Rights Commission, South Sudan



"I would like to thank WPDI for initiating Conflict Resolution Education training in Lakwana Omoro District. As political leaders, we pledge our full support for any initiative that fosters peace and unity, particularly among the youth. I urge WPDI to organize more training sessions and dialogues in Omoro to help communities resolve conflicts constructively."

Hon. Douglas Peter Okao,
Chairman LC5, Lakwana Omoro District,
Uganda



"WPDI's training gave me invaluable skills in mediation, negotiation, and peacebuilding—tools I have used to resolve conflicts in my community. With this knowledge, I've successfully led dialogues to address tensions, including disputes between the Tepeth and Matheniko communities over livestock theft. The skills I gained have empowered me to represent my people effectively and contribute to peacebuilding efforts in Karamoja."

Lokir Emmanuel,
District Youth Councillor, Katikekile Sub-County, Moroto District, Uganda



In South Sudan, WPDl Trains 65 Members of the State Assembly of Central Equatoria

South Sudan is a country that continues to be beset by internal security issues and regional instability with its neighbor country Sudan in turmoil. Committing to a culture of peace is therefore vital for the world's youngest country. To this effect, WPDl places significant resources into training members of local legislative assemblies in conflict resolution in order to avert outbreaks of violence within local communities due to local socio-economic challenges.

A training was organized for members of the Central Equatoria State (CES) Reconstituted Transitional Legislative Assembly (RTLA). The RTLA is a cornerstone of the country's governance and peace process, with its pivotal roles including enacting legislation, facilitating the election process, participating in the drafting of the permanent constitution, implementing the national peace agreement, overseeing the performance of National Government institutions, and ratifying international treaties. Because it has such responsibilities, the transitional assembly is probably one of the most significant entry points within South Sudan for restoring effective governance, delivering long-term reform, and guiding the nation towards lasting peace.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Peace Building, the Central Equatoria State Independent Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation Commission, and the CES Reconstituted Transitional Legislative Assembly, WPDl's four-day workshop aimed at enhancing the understanding of conflict resolution, peace, and Human Rights among State Members of Parliament. 65 participants, from the various institutions mentioned above, attended the training. The workshop covered a wide range of topics, including:

- The Concept of Conflict,
- Conflict Analysis,
- The Relationship Between Conflict and Power,
- Early Conflict Warning Signs, and
- The Various Types, Causes, Phases, and Approaches to Conflict.

Detailed discussions also addressed such key notions as servant leadership, the nuances of violence and peace (both negative and positive), negotiation, mediation, Human Rights, and the roles of parliament members in promoting peace and development in the state, as well as good governance practices.

The Right Honorable Speaker Peter Wani Elia Kulang of the CES Transitional Legislative Assembly opened the workshop, urging all members to exchange in a spirit of cooperation and to share the knowledge and skills gained during the training to resolve issues and promote peace in the state. He emphasized the importance of avoiding violence and making the CES RTLA a model for other state assemblies in South Sudan in executing their legislative, oversight, and representative roles to improve the wellbeing of the state's people.

The participants all rated the training as excellent, acknowledging that they had acquired new skills and tools to aid in peacebuilding and governance. They requested WPDl to conduct similar training for the remaining fifty members of the Assembly who had been unable to attend.

The success of the workshop, as evidenced by the very positive feedback we received from participants, highlights the critical need for ongoing training in conflict resolution.



Bringing Skills and Values for Peace Into Schools

299 schools hosting WPDI programs



USA
13



Mexico
6



France
1



Uganda
121



South Sudan
117



South Africa
41

33,975 learners



USA
646



Mexico
354



France
21



Uganda
10,635



South Sudan
13,759



South Africa
8,560

2,043 parents, administration staff, and teachers trained



USA
679



Mexico
105



Uganda
485



South Sudan
558



South Africa
216

70,797 people reached through advocacy campaigns in schools



USA
2,880



Mexico
280



Uganda
31,134



South Sudan
36,332



South Africa
171



307
students supported
through scholarships



Uganda
307

106,815 total participants in school-based peacebuilding



USA
4,205



Mexico
739



France
21



Uganda
42,254



South Sudan
50,649



South Africa
8,947

"I learned that not all conflicts need to be solved by yourself or only with your solution. I've learned that you can listen and calm everything down and not have to settle for a solution that may seem fitting, but not fully solve the conflict. Overall, the peer mediation program has helped me become a better listener and solve conflicts peacefully."

Cesar,
5th grade Peer Mediator, Studebaker
Elementary School, USA



"I enjoyed these classes very much as they were different from what we usually learn. Being happy, feeling calm is also important so we can feel better at home and learn better at school,"

Marina Ángel López,
student at the Secundaria 59 Secondary
School, Mexico



"I will try to apply what I have learned by being more respectful toward my classmates and teachers. I will also be more mindful of my reactions and how I communicate to avoid conflicts."

Student from the Lycee Jean-Pierre Timbaud, France



Feedback on the Peace Education in School Program in Africa from Surveyed Teachers and Administrators



To assess the outcomes of its Conflict Resolution Education program, WPDJ conducts surveys among teachers, administrators and parents of our partner schools. In a survey conducted in 2024 within school communities of Africa where WPDJ runs peace education programs, 452 educators at 26 schools provided feedback on these activities. 98% of respondents attribute improvements in student performance and attendance to the enhanced discipline and positive mindsets fostered by the program. They declared that the program had created a more conducive learning environment in their respective schools, leading to better academic outcomes.

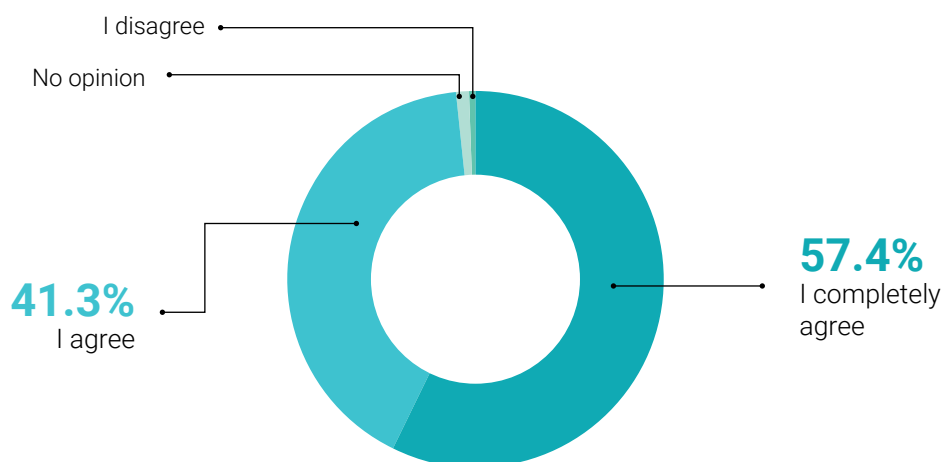
In addition to academic benefits, the program is praised for reducing violence, bullying, and conflicts among students, promoting a peaceful and harmonious school atmosphere. This is overwhelmingly manifested in the fact that 99% of

them agreed that 'the peace education program of WPDJ is a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school'. Such feedback on the results of the program is all the more encouraging that the program is deemed to have a positive impact beyond the groups of students that are trained throughout the year: 46% of the 452 educators surveyed in Africa in 2024 considered that the WPDJ program had an impact on their whole school.

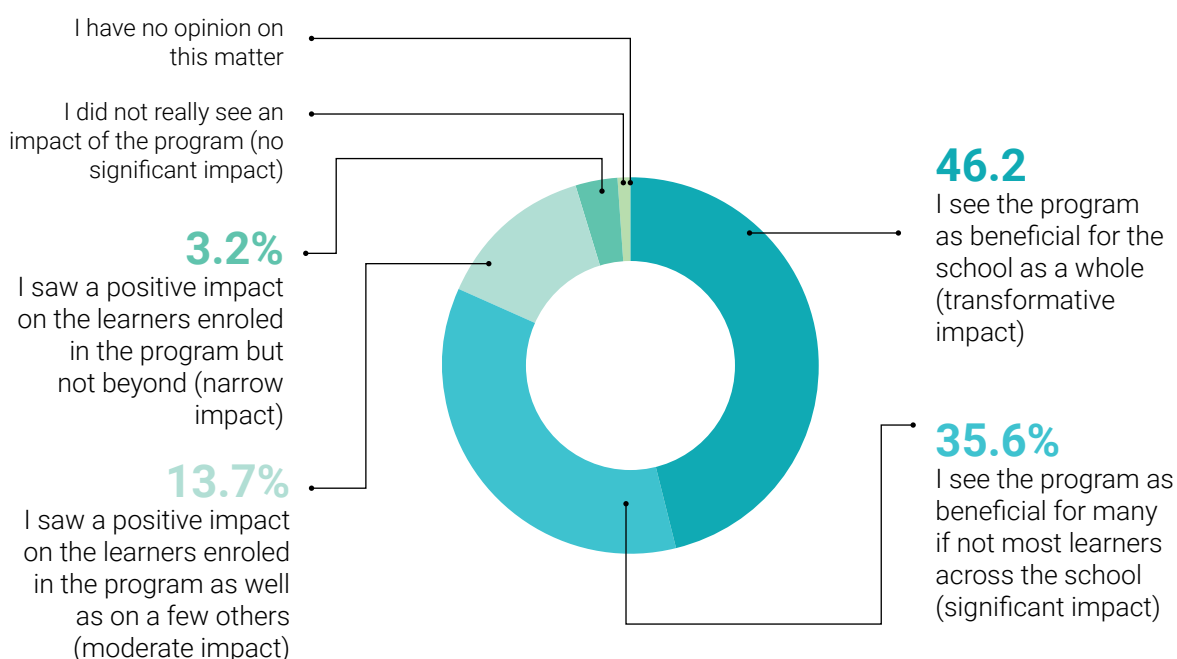
Teachers and administrators appreciate the essential skills in conflict resolution and emotional balance that the program imparts to students, which are seen as crucial for their personal development and future success. This is directly measured through the 100% of them agreed on the affirmation that 'the program of WPDJ is effectively teaching and promoting peaceful attitudes, self-discipline, nonviolence, and other civic mindsets'.



The Peace Education program of WPDl helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school (452 responses from educators and school staff)



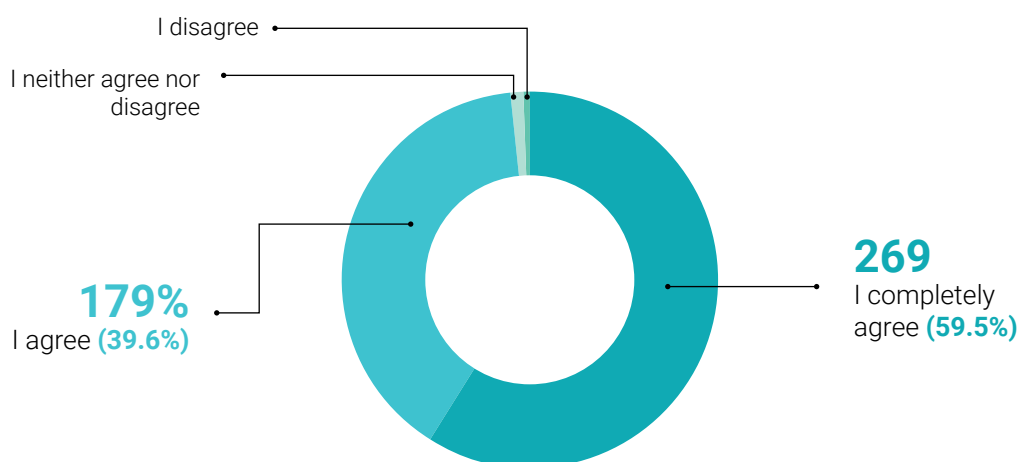
How do you see the impact of WPDl's program on your school? (452 responses from educators and school staff)



The program is generally described as well-tailored, timely, and transformative, with calls for its continuation and expansion to reach more students, teachers, and even parents. Continuous training and follow-up activities are recommended to sustain and enhance the positive impacts.

Overall, the feedback underscores the program's effectiveness in improving academic performance and promoting peace and discipline among students. It is viewed as a valuable initiative that has brought significant improvements to the school environment, making it a model program worthy of maintenance and expansion.

The peace education program of WPDI is a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school? (452 responses from educators and school staff)



Launching Conflict Resolution Education for Schools in France

As part of our ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace and nonviolence, WPDI launched its Conflict Resolution Education for Schools program at the Jean-Pierre Timbaud High School in Aubervilliers, France. The program engaged a class of 20 first-year vocational students, aged 17, in workshops held twice per week from April 23 to May 17, 2024. During these sessions, students were introduced to essential concepts of peace, conflict resolution, and emotional management. The workshops emphasized the importance of self-awareness, respect, and active listening, while helping participants understand the impact of their behavior on peers and the broader community. By fostering these key skills, the program empowered students to build self-confidence and learn to maintain healthy, respectful relationships.

"I learned how to manage my emotions better and to listen carefully to others. It has made me realize how my behavior affects those around me, and now I try to approach conflicts with more respect."

Student, Jean-Pierre Timbaud highschool

"The workshops were very interactive, and I appreciated learning new communication skills that I can use both at school and outside. They helped me to become more self-aware and respectful in my relationships with others."

Student, Jean-Pierre Timbaud highschool



A Scholarship Program Empowering Girls in Uganda

In a world where access to education is one of the most powerful routes to personal and social success, it is still a fact that millions of children and youth are deprived of educational opportunities simply because their families do not have the necessary financial means. Worse, in many contexts of limited income, traditional norms will induce families to systematically prefer dedicating their meager resources to the schooling of boys over girls'. In light of all these concerns, WPDI is making a significant impact in Uganda by providing 240 scholarships to

girls in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and the Karamoja Sub-Region.

A key aspect of this scholarship program is its integration with training courses on peace education and sustainable development. This ensures that our beneficiaries not only gain academic knowledge but also soft skills conducive to heightened capacities for leadership, self-confidence and economic development, empowering them to make a lasting impact in their communities as they progress through life.



Breaking Barriers: Gisma Peace Samson's Journey to Higher Education

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement hosts over 133,700 refugees, primarily from South Sudan and Sudan. Girls make up 52% of the population and face economic and cultural barriers to education, which result in many of them being forced to drop out due, in particular, to early marriage, teenage pregnancy, or domestic responsibilities. By combining the provision of funds to cover school fees with courses in Conflict Resolution Education, WPDI's program aims to contribute to girls' empowerment on these two fronts, as scholarships respond to the limitation of resources, and soft skills equip participants with tools to address, in their immediate environments, the root causes of gender inequality as they experience it. Indeed, as participants in our peacebuilding activities, scholarship beneficiaries contribute to advocacy campaigns that WPDI organizes at their schools as part of its program.

WPDI's Intervention

To bridge this gap, WPDI has provided scholarships to vulnerable girls, covering tuition, educational

materials, and uniforms. Regular mentorship programs promote self-confidence and life skills, while community engagement initiatives challenge harmful traditional practices and emphasize the importance of girls' education.

Gisma's Story

Gisma Peace Samson, now 22, has been a WPDI scholarship recipient since 2019. Thanks to this support, she completed her secondary education and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Medicine at Mbarara University.

"With the WPDI scholarship, I was able to complete my education and pursue my dream. Growing up in a refugee settlement, opportunities were scarce, but this scholarship paved my way. I want to use my education to inspire other young women and advocate for Human Rights, especially for refugees. My passion for medicine stems from my desire to break stereotypes and serve my community."

Training Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

2,043 parents, administrative staff, and teachers trained



USA

679



Mexico

105



Uganda

485



South Sudan

558



South Africa

216

1,832 teachers and school administration trained in CRE

211 parents and guardians trained

Few places are more critical for teaching peace than schools, which allow us to reach out to children and adolescents at ages when fundamental values and skill sets are acquired sometimes for life. Another key aspect is also that schools are communities in which children and youth not learn but also live - with their peers and with the adults of the community. In this sense, implementing a peace education program in school is always both about preparing future citizens

but also about learning to become an active promoter of peace in one's everyday community. This is as true for pupils and students as it is for teachers, including in improving their pedagogy. To this effect, we have, over the years, developed a Conflict Resolution Education program specifically designed to build the capacity of teachers and school staff are able to convey values of non-violence and tolerance to other members of their communities.

"School conflict is on the rise, discipline problems are escalating, and rumors quickly escalate into more serious problems. As a result, we find risk finding ourselves escalating a situation because we are not well skilled in handling such situations. Thank you so much WPDI, I now feel so empowered I can better navigate any situation in my school."

Willem Johannes,
teacher at Riverside Primary School, South Africa



"It's my first time attending a Conflict Resolution Education training session. In my community, we have a lot of conflicts that sometimes become violent, causing people to lose lives and livelihoods. There is so much hatred and division among the community members with a constant desire for revenge. WPDl has really come at the right time to give us this knowledge and skills. I have understood the meaning of conflict and how to resolve conflicts constructively. Going forward, I am going to ensure corporal punishment, which is violent in nature, does not happen at the school and that teachers will be able to show the values of peace and professionalism in handling their duties."

Kenyi Albino,
teacher from Lanya County, South Sudan



WPDI Trains a New Cohort of California School Counselors

In February, WPDI renewed its partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to integrate peer mediation as a structured practice in schools. As part of this effort, WPDI conducted a series of full-day training sessions for school counselors, equipping them to implement the Domestic Harmonizer Program's peer mediation component on their campuses.

The training brought together 11 counselors from four school districts in Los Angeles County, including Los Angeles Unified School District, Culver City Unified School District, Bellflower Unified School District, and Inglewood School District. LACOE played a key role in promoting the sessions and providing training facilities, ensuring broad participation from educators eager to foster conflict resolution skills among students.

The program covered essential topics such as peer mediation steps, communication techniques, conflict resolution styles, and best practices for establishing peer mediation programs in schools. In addition to learning from WPDI and LACOE experts, participants had the opportunity to exchange insights and strategies for addressing school-based conflicts, fostering a collaborative environment for educators committed to promoting peaceful communication.

By providing educators with tools to facilitate constructive dialogue and conflict resolution among students, WPDI's training aims to foster a culture of nonviolence, restorative justice, and peaceful communication in schools. This collaboration with LACOE represents a critical step in expanding peer mediation programs and ensuring that schools become environments where students learn to navigate conflicts with empathy and understanding.

"The peer mediation training was transformative for me. After this training, I can't help but think I've been holding mediations incorrectly. This training was comprehensive and effective. The trainers fostered a nurturing and empowering learning environment, which is imperative in this work. I can't wait to take all I've learned through this training and bring it to my site! This training is beneficial for all humans, not just educators."

Chris Ordoñez,
a counselor from Culver
City Middle School



"This training was informative and inspirational. It was a great reminder as a school clinician to let students take the lead in their own social-emotional learning. I have already spoken to my school leadership team about incorporating more of this work into our regular practice. We will be integrating these practices and training for our peer counselors in the coming school year and hope to see positive changes in our climate and culture."

Kristin Jones,
a counselor from Bellflower Unified
School District



Peace is a Skill For Everyone in the Community

3,973 Conflict Resolution Education trainees



Mexico

344



France

74



Uganda

1,754



South Sudan

1,314



South Africa

487

Peace is a skill that anyone can learn - provided one has access to training opportunities. A major obstacle faced by fragile communities is precisely that they have limited or no access to such opportunities. This is one of the reason why WPDl has a policy of establishing Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in the regions where it deploys its activities. Taught by expert trainers, the Conflict Resolution Skills program focuses on strengthening relationships within communities by addressing both individual behaviors and group dynamics. Feedback from beneficiaries highlights how these efforts have enhanced their skills in conflict management and mediation, contributing to peaceful coexistence.

"The knowledge I gained at WPDl has enriched my business management skills, particularly in understanding people. I was so inspired by the program that I've now enrolled in the trauma healing course, which I believe is equally important. I continue to appreciate WPDl for these initiatives and the donors who support the organization's activities."

Otim Joseph,
an engineer with the local
government and graduate
trainee, Uganda



"This training came at the perfect time. I recently lost my sister to gang violence and I have taken on the responsibility of caring for my kids and hers, which means I'm now raising six children. It's been incredibly difficult, and my emotions have been running high. I miss her deeply, and it's even harder because I have to deal with so many kids. I often find myself yelling at them. This training has shifted my mindset and provided me with tools to heal and strategies to handle conflicts. I'm looking forward to becoming a better mother, and I know that consistency and practice are key. Thank you WPDl."

Daylonn Dirks,
Conflict Resolution Trainee, South Africa



Conflict Resolution Training at Pollsmoor Prison

The initiative aims to equip correctional officers with the tools to mediate conflicts, fostering a culture of peace within the prison system. In 2024 WPDl conducted a training program for 50 prison officials. Given the inherent challenges of confined environments it is crucial that officials are equipped to effectively interact and mediate conflicts on a daily basis. The training covered key

topics including, understanding peace and conflict, conflict classifications and dynamics, effective communication and mediation. Upon completion of the program, the participants shared their commitment to transforming the prison environment into a more peaceful space in the future. The prison's leadership has requested the continuation of WPDl's program in 2025, expanding it to also train inmates.

"Behind these prison officer uniforms are human beings. We go through personal challenges just like everyone else, and working in this kind of environment adds to the burden. Sometimes we take out our frustrations on prisoners, which only worsens the situation and contributes to the cycle of violence. Thank you WPDl for considering us. We really needed this kind of training, and I feel better equipped to handle any situation. I've learned that I need to address my own personal struggles first, so I can better handle external circumstances. Thank you, WPDl."

Shannon Flandorp,
Pollsmoor Correctional Service Official



"I used to react aggressively towards prisoners, but thanks to this training from WPDl, I'm determined to be a better officer. I believe this training will create a better working environment at Pollsmoor, because I now understand that peace is contagious and it starts with me as the officer. We all have a role to play in making this facility peaceful, safe, and habitable for everyone. Thank you WPDl."

Matwell Saunders,
Pollsmoor Correctional Service Official



Working in Detention Centers in Tijuana, Mexico and the Karamoja Sub-Region of Uganda

Prior to launching the program in South Africa, WPDl had experience working in prisons in the Karamoja Sub-Region, in Uganda, and in Tijuana, Mexico.

In Mexico, WPDl implemented a Restorative Justice Program, focusing on young offenders. The program seeks to repair harm by engaging offenders with their families and victims in reconciliation processes, ultimately aiming to break the cycle of violence and reintegrate youth into society.

In Uganda's Karamoja region, WPDl has also built a strong presence in prisons, focusing on mental health, trauma healing, and psychosocial support. WPDl has trained inmates in conflict resolution and basic counseling skills, helping them manage interpersonal disputes and process their own experiences of trauma. Through health outreaches and awareness programs, WPDl addresses mental health challenges, ensuring that underserved prison populations receive much-needed support.



Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

17,055 participants in Advocacy campaigns



Mexico

472



Uganda

7,416



South Sudan

8,393



South Africa

774

Instilling a culture of peace in places that have experienced conflict, violence and fragility for years calls for disseminating the necessary values, attitudes and behaviors directly at the grassroots. To this effect, WPDI's advocacy campaigns aim to inspire, enable, and empower women and youth as advocates for peace and Human Rights. Through this initiative, whether in schools or in the communities around our Community Learning Centers, WPDI seeks to amplify voices on issues impacting peace, health, and productivity, equipping advocates with the tools to navigate appropriate channels for change. Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate a space to drive sustainable change within communities.

"Advocacy campaign conducted in my school was so beneficial, it gave us the opportunity to discuss issues that affect our wellbeing in school as students and we got solutions to them, this was only possible through advocacy campaign."

Akello Monivesta,
student Uganda



"Advocacy events opened my eyes so much. It really hit me how small acts of kindness can make a big difference when I made and gave out lunch to people on Skid Row. I really felt like I was making a difference in the world."

Student at DNA Prep Academy, USA



International Red Hand Day: Uniting to Eliminate the Use of Child Soldiers

Context

19,000 children are currently estimated to be used by armed forces and groups in South Sudan. The internationally-adopted 2007 Paris Principles define a child soldier as any individual under 18 recruited or used by an armed force in various capacities—not only in combat but also as laborers, messengers, or victims of sexual slavery. These children, often abducted or coerced through false promises, face severe physical, psychological, and social consequences, losing access to education, family, and a stable future.

There has been progress in efforts by UN and civil society organizations against the recruitment of child soldiers but the issue persists. South Sudan is a case in point. While the government's 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to Prevent All Grave Violations Against Children signaled the willingness of national authorities to end the recruitment of children as soldiers, enforcement remains difficult. Reports indicate that children are more often recruited into locally organized armed groups rather than centralized military forces, particularly in the States of Western Equatoria, Unity, and Lakes. This



persistence at local levels indicates that, while international and national efforts are critical, specific action must be taken at the grassroots level.

It is to this end that WPDI took Red Hand Day as an opportunity to raise awareness of local communities and leadership on the critical importance of preventing the practice of child soldiers and protecting the rights of children at large. Observed every February 12th, Red Hand Day is a global effort to amplify awareness and demand action from political leaders.

WPDI's Campaign in South Sudan

This issue is deeply personal to WPDI's mission. In 2006, while filming *The Last King of Scotland*, Forest Whitaker witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of child soldier recruitment, meeting young individuals whose lives had been shattered by forced enlistment and violence. That experience led him to dedicate himself to peacebuilding, particularly in conflict-affected areas like South Sudan, where the rehabilitation of former child soldiers remains critical to fostering lasting peace.

On Red Hand Day, WPDI joined forces with Human Rights and Children's Rights organizations of South

Sudan, actively participating in advocacy efforts across South Sudan. In Central Equatoria State, WPDI teams engaged in radio talk shows to educate communities on the issue and promote solutions. At the Yambio Community Learning Center, an anti-child soldier campaign gathered over 50 participants, including representatives from the Ministry of Local Government, Law Enforcement, State Ministry of Child, Gender, and Social Welfare, and DDR. The event encouraged attendees to spread awareness within their own communities. School-based advocacy campaigns were also held in Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria States, where children painted red hands and shared heartfelt messages such as "I want to go to school," "Stop child soldiers worldwide," and "Children should carry books, not guns."

For WPDI, Red Hand Day reinforces its mission to empower communities, foster peace, and protect the most vulnerable. By continuing to advocate for the eradication of child soldier recruitment and supporting sustainable reintegration efforts, WPDI remains committed to creating a future where every child is free from violence and given the opportunity to thrive.



Cinema For Peace

18,423 participants in Cinema for Peace



Mexico

255



France

20



Uganda

10,289



South Sudan

7,113



South Africa

746

WPDI's Cinema for Peace program is designed to create a platform for children, youth and community members at large to learn on peace values, share ideas, make new friends, forge ways of peaceful co-existence and behavioral change. A typical session starts with the screening of a film featuring peace and security concerns and is followed by group discussions during which members of the audience share and debate on the themes brought forward by the film. These sessions have proven effective for creating unique moments for participants to learn the culture of peace in an interactive and engaging manner.

"The movie on bullying has inspired me a lot because I was once both a victim and a perpetrator of bullying. After watching the film, I became an advocate for stopping bullying at my school and in my neighborhood."

Ayen Mary,
participant in Cinema For Peace,
South Sudan



"I am 14 years old and I enjoy Cinema for Peace cartoons because they teach me how to love, share with and respect my friends no matter our difference. I can now play with my friends from different tribes. I am a Nuer and my best friend is an Acholi."

James Yien Ruui,
participant in Cinema For Peace,
Uganda



"As a student in secondary school, I would like to thank WPDI for the great opportunity of being a part of the Cinema for Peace they have conducted at our school. From the screening of the movie I learned a few key lessons. Firstly, not to discriminate against anyone, and secondly, if we all share our ideas and methods, we can come up with solutions to resolve our issues peacefully."

Mihlali Mayeza,
participant in Cinema For Peace, South Africa



Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment

57,226 total beneficiaries under the Livelihood pillar

Central to our work is the ambition to foster economic resilience and autonomy, chiefly by providing vocational skills, access to start up grants and incubation services. Taken together, these actions contribute to improving economic conditions not just for direct beneficiaries as they find jobs or create businesses, but also for their communities, as the added revenues and services foster added prosperity and vibrancy.



Vocational Skills for Personal and Career Development

In places where residents lack access to practical skills necessary to improve economic prospects, our vocational training courses play a key role. The training offering is comprehensive and includes courses in fields like Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Business and Entrepreneurship, and Arts and Crafts. These skills economically empower community members by increasing their employability or their revenue, including through the development of a business.



13,373 total trainees in vocational courses



Mexico

1,032



France

130



Uganda

6,764



South Sudan

4,238



South Africa

1,209

4,535 ICT trainees



Mexico

735



France

59



Uganda

1,182



South Sudan

2,011



South Africa

548

5,327 Business and Entrepreneurship trainees



Mexico

164



France

9



Uganda

2,542



South Sudan

2,113



South Africa

499

792 Vulnerable Women trained in business



Mexico

35



France

62



Uganda

419



South Sudan

114



South Africa

162

612 Arts and Crafts trainees



Mexico

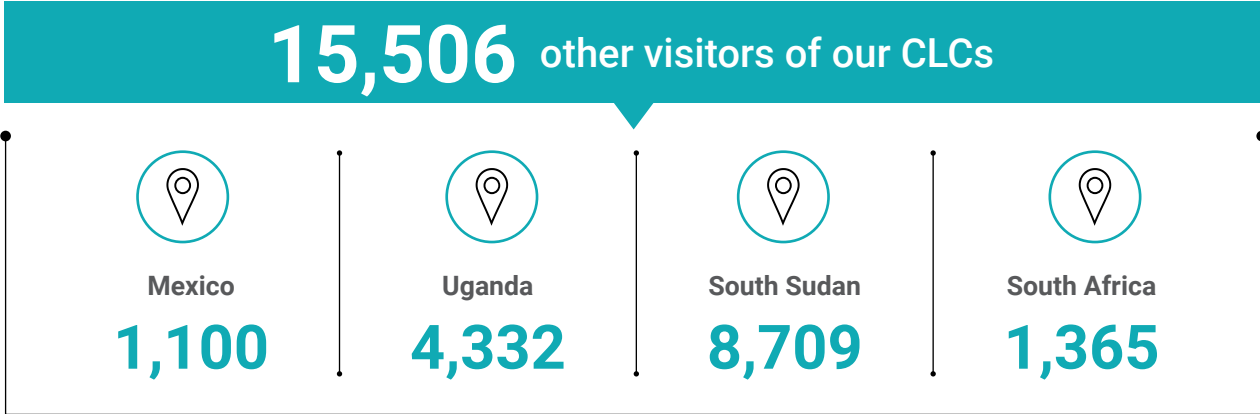
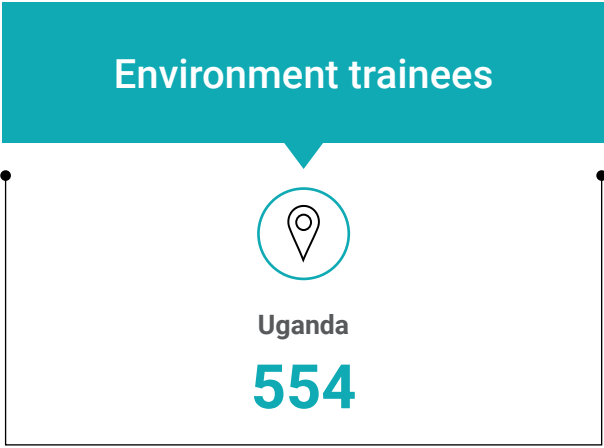
98



Uganda

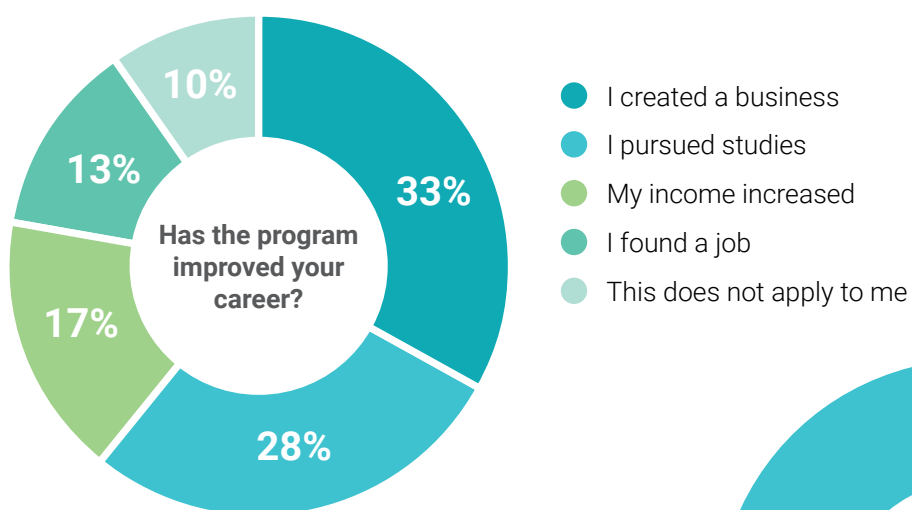
514



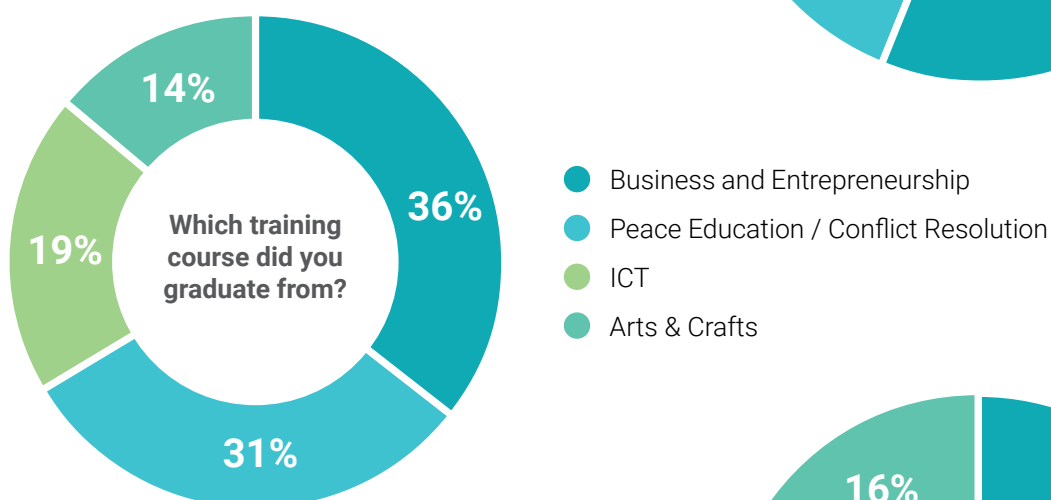
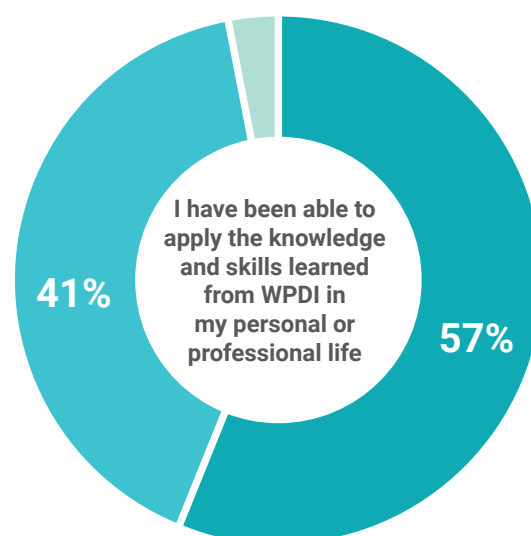


Vocational Training Survey Results

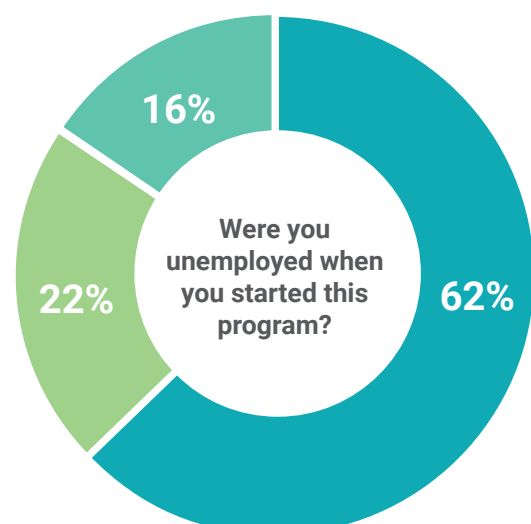
3,923 respondents



- I completely agree
- I agree
- Neutral / I disagree



- Yes
- I am a student
- No



Business and Entrepreneurship

This is a central vocational training in the Business Bootcamp. Indeed, the Business and Entrepreneurship component aims to equip participants with an array of skills that they can use to create a business or excel in their current activity.

5,327 Business and Entrepreneurship trainees



Mexico

164



France

9



Uganda

2,542



South Sudan

2,113



South Africa

499

"I am grateful for the business skills training I received from WPDI. I believe the expert guidance I received from the training will help me turn my entrepreneurial dreams into reality. I gained valuable insights into business planning, marketing and financial management. During the training, I gained skills that built my confidence on issues like how to attract loyal customers. I am now knowledgeable about developing a business plan, market research, and creating marketing strategies that bring results. One of the most important things I learned was resilience. Business may have challenges but it is possible to navigate them when you are resilient. I highly recommend anyone looking forward to starting or growing their business to engage in this training. Thank you for always supporting our communities".

Napeyok Doreen,
Business trainee, Uganda



"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. The business manual was very difficult for me to read at the beginning, however the trainer made sure that we all understood and we were not left-out. The training is designed in such a brilliant way, it starts with familiar things and then gradually dives into more complex topics. I gained knowledge, skills and self-confidence. I'm inspired to better myself and support women who went through similar problems. Thank you WPDI for all you do for women in Cape Flats, bringing hope that we thought was long gone."

Ntombizanele Binase,
Business Trainee, South Africa



"I am very grateful, what an experience it has been to go through training at WPDI's CLC! It was very useful both on a professional and personal level. With the help of a great trainer, I built new skills and improved skills I already had, notably in market research and business plan editing. The positive dynamic and the teaching method has really increased my motivation. I am convinced that these training courses will be of great help in our future careers."

Michel He,
Business Trainee, France



WPDI Facilitates Refugee Integration for Sudanese Refugees in Uganda Through Functional Adult Literacy Program

In the wake of the ongoing conflict in Sudan, thousands of refugees have sought sanctuary in Uganda. In escaping a dire fate at home, refugees will nevertheless find themselves facing various challenges as they work to integrate themselves into a new society. This calls first and foremost for an ability to communicate efficiently for navigating their new environment. In this respect, adult literacy is a first key to many many doors, including daily interaction with NGOs and authorities and economic empowerment. In sum, it is but a crucial tool for rebuilding their lives and creating a new normalcy for themselves.

In the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, WPDI has been actively engaged in providing Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) and English language training to women's groups over the past years. Between November 2023 and April 2024, we saw a significant increase in enrollment in FAL classes due to newly arrivals of Sudanese refugees who only speak Sudanese Arabic. The ambition to integrate into their

new environment has made it a necessity for them to prioritize learning English.

Currently, at WPDI's Community Learning Center in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, enrollment in FAL/English classes is at an all-time high with 250 participants (145 males and 105 females), spanning both level one and two courses.

At WPDI, we remain committed to complementing the Ugandan government's efforts in supporting both its citizens and refugee communities. We are dedicated to mentoring and supporting this new generation of individuals as peacebuilders or entrepreneurs, equipping them with the necessary tools to foster peace and create economic opportunities is a necessity and a sound investment in their personal development as well as the development of their community wherever they reside. Through our programs, these individuals will gain skills that can lead to positive economic outcomes and develop their self-reliance as they integrate into Ugandan communities.

"I came to Uganda as a refugee and the first challenge that I faced was speaking English since I only know Arabic. It was difficult for some time to adjust but while in the settlement I got to hear about WPDI programs from a friend who encouraged me to register 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. This is quite a rare opportunity for me because currently I can't afford my education in school, so I'm very thankful to WPDI."

Sarah,
refugee from Sudan



"Before coming to Uganda, I had a business, but the war disorganized everything and I lost it all. Right now, I am a refugee at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, but I am not giving up. I still have hope of starting a business in the future but currently I don't know English and it makes it hard for me to interact. I want to thank WPDI for giving me this rare opportunity to pick myself up again. I am determined to start a business again. I thank WPDI for this chance and indeed I am learning a lot."

Mohammed,
refugee from Sudan



Information and Communication Technologies

Our free ICT training remained highly sought-after, reflecting the significant local demand for computer literacy skills. Everywhere we deliver this course, we ensure that it aligns closely with the need expressed by the community, whose members have different levels of ICT proficiency. In this line, the training program encompasses Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels. Depending on the context, we will provide specific modules on spreadsheet software or Advanced levels Programming and gaming workshops. WPDI's curriculum is regularly updated to incorporate real-life situations and examples, ensuring trainees can readily apply their newfound skills. Trainees see tangible benefits, including improved job prospects, academic advancement, and increased confidence in computer usage beyond mobile devices. Despite high demand everywhere, WPDI has various capacity limitations depending on the availability of equipment.

4,535 ICT trainees



Mexico

735



France

59



Uganda

1,182



South Sudan

2,011



South Africa

548



An ICT Initiative in France: “Ma Semaine Numérik”

Context and Objectives

An industrialized country with high levels of internet coverage, France is nevertheless host to communities living in poverty and marginalization, where many have no access to digital hardware and to skills to operate it. This creates a significant bottleneck for the economic prospects of residents from these areas, notably the Seine-Saint-Denis, which is the poorest district of continental France. This is one of the reasons why the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis has recently increased its investment in employment support initiatives, as part of its efforts to enhance inclusion for individuals enrolled in welfare assistance programs. In response to challenges related to digital literacy, WPDl and its partners – Orange Digital Center, Au Carré, 10 000 Codeurs, and four Local Employment Agencies (ALI) – have developed “Ma Semaine Numérik”, an innovative training program aimed at improving digital skills and boosting employability.

Format and Implementation

The program consists of six days of immersive workshops, with 12 participants per session, held alternately at Orange’s Digital Center and WPDl’s Community Learning Center. Participants explore digital careers, learn no-code techniques, master the use of their smartphone for job searching, work on a project in a fablab, and develop essential skills such as emotional intelligence and conflict management. Additional sessions cover Google tools and ChatGPT, along with a CV and professional photo workshop.

Expected Results

Over the course of the 2024-2025 academic year, six “Ma Semaine Numérik” sessions will be held.

The goal of the program is to eliminate barriers to employment by expanding access to digital career opportunities while encouraging participants to pursue further, professional training for long-term job success.

“I learned a lot during Ma Semaine Numérik. The atmosphere in the group was very positive. I enjoyed discovering the various careers in the digital sector, as well as very practical things like no-code tools and how to apply to jobs directly online with my CV. I was able to redo my CV and also work on the topic of rights and discrimination. The program was comprehensive, and I appreciated the organizations involved.”

Anna Camilien,
participant in the program in
December 2024



The poster for "Ma semaine Numérik" features a blue and yellow logo at the top. Below it, the title "Ma semaine Numérik" is written in large, bold letters. A subtitle reads "Une semaine pour surmonter les idées reçues et découvrir les métiers du numérique !". To the right, there is an illustration of three people (two men and one woman) working together at a computer. Below the illustration, it says "Session 1 Du 8 au 15 octobre 2024". The poster is divided into two main sections: "Au programme" and "À qui s'adresse ce programme ?". The "Au programme" section lists five bullet points: "Découvrir les métiers du numérique", "Utiliser un smartphone pour la recherche d'emploi", "Créer une application en no-code", "Apprendre à gérer ses émotions", and "Explorer les outils Google et ChatGPT". The "À qui s'adresse ce programme ?" section lists two bullet points: "Toute personne en recherche d'emploi" and "Priorité accordée aux allocataires du RSA". At the bottom, it states "Le programme Ma Semaine Numérik est entièrement gratuit." and provides a call to action: "Inscrivez-vous au lien dans la bio ou parlez-en à votre conseiller !". The bottom of the poster features logos for the partner organizations: WPDl, Orange, Seine-Saint-Denis, Au Carré, 10000 Codeurs, and the Department of Seine-Saint-Denis.



Arts and Crafts

As part of its mission to equip beneficiaries with practical skills that enhance their livelihoods, WPDJ offers Arts and Crafts courses that blend vocational training with cultural heritage, enabling participants to improve their economic prospects while contributing to the vibrancy of their cultures. Through teaching the design and creation of traditional crafts such as garments and soaps, the program is therefore fully geared towards our objectives of helping communities regain their resilience capacity. Particularly popular among women, the Arts and Crafts training empowers them to develop small businesses, supporting both their families and local economies. Arts and Crafts is also a vector to introduce other themes such as mental health.

612 Arts and Crafts trainees



Mexico

98



Uganda

514



Empowering Women Through Art Therapy in Tijuana

In 2024, WPDI Tijuana introduced its first Arts and Crafts workshop at the Community Learning Center, creating a dedicated space for artistic expression and therapeutic healing. Led by painter and art therapist Leticia Abegail, the five-week Art Therapy Workshop provided vulnerable women with a safe environment to explore creativity as a means of emotional resilience and empowerment. Through guided discussions and expressive painting exercises, participants—many of whom survivors of violence—found support, self-awareness, and a renewed sense of confidence. The program fostered deep connections among the women, culminating in a powerful and transformative experience.

Irene Macías tells her story

One of the program's graduates, Irene Macías, is a 30-year-old entrepreneur and single mother. A survivor of domestic violence, she has dedicated herself to promoting self-confidence and self-love

among women navigating separation or abusive relationships. She runs a successful beauty business specializing in eyebrow shaping and is now the Representative for Young Women Entrepreneurs at CANACO, Tijuana's National Commerce Chamber. Having followed Leticia Abegail's work for years, Irene saw the workshop as an opportunity to connect with other women and explore art therapy for the first time. Initially hesitant about networking as a young female entrepreneur, she found strength and inspiration in the supportive environment WPDI provided.



"I first learned about WPDI through Lety Abegail's social media. Meeting other women who have also struggled to get to where they are was incredibly inspiring. I also discovered WPDI's other programs, like ICT—I couldn't believe such a dedicated effort was happening in my own city!"



The Business Bootcamp

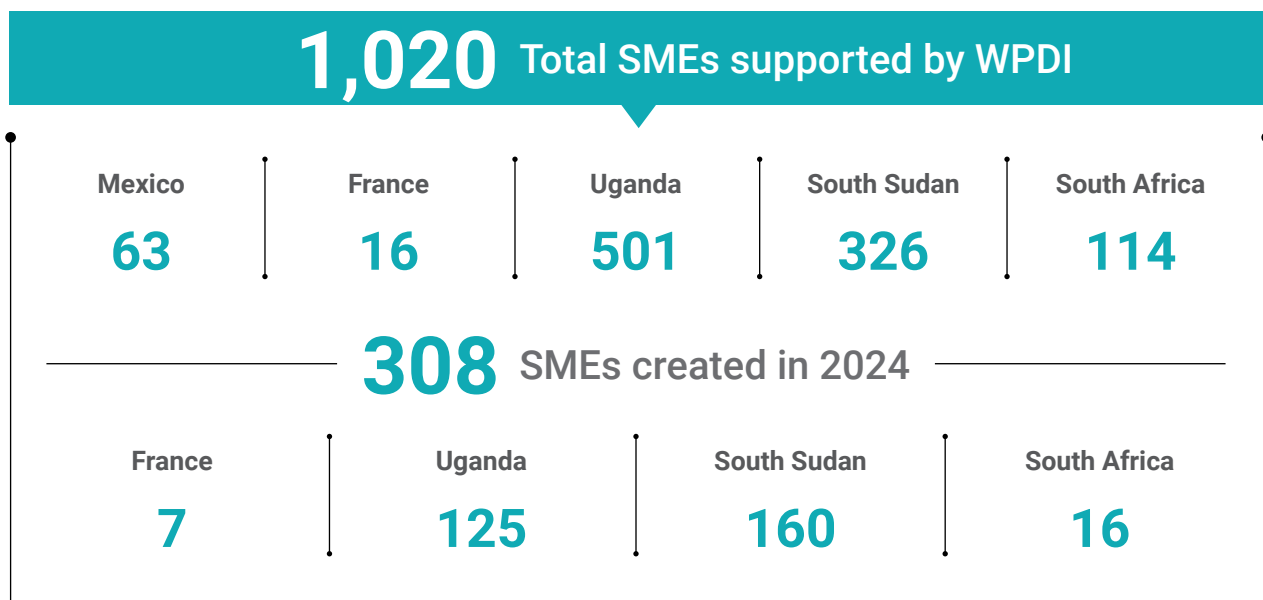
Upon successfully completing our training programs, former trainees have the opportunity to apply in our dedicated entrepreneurship program, the Business Bootcamp. While the training component of our Livelihood pillar aims to fill one of the gaps faced by entrepreneurs in fragility-affected places in particular, the Bootcamp is designed to address the two main other gaps they face, namely the lack of funding and the lack of experience.

Funding is indeed of the highest hurdle to entrepreneurship especially in the areas where WPDl operate, where financial services are scarce if not nonexistent. This is what motivated WPDl to organize Business Plan Competitions where vocational training graduates can apply – for individual, partnership or cooperative businesses. While funding is at the core of the process, BPCs are much more than that.

They are an intensive process whereby participants are trained to hone their projects and present it in public – indeed, the selection of project is always carried out through a jury which includes

representatives of WPDl and local partners who have an understanding of the business sector and of their region. Having projects selected by a jury in public is effective because it boosts the confidence of participants and also because it ensures that the process is fully transparent and fair, which is key for the appropriation of our programs at the grassroots in general.

Following the identification of promising projects, the winners join our incubation platform, which helps to address the lack of experience and to provide strategic advice as the supported business grow. After years of implementation, we have noted the very positive impact of this program as it ensures a very significant rate of businesses surviving after two years, namely 87% (NB: according to a report from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), in Africa, the survival rate is around 20% of SMEs within 5 years). Another, broader positive impact is that, by creating a spirit of emulation, the program contributes to making our communities more vibrant and more enabling.



28,765 Beneficiaries of all SMEs

Mexico	France	Uganda	South Sudan	South Africa
3,292	54	18,630	4,373	2,416

6,104 Jobs created

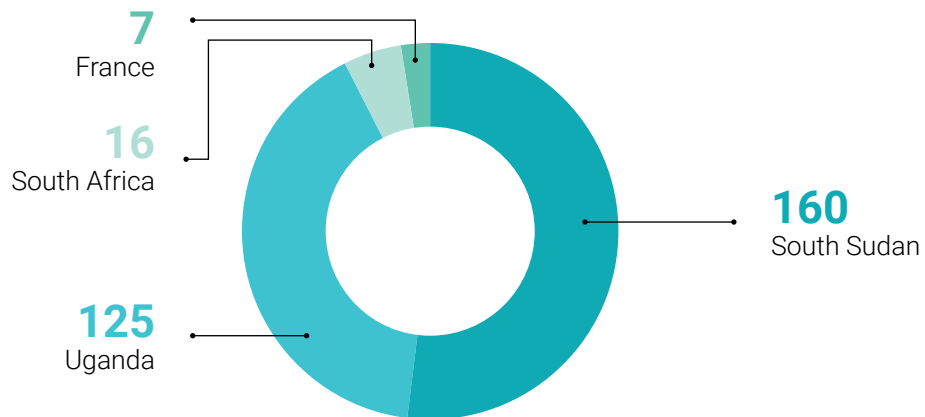
Mexico	France	Uganda	South Sudan	South Africa
463	18	4,141	4,141	402

22,661 Indirect beneficiaries of businesses
(families of jobs holders)

Mexico	France	Uganda	South Sudan	South Africa
2,829	36	14,489	3,293	2,014



SMEs created in 2024 (308) by country



58%

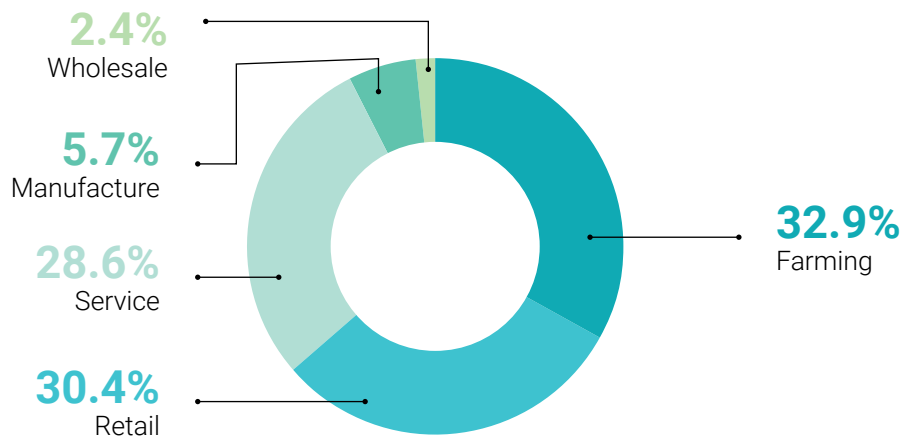
of staff members are women (including founders)



28

is the median age of staff members (including founders)

Types of businesses active in 2024 (1,020)



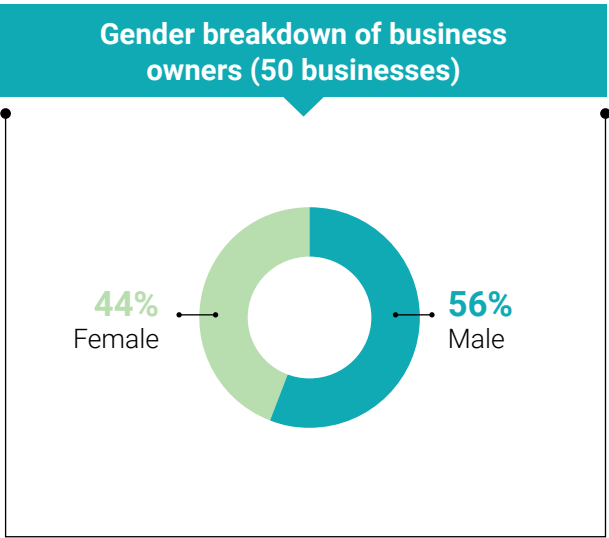
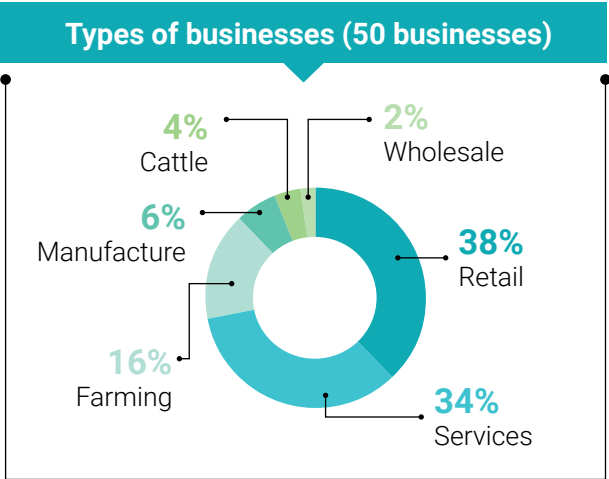
WPDI's Striving for Improved Livelihood and Resilience Interventions in South Sudan

In recent years, WPDI has partnered with organizations in South Sudan to support remote communities in a country still struggling with civil conflict. As an implementing partner of the South Sudan Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF), led by IOM, WPDI has advanced reconciliation, resilience, and stabilization in Lainya, Morobo, Yei, and Kajo-Keji counties.

WPDI's interventions addressed conflict drivers through peace dialogues, economic empowerment, and infrastructure development, fostering social cohesion and recovery. The project provided 10 business training sessions across 10 payams, equipping 849 participants (512 males, 337 females) with entrepreneurial skills. Four Business Plan Competitions and bootcamps in key counties led to funding 50 businesses in agriculture, retail, and services, enhancing economic stability.

Improved security and opportunities have encouraged some refugees to return. Strengthened coordination with authorities, religious leaders, and peace committees has ensured local ownership of efforts. Youth engagement in economic and peacebuilding initiatives has also reduced their involvement in conflict and crime.

Collaboration with local leaders has been key to sustainability. Through its integrated approach, the RSRTF project has strengthened peacebuilding, economic resilience, and social cohesion. WPDI and its partners have contributed to greater stability and economic revitalization. Moving forward, ongoing adaptation and collaboration will be essential to sustaining progress.



The Women's Livelihood Program

In a world where the immense potential of women for entrepreneurship is too often overlooked, WPDI's Women's Livelihood Program is dedicated to empowering underprivileged women by providing them with the skills, resources, and support needed to achieve economic independence. Through comprehensive capacity-building training, participants gain the knowledge to develop sustainable businesses, often working in groups

to strengthen their ventures and maximize impact. Beyond entrepreneurship, the program fosters financial resilience, enabling women to generate income that supports their families and uplifts their communities. By equipping women with business tools and access to funding, WPDI's effort aim at building a foundation for long-term stability, ensuring that they become active contributors to local economies and agents of positive change.

1,842 Vulnerable women trained in business

Mexico

35

France

62

Uganda

1,469

South Sudan

114

South Africa

162

189 Women-led businesses launched in 2024

France

6

Uganda

78

South Sudan

95

South Africa

10



Women's Economic Empowerment as A Path To Community Resilience in Uganda's Refugee Response

As part of a four-year initiative (2021-2025) across multiple districts in the Western Sub-region of Uganda, WPDI is implementing a two-year program to support refugee and host community women in developing sustainable livelihoods in Adjumani District. By equipping vulnerable women with key skills for managing business operations, handling financials, and identifying market opportunities, the program is designed to help beneficiaries undertake sustainable and profitable ventures that will generate revenue for themselves and relevant services to the community..

A key focus of the initiative is expanding financial access through savings and lending associations, which have already benefited 1,050 women. Additionally, 750 of these women have received startup grants, business training, and market linkages to enhance their entrepreneurial success. To promote gender equality and social transformation, 350 of the women participants, have undergone training in Gender Action Learning Systems, empowering them to challenge restrictive norms and take on leadership roles within their communities. The program also prioritizes sustainable agricultural practices, with 350 women gaining access to climate-smart agricultural

resources to improve food security. Furthermore, 165 women have been trained in the use of alternative fuel sources, reducing environmental impact and promoting cleaner energy solutions.

Beyond individual empowerment, WPDI is actively strengthening community resilience by collaborating with the Adjumani District Local Government and Delight Uganda Limited to develop disaster preparedness strategies and early warning systems. As part of these efforts, 325 households have planted herbal, fruit, and woodlot trees, which will support livelihoods while contributing to environmental sustainability.

Looking ahead, the program will further expand its impact by providing 165 women with access to solar energy and energy-saving cook stoves, significantly reducing coal dependency and promoting environmentally friendly household practices. Through these comprehensive interventions, WPDI continues to foster economic independence, environmental sustainability, and social resilience among women in Adjumani District, ensuring that they play a central role in shaping their communities' future.



Village Savings and Loans Associations in South Sudan

In July 2023, WPDI entered into a significant partnership with the SkinnyDipped Foundation, subsequently launching a project to support vulnerable women of South Sudan, specifically in the counties of Terekeka and Juba in Central Equatoria State (CES) and foster their resilience capacity in a complex yet growing economic environment.

Thanks to WPDI's experience and standing with local partners, the local team was able to quickly initiate the project, allowing to celebrate the graduation of a first cohort of 114 beneficiaries within one year. These women successfully completed a transformative three-month business and entrepreneurship skills course designed to empower them with the knowledge and tools to develop and scale their business initiatives, thereby fostering positive change in their lives, families, and communities.

As follow up, the two groups of participants received financial support, distributed as revolving funds to support their entrepreneurial endeavors and they were assisted in the creation of Village Savings and Loan

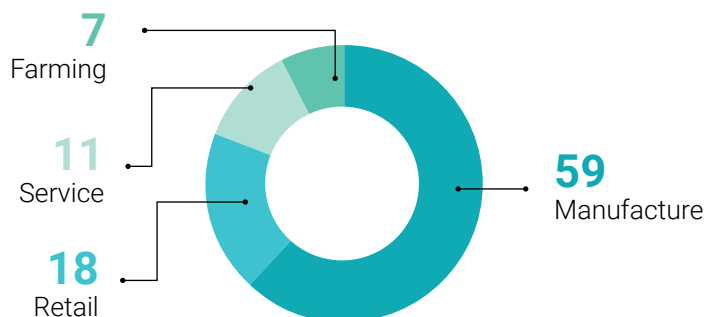
Associations (VSLAs), a model designed to empower communities through collective saving and borrowing. The VSLAs, which usually consist of 10-15 members, allow women to save money by purchasing shares and borrowing from the collective savings. This financial model helps create a sustainable fund for small, low-interest loans, giving the women a structured way to manage their finances and develop their businesses. The program also emphasizes transparency and accountability, with passbooks used to record each transaction and a management committee elected to oversee the group's activities.

Organized into 11 such VSLA groups, the participant women are now equipped with newfound skills and financial support to overcome barriers to economic participation, expand their businesses, and uplift their households.

This initiative not only highlights the crucial role of women in economic growth but also underscores a shared commitment to fostering gender equality and resilience in South Sudan.

The 11 VSLA women-groups include 114 members. Already, 95 businesses have been created by VSLA members within just under one year.

Type of businesses launched by VSLA-group members



Health and Wellbeing: Pathways to Inner Peace

18,779 total beneficiaries under
the Health and Wellbeing pillar

As it takes inner peace to be at peace with others, our programs offer health education, promote mental health awareness, and provide access to healthcare services in underserved areas. Through initiatives such as mobile health clinics, mental health counseling, and community health education workshops, WPDI empowers individuals with the knowledge and resources to improve their health and wellbeing. By fostering healthier communities, we lay the foundation for social stability, enhanced productivity, and a greater sense of hope for the future.



Trauma Healing Services for Improved Resilience

2,274 Trauma healing counselling beneficiaries

Uganda
1,262

South Sudan
498

South Africa
514

3,734 Trauma healing event participants

Uganda
2,168

South Sudan
470

South Africa
1,096

3,374 Students trained in Social and emotional learning (SEL)

USA
117

Uganda
957

South Africa
2,300

WPDI's Mental Health Awareness and Support Program is driven by two key objectives: raising awareness about mental health while reducing stigma, and providing direct counseling support or referrals for individuals in need. Through a series of targeted interventions, the program is making a tangible impact in communities.

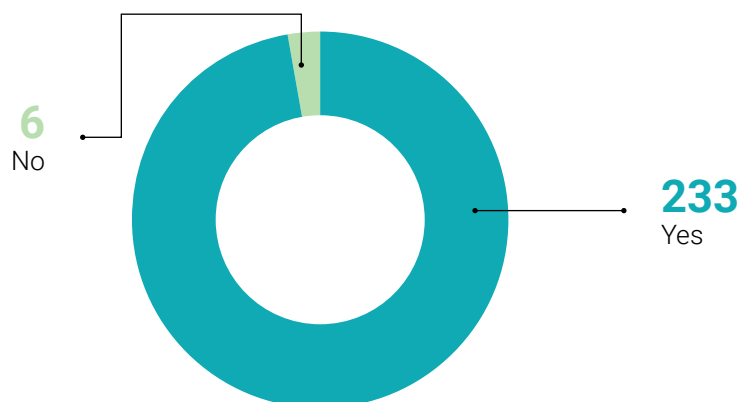
Trauma healing awareness is delivered in schools and community spaces to inform people on mental health, challenge misconceptions, and introduce the different psychological challenges that individuals may face.

To ensure that those in need receive proper care beyond the scope of our capacity, WPDI conducts screenings for mental health disorders using its

structured Post-Traumatic Stress Diagnostic Scale (PTSD). This assessment helps identify individuals experiencing psychological distress and provides an entry point for appropriate therapeutic support. Beyond therapy, WPDI remains committed to long-term recovery by conducting regular follow-ups and home visits. These check-ins ensure that survivors continue to receive the guidance they need, help prevent relapse, and support their journey toward lasting wellbeing.

Through this holistic approach, WPDI is not only fostering a culture of mental health awareness but also providing essential support services that empower individuals to heal, rebuild their lives, and contribute positively to their communities.

Do you feel that the trauma healing program brought you valuable knowledge about yourself and others? (239 respondents from South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda)



Independent Evaluation of the InnerSpark Program

The activities delivered under the DHP are evaluated by Dr. Briana Hinga, Associate Professor of Clinical Education at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. The research sheds light on how these interventions support students' ability to navigate conflicts, enhance educators' skills, and involve families in fostering harmonious school environments. Furthermore, the findings provide valuable insights for refining program practices, ensuring their alignment with evidence-based strategies, and informing broader efforts to create inclusive and supportive educational systems.

Findings on the Inner Spark Program

The Inner Spark program was found to provide a "brave space" for students to explore their emotions, fostering growth through honest dialogue and discomfort. These efforts align with research advocating for trauma-informed, relationship-centered approaches that build resilience, trust, and community cohesion. Findings of the report include immediate and long-term benefits, including improved emotional regulation, healthier interpersonal dynamics, and stronger family and community ties, with students even applying skills learned to mediate conflicts at home.



WPDl's Social Work Internship Program

In South Africa, WPDl's strategic partnership with the University of Western Cape offers a transformative learning experience for aspiring social workers. Engaging students from local universities and international institutions, the program helps to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Interns actively participate in real-world settings where they engage with communities, provide support to vulnerable populations, and contribute to advocacy and development initiatives. This hands-on experience not only hones their professional skills but also deepens their understanding of complex social issues, preparing them for their future careers in a dynamic and engaging manner.

The program trains beneficiaries through activities like individual and group counseling, Community Dialogues, awareness campaigns, health and wellbeing workshops. With the skills thus acquired, the aspiring social workers in the program will have more tools to empower marginalized groups, foster resilience, and promote sustainable development within the Cape Flats region and beyond.

For many interns, the experience has been transformative. Mbali Mcaba, a student social worker, described her journey of discovering her passion for long-term social work interventions.

"WPDl exceeded being just an internship program; it became a platform for in-depth community support," she shared. Similarly, Chadtley Nuiwenhuis reflected on how the internship helped him develop critical problem-solving skills and fostered his understanding of diversity promotion and poverty alleviation through WPDl's initiatives such as entrepreneurship and ICT training. For Charl Piers, the internship provided an invaluable opportunity to work across multiple levels of social work intervention, from individual counseling to community-wide empowerment projects like Peace Through Sport. "My passion for social work has grown stronger as a result of my internship," he noted, emphasizing the profound personal and professional growth he experienced.

The success of the internship program demonstrated the relevance of integrating trauma healing into social work as a means to improve how the needs of vulnerable communities are addressed. Through a supportive and dynamic series of training activities, the students gained tools to become even better professionals in their field. As WPDl continues to invest in building resilience and fostering peace in fragile areas, the internship programme stands out as a model for transformative learning and impactful community development.



Sexual and Reproductive Health

1,233 Sexual & Reproductive Health workshops participants

Uganda

780

South Sudan

453

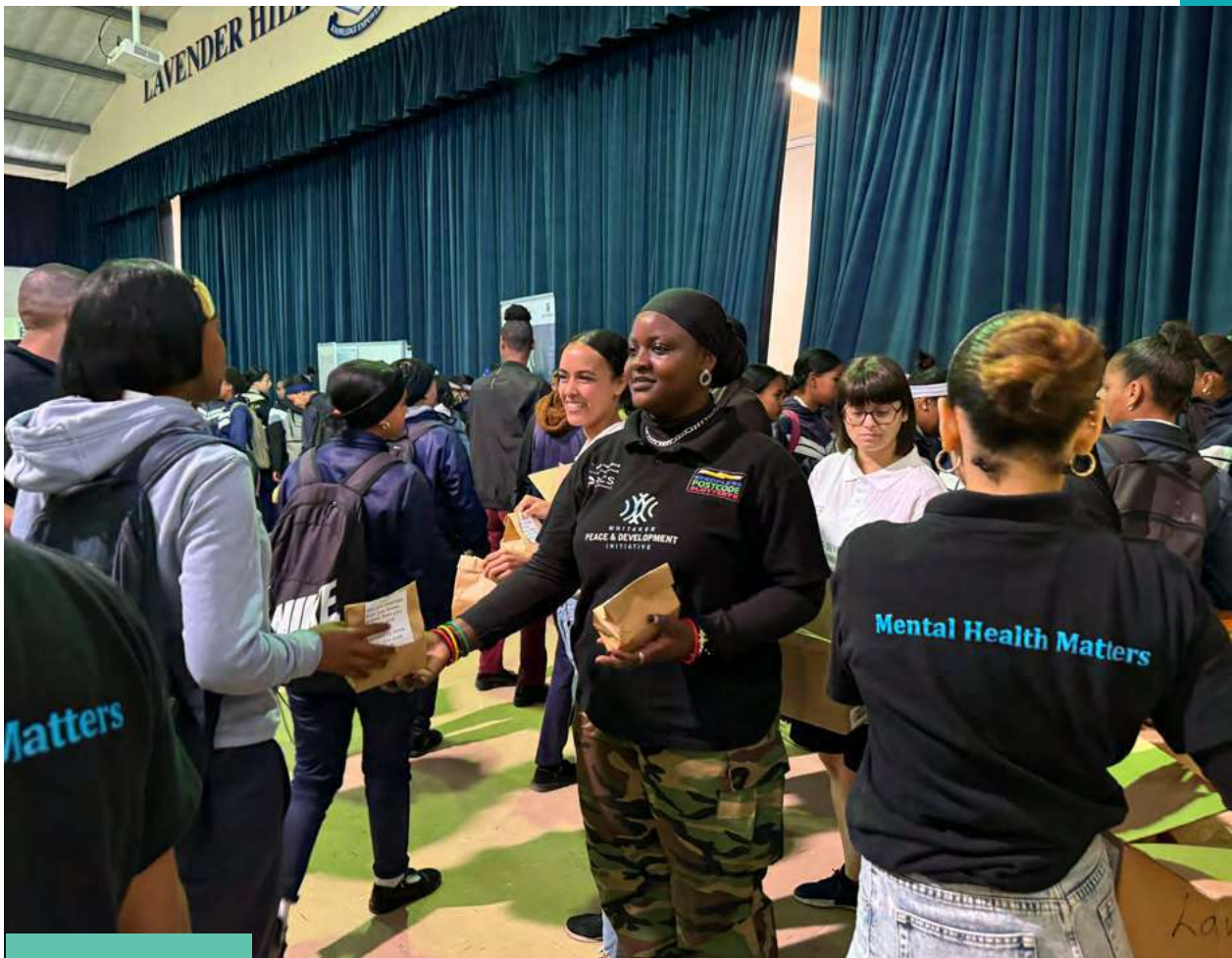
8,164 Sexual & Reproductive Health event participants

Uganda

3,133

South Africa

5,031



Restoring Dignity, One Pad at a Time: Empowering Young Girls in the Cape Flats

In 2024, WPDl embarked on a transformative journey to restore dignity and create opportunities for thousands of young girls across 40 schools in the Cape Flats. These girls, many from impoverished backgrounds, often have no access to basic menstrual hygiene products—a challenge that not only fragilizes their education but also erodes their self-confidence as individuals who are at a critical stage of their bodily and mental development. While there have been many advances in the gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decades across all countries, the recognition of menstruation as a normal dimension of human societies is still a frontier to push forward. In many places, the issue of menstruation remains a source of shame, guilt, and missed opportunities for young girls. This situation is even aggravated in fragility affected areas where traditional norms often worsen the marginalization of women and youth. This is to say that taboos and menstruation-specific prejudices create a double burden on the shoulders of teenage girls and young

women. The first step into a healthy approach to menstruation is therefore to break the isolation of girls and young women on this matter and engage them to start conversations on this critical aspect of their personal lives.

To this effect, WPDl works to create safe spaces for positive exchange and learning. Through its innovative empowerment trainings, 5,031 girls could openly ask questions, share their experiences, and learn essential skills to navigate their menstrual health with confidence.

A cornerstone of this initiative was the distribution of sanitary pads each month, ensuring that no girl had to miss school because of her period. The impact of this initiative extends far beyond the classroom, breaking cycles of inequality and fostering a generation of confident, resilient, and hopeful young women. This is the power of dignity in action: empowering every girl, regardless of her circumstances, so she can thrive and shine.

"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 if I stained my uniform. Now, with the pads we get every month, I don't have to miss school anymore. The talks also showed me that there's nothing wrong with having my period. I feel normal and proud to be myself. Thank you so much for helping me!"

Beverly,
Learner in Hanover Park



"Growing up in poverty, we don't always have the things we need. Before, I felt like I didn't belong when I had my period because I couldn't afford pads. The program has helped me stay in school, and the lessons taught me that periods are natural, not something to hide. I'm so grateful because I can just focus on being a student now."

Ziyanda,
Learner in Langa



Empowering Communities through Comprehensive Sexuality Education in South Sudan

As a young nation, South Sudan faces tensions between tradition and modernity, especially on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). These issues affect gender dynamics, making them a WPDl priority. In October, the Women Resource Center in Maridi hosted its first Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) training in partnership with UNESCO South Sudan. The event gathered 46 teachers and five Youth Peacemakers, committed to reshaping sexuality education.

Led by Mr. Omwony Terensio from the National Ministry of General Education, the four-day training provided accurate, age-appropriate, and non-judgmental information. It aimed to counter the conflicting and harmful messages young people receive from peers, media, and other sources.

With traditional systems of sexual education diminishing, many youths are left vulnerable to misinformation. CSE bridges this gap by promoting

values, healthy relationships, and informed decision-making. South Sudan's cultural taboos around sexuality exacerbate issues like early marriage, forcing many girls out of school. Recognizing this, the training emphasized the role of families and educators in offering guidance and support.

Deputy Executive Director of Maridi County, Kamaladin Bashir Juma, acknowledged these challenges, stating: "Discussing sexuality with children is taboo, yet many struggle with related issues. Early marriage leads to school dropouts, and we must become ambassadors for this vital knowledge."

The program embraced a holistic, learner-centered, rights-based approach, positioning teachers as

facilitators rather than mere instructors. It aimed to equip young people with critical understanding, self-esteem, and decision-making skills.

Empowered teachers and Youth Peacemakers are now catalysts for change, ensuring ripple effects in their communities. One participant reflected: "With my new knowledge, I will help young people make responsible choices about relationships, sexuality, and reproductive health."

This program's success highlights the dedication of funders, organizers, and participants in fostering a more informed and empowered generation in South Sudan. By addressing sensitive topics, they are paving the way for healthier, more confident youth.



Peace Through Sports

Sports activities and events can serve as powerful platforms for fostering dialogue, promoting inclusion, and even resolving conflicts. Through the Peace Through Sports program, WPDJ harnesses the unifying power of sports to bring children, youth, and their communities together. By emphasizing values such as mutual respect, teamwork, and fair play, the program helps instill a culture of peace that becomes an integral part of everyday life.

135,344 total beneficiaries under the Sports pillar



Mobilizing the Power of Sports for Healthy Bodies and Peaceful Minds

135,344 Participants in all sportive activities

Uganda
68,684

South Sudan
63,100

South Africa
3,560

230 teams managed by WPD

Uganda
138

South Sudan
72

South Africa
20

3,565 training participants

Uganda
2,229

South Sudan
1,096

South Africa
240

131,779 participants in competitions events

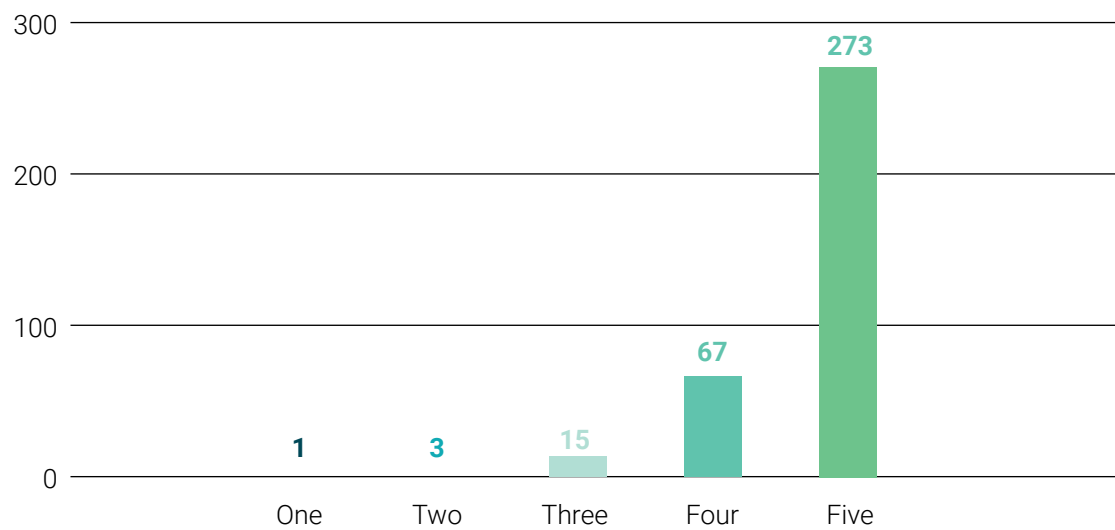
Uganda
66,455

South Sudan
62,004

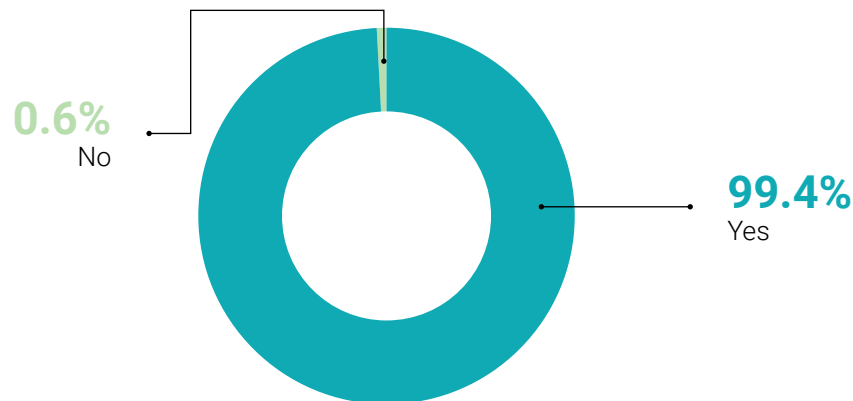
South Africa
3,320



From a scale of one to five, how much do you think that the program is helping girls to shine? (359 responses)



Do you think that the community is improved by a program like “Peace Through Sports”? (367 responses from team players of South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda)



The Power of Sports to Promote Peace in Conflict-affected and Underprivileged Communities of Uganda and South Sudan

The “Mobilizing the Power of Sports to Promote Peace in Conflict-affected and Underprivileged Communities of Uganda and South Sudan” project, implemented by WPDJ in partnership with the Swedish Postcode Lottery Foundation, represented a key opportunity to pilot a strategic and innovative

approach to peacebuilding and economic sustainability in remote areas of fragility. Launched in 2023, in Uganda and South Sudan, the project demonstrated the relevance of leveraging sports as a tool for unity, development, and empowerment. In regions where communities lack the means to offer

sports infrastructure, the project has introduced formal sports practice, including fields, equipment, and trained human resources. This initiative has demonstrated the effectiveness of sports as a gateway to other positive activities, mobilizing young people at a critical age in their development. By combining sports with peacebuilding activities, the project equipped participants with skills in coaching, refereeing, sports management, conflict resolution, and a culture of peace.

Key Observations and Lessons

Infrastructure and Human Resources: The project successfully introduced formal sports practice in areas previously devoid of such infrastructure. This included the establishment of sports fields, provision of equipment, and training of human resources. For instance, 109 coaches and 108 referees were trained, with referees receiving certification from the South Sudan Football Association, granting them D licenses for national-level officiating.

Youth Mobilization and Development: The program has effectively mobilized young people, providing them with opportunities to engage in positive activities. In the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, participation in the program helped refugee youth build resilience and foster a sense of belonging and identity. Some talented participants gained opportunities beyond their communities, including enrollment in secondary schools and selection for the national soccer team.

Promotion of Gender Equality: A significant aspect of the program is its promotion of gender equality, particularly in fragility-affected areas where traditional norms often limit women's freedom. By working with local authorities and stakeholders from the onset, WPDI established a climate of trust that

enabled the enrollment of girls in sports activities. This led to increased female participation in football and the breaking of gender barriers, with three female players receiving call-ups to the national team.

Partnerships and Empowerment: In South Sudan, the project partnered with the South Sudan Football Association (SSFA) to organize training for coaches and link the program to international football authorities (FIFA). This partnership not only provided resources for training but also heightened the sense of empowerment among participants, contributing to peacebuilding and professional sports development.

Final Considerations

The project has made a lasting impact by fostering social cohesion, reconciliation, and youth empowerment. Through strategic partnerships, innovative approaches, and a focus on local realities, WPDI and the Swedish Postcode Lottery Foundation have demonstrated the transformative power of sports in promoting peace and sustainable development.

In conclusion, the extent to which the program was appropriated cannot be overemphasised. In the instant that it was announced in the target locations, it generated an immense enthusiasm from children, youth, and all community stakeholders. The turnout far exceeded our expectations, highlighting the program's broad appeal and acceptance. While we are very satisfied with the numbers achieved, we are also convinced that the signature of the program lies in the sheer enthusiasm reflected in the qualitative aspects of the report, such as testimonials and pictures. These elements are integral to understanding the true value of the program, showcasing the profound impact it has had on individuals and communities alike.





Faces of Hope Gala

The Faces of Hope Gala

On September 27, WPDI hosted the Faces of Hope Gala in New York City, bringing together supporters, partners, and global leaders to celebrate the organization's work in empowering young people and communities affected by conflict. The event served as a platform to highlight WPDI's impact over the past 12 years and to call for continued support in advancing sustainable peace.

The evening featured a distinguished lineup of guests and impactful moments, a particular highlight being the heartfelt speech by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed.

In addition, the program included speeches from WPDI's partners, a Fireside Chat with Forest Whitaker and Executive Director Caroline Descombris, inspiring testimonials from Youth Peacemakers, and a special performance by YG Marley. The Fireside Chat, moderated by Whoopi Goldberg, allowed a time to reflect on WPDI's mission, evolution, and future prospects. Forest Whitaker shared personal insights into how his peacebuilding journey began. He recalled that peace is not merely the absence

of conflict but a skill that must be cultivated and passed on. He also highlighted the uniqueness of WPDI's model, where trained Youth Peacemakers not only develop conflict resolution skills but also become catalysts for change, inspiring others to take part in peace efforts. Caroline Descombris provided further perspective on WPDI's growth, underscoring the vital role of partnerships in scaling the initiative's reach. She shared stories of transformation from the communities WPDI serves, emphasizing the organization's holistic approach, which combines peace education, vocational training, trauma healing, and entrepreneurship support to build resilience in conflict-affected areas.

The evening also featured the Peacemakers Roundtable, where four Youth Peacemakers shared their journeys and the impact WPDI has had on their lives and communities. Their stories were a powerful reminder of the resilience and dedication of young leaders working to create peace in some of the world's most challenging environments.



verizon

MACH49

VISA

tcs TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES

World Wide Technology

BNP PARIBAS

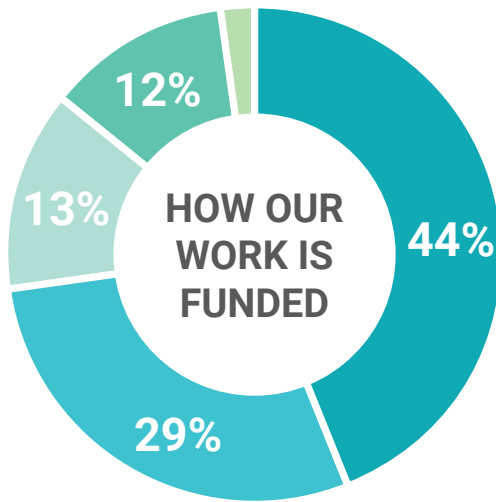




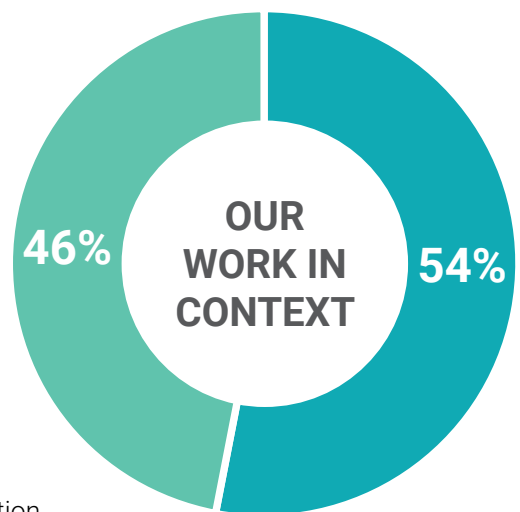
Financials

Financials

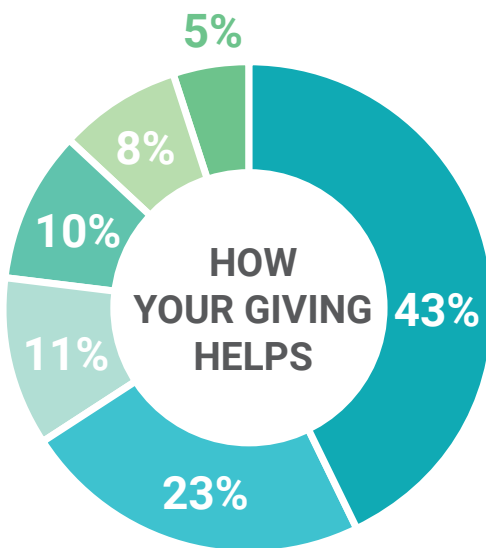
Total budget for 2024: \$6.4 million



- Foundations
- Private Sector
- UN & Other Multilateral Funding Institutions
- Development Agencies/Governments
- Individuals

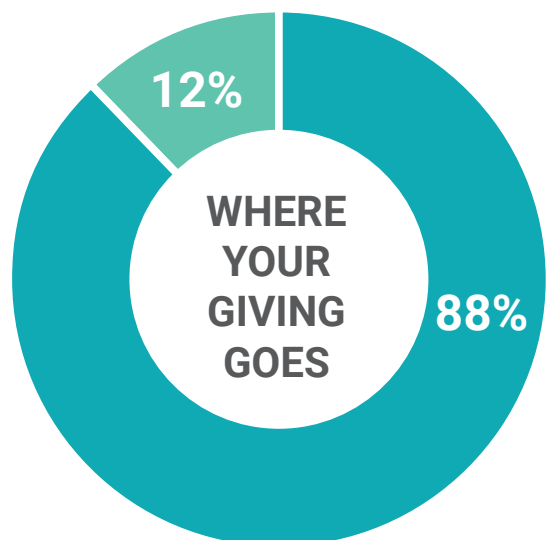


- Peacebuilding
- Development



- Peace education
- Business & livelihood
- Sports
- Employability skills
- Community building
- Trauma

- Programs
- General Management





Sustainable Development Goals 2030

12 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are pursued by WPDl programs

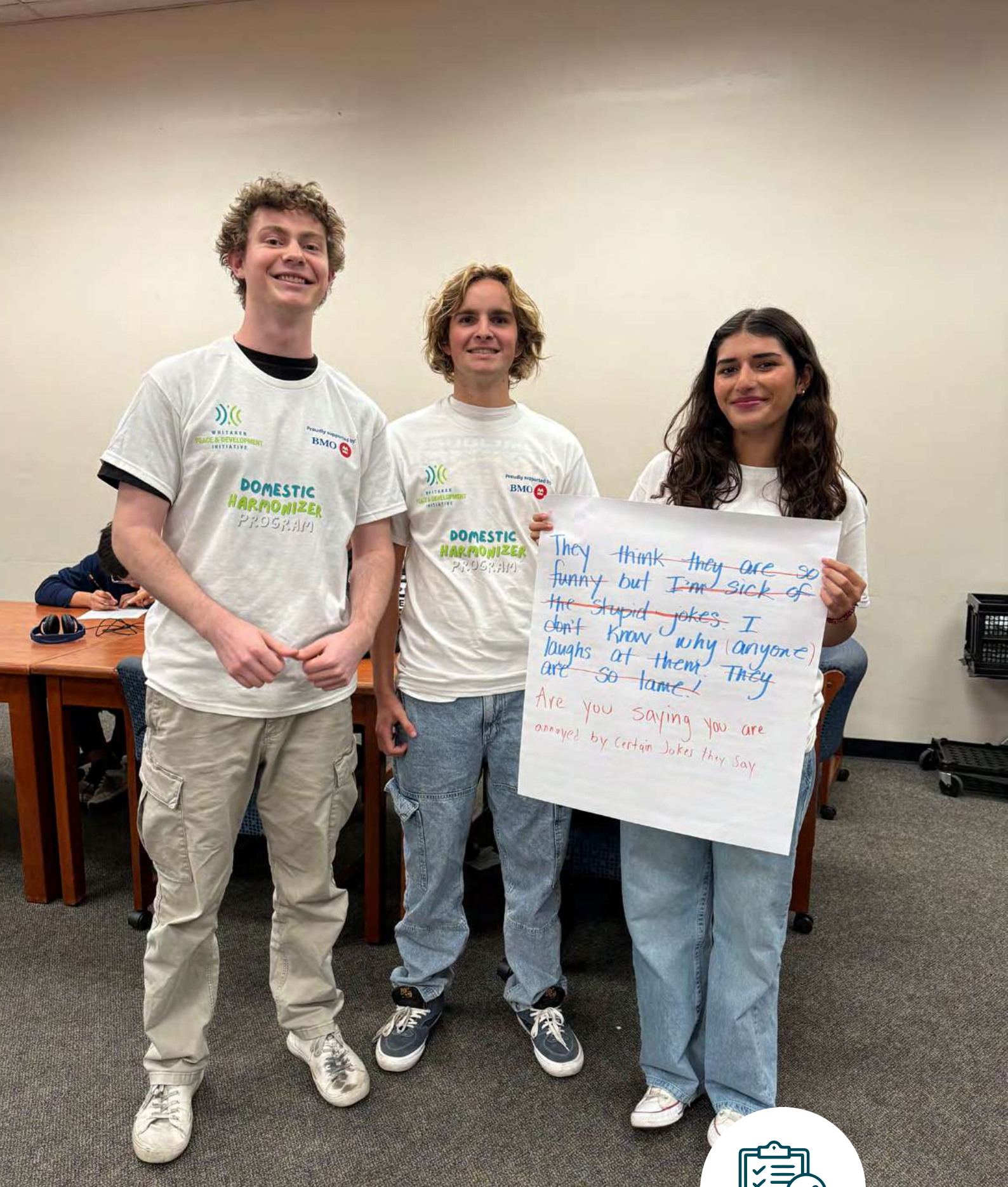
By proclaiming the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda in 2015, global leaders set the world on a unique and ambitious course to ensure that humanity can gather around a set of common goals to create a better future for every individual. With its 17 goals ranging from poverty to education, gender equality to climate change, this agenda aims to “leave no one behind.” For us at WPDl, this call for action is meant for everyone in every sense. Everyone is entitled to benefit from the SDGs, but it also means that everyone can do their part to help transform the world. There can be no global development without empowered people locally.

This approach is at the core of the strategy developed by Forest Whitaker, who has been designated as SDG Advocate by the Secretary-General of the UN: by enabling members of vulnerable, fragile, and conflict-affected communities, we aim to provide them with resources – skills, grants, etc. – that they can mobilize directly in their environment to improve

peace and sustainability. With this integrated bottom-up approach, we have learned how to respond to the multiple needs of our target communities, heeding the concerns they express. Aiming to foster the overall resilience of our communities and building our projects in line with their expectations, we currently pursue 12 of the SDGs. We strive for all our staff, Youth Peacemakers, volunteers, and beneficiaries to become local partners in the implementation of this global agenda.

Our effort at the 2030 Agenda has included training Peacemakers to lead advocacy campaigns for the SDGs, ensuring that our work to promote the SDGs can be both global, through the interventions of Mr. Whitaker, and local, through the grassroots initiatives of our youths. Across the years, we have ensured not only that our programs contributed to specific goals but also that our beneficiaries could themselves become an engine to implement the agenda and advocate for it in their communities. We have seen progress towards the SDGs in our locations.





Conclusion

Conclusion

In 2024, WPDI teams achieved yet again some remarkable results, increasing our impact and emphasizing the effectiveness of our renewed strategic approach and its four pillars of peacebuilding, livelihood, and health and wellbeing and sports. Our efforts under this comprehensive strategy have enabled us to reach over 375,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries this year alone, contributing to a cumulative total of more than 2.3 million beneficiaries since our inception in 2012.

These numbers are all the more uplifting that they are not just numbers: the many testimonials that we have gathered in this report stress that our impact is not just evident - it is meaningful to the diverse communities we serve, in South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Mexico, the United States or France, where our initiatives have fostered positive attitudes, resilience, economic empowerment, and social cohesion. More generally, the success of

our programs is a testament to the dedication of countless individuals, ranging from the commitment of our teams and the invaluable support of our partners from all sectors. Their unwavering trust and collaboration have been instrumental in driving our mission forward.

As we look to the future, maintaining this momentum is crucial. The true measure of our success lies in the sustained positive change within the communities we empower. We remain committed to deepening our impact, expanding our reach, and continuously innovating our approaches to meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

Together, with the continued support of our partners and the resilience of our beneficiaries, we will strive to build a more peaceful and sustainable world. The journey ahead is long, but we are confident in our ability to make lasting change.



WPDJ Board of Directors



Valerie Amos is a long time campaigner and advocate on Human Rights, social justice, and equality issues. She is currently Master of University College, Oxford. She is a former Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator at the United Nations. From 2003-2007, she was a member of the British Cabinet as Secretary of State for International Development and then as Leader of the House of Lords and Lord President of the Council. She is involved in a number of charitable and other organisations including the UN Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, Institute for Government and Amos Bursary. *Photography by John Cairns.*



Brandon Chapnick is partner of Chapnick Smukler & Chapnick, has been practicing business management for over 10 years, and has over 20 years in the entertainment business. Brandon's client list includes 20 - 30 entertainers, producers, and executives scattered throughout all disciplines of the entertainment business. These clients have a combined net worth in excess of \$225,000,000.00. Brandon is hands-on in overseeing his client's investments ranging from stocks and bonds; multi-family and commercial real estate; closely held corporations; and more. In addition to his position with the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, Brandon is a founder and board member of the Scott Lieberman Camp Scholarship Foundation and former board member of The Fulfillment Fund, a Los Angeles-based charity that provides college access to underprivileged students.



Jean-Yves Fillion is Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of BNP Paribas USA. He serves as executive sponsor to many of the bank's strategic US clients and represents BNP Paribas to the US official sector, US trade organizations and the media. Mr. Fillion has been with BNP Paribas for four decades, 3 of which he has spent in the US between Chicago, Los Angeles and New York. Mr. Fillion has served the bank since 1984 in a succession of executive positions. In addition to his role on the Board of BNPP USA, he is also a Director and member of the Executive Committee of the French American Foundation and the International Advisory Board of Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC). Mr. Fillion is a member of the Board of Governors for the International Tennis Hall of Fame and CityParks Foundation. A former member of the French National Sailing Team, he is an active member of the New York Yacht Club and American Yacht Club. Mr. Fillion is a Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honour. Mr. Fillion received a Master's degree from Dauphine University and his MBA from HEC in Paris. He also studied at the Kellogg School of Management of Northwestern University in Chicago.

WPGI Board of Directors



Frank Cooper serves as Global Chief Marketing Officer at Visa. In this vital role, Mr. Cooper leads a global team focused on amplifying the company's purpose and advancing Visa's business strategy in the global marketplace. Mr. Cooper's career spans multiple industries, where he has consistently distinguished himself as a business leader driving change and industry-wide transformation through a deep understanding of business, culture and technology. Previously, Mr. Cooper held previous roles as Global CMO at BlackRock, Chief Marketing and Creative Officer at BuzzFeed and CMO of Global Consumer Engagement at PepsiCo. He began his career as an entertainment lawyer and served as a senior executive at two of the world's most iconic music labels: Motown and Def Jam. Mr. Cooper earned a J.D. from Harvard Law School, where he served as the Supreme Court Editor of The Harvard Law Review, and a B.S. degree in business administration from the University of California at Berkeley.



Dana Frix is a lawyer, business advisor, and investor, CEO of Frix Advisory Group, and a Managing Director of Utilicom Advisors. Dana has advised WPGI and been on its board since its founding. Dana is on the board of several U.S. technology companies: Savi Technology, a provider of sensor technology and predictive analytics for complex supply chain needs to the U.S. Department of Defense, Common Energy, a clean energy service and technology provider, GoodPeak Holdings, a Texas-based solar and battery energy storage provider, and Revive PV Solar, a remanufacturer of solar panels. Dana is a founding advisor to the World Champions Rodeo Alliance, the premier for-profit U.S. rodeo organization. Until forming the Advisory Group Dana was a Managing Partner of Chadbourne & Parke, a U.S.-based international law firm. For several decades, Dana was a partner in Chadbourne's corporate practice and chair of its technology, media, and telecom practice. Before that, he was a corporate partner with the law firm of O'Melveny and Myers.



Niclas Kjellström-Matseke is a Swedish-South African business leader with nearly a three-decade career as a CEO and international investor. He has a special focus on sustainable business, engaged in UN's pioneering work with the Sustainable Development Goals, and Board Member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. He is also the Chairman of Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, and former Advisory Board member of The Elders. Niclas was the CEO of Novamedia Nordics 2005-2015. Novamedia/The Postcode Lottery became the industry's most profitable company. Niclas has nearly two decades of experience investing for social impact, since Novamedia/The Postcode Lottery became the world's 3rd largest private donor, after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Wellcome Trust, distributing approx \$11 billion. In 2013, Niclas received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights - The Ripple of Hope Award for his "dynamic and creative leadership" bringing together the business, political, and civic communities. He was born in 1970 in Sweden and holds an MBA from the Stockholm School of Economics, and a degree in Political science from Uppsala University.



WPD I Board of Directors



Elizabeth Roscoe is a global marketing and sustainability executive with decades of expertise transforming the scope and reputation of corporate foundations through partnerships, advocacy programs, and donor stewardship. She was formerly the head of the Western Union Foundation, a global non-profit that has donated \$140 million connecting migrants and refugees to the global economy through workforce development. Prior to this Elizabeth was the head of marketing for Western Union business solutions, a payments engine moving money for non-profits, governments, small businesses, and educational institutions. Previously, Elizabeth oversaw marketing efforts for American Express, PepsiCo, and Nestle among other well-known brands. She holds a Master's degree from Manchester University.



Hans Vestberg has been the CEO of Verizon since 2018 and Chairman since 2019. Hans is the architect of Verizon's 5G network strategy, which powers and empowers how its customers live, work and play. Under Hans' leadership, Verizon was first in the world to 5G and 5G Mobile Edge Compute and has since expanded its 5G network nationally for mobility and home internet and business services, and worldwide with 5G private network solutions for enterprises, governments and other organizations. Hans is a board member at BlackRock, the UN Foundation, and WPD I. He is Co-Chair of the New Jersey CEO Council, a coalition of leaders from the state's largest companies. He is also the founder and Chairman of the World Economic Forum's EDISON Alliance for digital inclusion, which aims to impact 1 billion lives by delivering affordable and accessible digital solutions in education, healthcare and financial services by 2025. Hans is a member of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network, where he helped author the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Born in Hudiksvall, Sweden, Hans earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Uppsala University in Sweden.



Elaine Grunewald is a global sustainability and development expert and has worked in the private sector for over two decades as a corporate executive, an investor, and a tech founder. Her consistent advocacy for the private sector's role in solving sustainability challenges has played out in multinational as well as startup environments. She is an adviser to numerous start-ups, companies, and CEOs. Formerly, she was SVP and Chief Sustainability and Public Affairs Officer at Ericsson, and a member of the Executive Team. Her public board roles have included the European Sustainable Growth Acquisition Corp., Azelio AB and Sweco AB, and she is an advisor to the Rockton Sustainable Aviation Fund. In 2018 she co-founded the AI Sustainability Center. She has been actively engaged in the World Economic Forum, the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, the Boards Impact Forum, and the International Women's Forum. She co-authored the book "Sustainability Leadership: A Swedish Approach to Transforming Your Company, Your Industry and the World" (Palgrave MacMillan 2020). She holds a double Master's degree from Boston University's Center for Energy and Environmental Studies.



Our Founder

Forest Whitaker

Forest Whitaker is the founder and CEO of the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI), through which he provides skills and opportunities to youths and women in regions affected by violence and armed conflict in Uganda, South Africa, South Sudan, France, Mexico, and the United States. Forest Whitaker is also 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. Renowned for his dedication to cultivating children's and youths' artistic talents he had been a member of President Obama's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, working closely with elementary schools to demonstrate the limitless power of the arts to unlock the creative potential of pupils and students.

In addition to his social activism, Whitaker is one of Hollywood's most accomplished and versatile figures. Through his production company, Significant Productions, 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. He also received the Palme d'Or for Best Actor for *Bird* at the 1988 Cannes Film Festival.

Forest 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. In 2013, Boston University's Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center appointed him a Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellow. 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, the Southern California Mediation Association and more. As an artist and activist committed to promoting peace and social

justice, Forest Whitaker has been honored with such recognitions as the Crystal Award at the 2017 edition of the Davos World Economic Forum and the Global Citizen Award from the Atlantic Council in 2022. In recognition of his work serving those affected by conflicts and violence, the French Government appointed him to the Order of Arts and Letters in 2013 as Knight and in 2021 as Commander. In 2022, he was awarded the International Peace Honors PeaceTech Lab for his philanthropy and humanitarian service, alongside the SDG Vanguard Award by the UN Foundation, acknowledging his innovative championing of sustainability and resilience across various countries. Additionally, he was honored, in 2023, with UK's People PostCode Lottery Hero award as well as the 2023 Global Generation Award by the Millennium Campus Network (MCN), underscoring his commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Forest Whitaker's commitment to peace and social justice has led him to work ever more closely with the United Nations and its diverse agencies. He has addressed such bodies as the Security Council, in 2014 and 2021, and the Human Rights Council, in 2019. His dual career as an artist and activist has brought him into close collaboration with UNESCO, the UN agency for education, science and culture, through which he strives, as UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation, to champion values of tolerance, openness and mutual understanding. His commitment to empowering former child soldiers has also led him to actively collaborate, since 2014, with the UN office for Children and Armed Conflict including in the role as an Advocate for Children Affected by War. Forest Whitaker is also member of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocacy Group since its creation by the UN Secretary-General. Membership in this unique platform allows him to disseminate ideals of peace both on the global scene and at the grassroots, in line with his belief that: "Even a seemingly small action can cause ripples that make an enormous impact."

Our Partners

			
			
			
			
			
			
	<i>A Foundation Wishing to Remain Anonymous</i>		



Become a Partner

Partnerships ensure WPDI's ability to develop and continue its critical work. This might involve training cohorts of future peacemakers in South Sudan, empowering vulnerable communities in South Africa's Cape Flats, running intercultural dialogues among refugee and host communities in Uganda, helping develop self-sustaining entrepreneurial ventures in Mexico's rural Chiapas state, training women to become entrepreneurs in the suburbs of Paris, France, or teaching conflict resolution in schools in the United States.

Your commitment – large or small – will make a meaningful impact for thousands of people around the world.

Contact us

Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative



17777 Center Court Drive, Suite 600
Cerritos, CA 90703



info@wpdi.org



www.wpdi.org



Act for Peace

WPDI is an established 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. Your donation – no matter its size – will ensure our ability to promote youth-led peacebuilding projects and small businesses around the world that will impact thousands of young men and women.



“You have the power to act for peace whether you donate, you convince, you tell a friend, you share our initiative. Make peace grow everywhere we can.”

Forest Whitaker





W H I T A K E R
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
I N I T I A T I V E

Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative
17777 Center Court Drive, Suite 600
Cerritos, CA 90703

info@wpdi.org
www.wpdi.org

