

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO CHANGE: YOUTH, WOMEN, AND THE POWER OF PEACE



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

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Foreword

by Forest Whitaker

The year 2025 has reminded us how fragile peace remains for so many communities around the world. Conflicts have intensified, inequalities have deepened, and civic spaces have come under strain. Yet across all these challenges, one truth has grown ever clearer to me: peace is built every day, from the ground up, by people who choose dialogue over division and resilience over resignation. This conviction lies at the heart of our work.

In all truth, WPDI has not been immune to the havoc of 2025. Like a tsunami, international funding receded without warning before we were hit by a wave of ordeals on all levels. Some programs delivered less than planned; one office closed; dear colleagues parted. It was heart-wrenching; and I want to honour the remarkable work our team carried through in spite of it. Your steadiness under pressure safeguarded what mattered most.

And yet, in a difficult global landscape, WPDI's work has shown, again, that even in fragile settings, knowledge, opportunity, and healing can take root when nurtured locally, even when we must scale back. Across countries and contexts, I have seen young people and women lead with courage, mediate conflicts, launch businesses, support their peers, and transform trauma into hope. Their determination reaffirms our core belief that empowered individuals strengthen the fabric of their communities in durable ways.

This year also underscored that resilience comes in many forms and faces. Peace does not stand without the dignity brought by a decent livelihood, without mental well-being that restores inner stability, or without the capacity to adapt to environmental and climate pressures. By investing

in these interconnected dimensions, and innovating to bring climate and environmental action more fully into our framework, WPDI helped communities hold the line against social, economic, psychological, and environmental shocks. Our staff struggled to maintain core programs, reached beneficiaries where it mattered most, and saw new businesses take root, even if at a smaller scale than planned.

I have also been encouraged by the recognition from partners, institutions, and communities that make up the wider network of WPDI. External evaluations, feedback from local leaders, and the lived experiences of our beneficiaries point to the same lesson: lasting change happens when solutions are co-created with the people who will carry them forward.

Our Youth Peacemakers and Community Learning Centers stand as quiet, durable examples of what it means to build peace with communities, not merely for them. Looking ahead, we will listen, adapt, and stand alongside those who rely on us. The road before us will not be easy, but it is lit by the strength, creativity, and resilience of the individuals and communities we serve. We carry forward in honour of colleagues and partners who kept faith through this difficult year.

Let us continue with patience and with persistence to build the defenses of peace together.

Peace and Light,

Forest Whitaker,
CEO and Founder of WPDI



Our Mission

The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) is a non-governmental organization with an international scope and reach, founded by artist, social activist, and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace, Forest Whitaker, in 2012. We develop and implement programs promoting lasting peace and sustainable development in places affected by conflict, poverty, and exclusion. Women and youth are the groups we serve in priority, and our programs are open to anyone willing to be a changemaker. Our approach ensures that our programs have a leverage impact at the grassroots, which has translated into solid growth over the years.



Executive Summary



This year, WPD's four-pillar model based on peacebuilding, livelihood, health & well-being, and sports, continued to act as one integrated platform for community resilience. Across the communities where we work, programs reached 178,026 people in 2025, with schools, community spaces, and enterprises reinforcing one another to weave resilience into the social fabric. Throughout the year, field data and lived experiences converged: 90% of trainees report mediating conflicts; 97.4% of community leaders say WPD skills improved their decisions; and in well-being, 91% of participants report better performance at school or work after trauma support, demonstrating that healing and opportunity are inseparable. More importantly, the fact that 99% of our trainees report applying their newly learned skills in their daily lives, is in itself a vindication of our Theory of Change, which assumes that empowered individuals are key to leverage social transformation.

These results were not just perceived by individual beneficiaries but also by all kinds of stakeholders. External evaluations and testimonials from local players consistently affirmed the effectiveness of this approach. Partners and public authorities observed

reduced violence, stronger social cohesion, and more durable livelihoods even in high-risk settings. In South Sudan, an independent mid-term review of our combined peacebuilding and livelihood work described the model as holistic and locally replicable, noting how community institutions have begun adopting WPD's tools. These findings mirror what beneficiaries tell us every day: when people are equipped to resolve conflict, earn a living, and care for their mental health, communities stabilize and then move forward.

Throughout 2025, WPD deepened the system-level reach. We delivered peace education and social-emotional learning in 140 schools, trained and supported 284 Lead Youth Peacemakers alongside 1,099 local Youth Peacemakers, and convened dialogues to embed prevention practices with local leaders. On the economic front, 210 new small businesses were launched. Another 255 businesses were created through the 62 VSLA groups created under WPD programs. More generally, the benefits of our livelihood programs are revealed in the feedback we received from trainees surveyed three months after completing their courses at WPD. For instance, around 6,500 vocational trainees from



all our countries declared that the WPDI's training had brought positive career outcomes for more than 65% of them, including through finding a job (15% of responses), increasing their income (24%), or creating a business (28%). These results show how livelihoods become lifelines for stability and dignity when they are linked to peace education and community leadership.

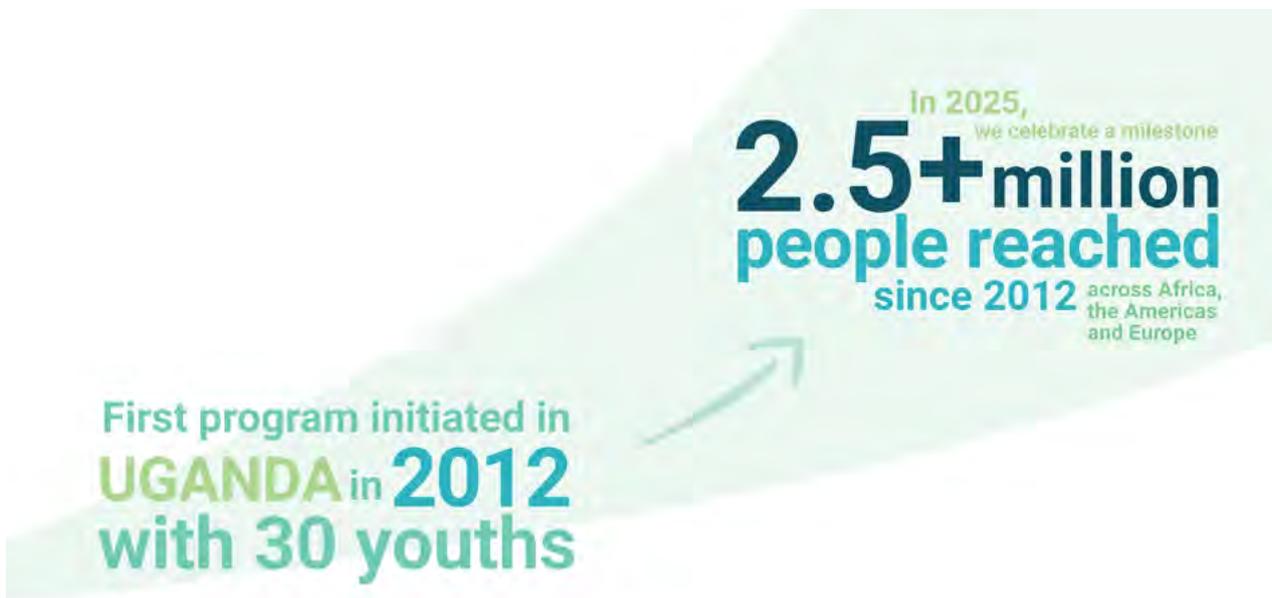
We also advanced our strategy to mainstream resilience by integrating trauma healing, health literacy, and climate-aware practices across programs. 1,509 people received individual trauma counseling; 7,461 joined mental-health awareness activities; and 486 accessed sexual and reproductive health services and information. Participants' outcomes, 91% reporting improved performance at school or work, underline how psychosocial support translates into everyday gains in functioning and productivity. In parallel, climate-smart skills and environmentally responsible enterprise practices were scaled to help communities adapt to shocks and build future-proof livelihoods.

To improve access to knowledge of remote and underserved areas, WPDI expanded satellite-powered internet to 11 Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in South Sudan and Uganda. With reliable connectivity, learners access digital courses, mentors support entrepreneurs

remotely, and communities convene more effectively. In 2025, CLCs welcomed 34,107 visitors, confirming their role as hubs where all four pillars intersect. The initiative's impact was recognized with the "Changing Lives" Award at the AfricaTech Festival, a recognition that technology, when rooted in local leadership, multiplies the reach and quality of services.

In 2025, the Paris Peace Forum provided a high-level platform to showcase the Youth Peacemaker Network and to engage governments, funders, and civil-society peers on sustainable financing for grassroots leadership. From municipal leaders in France and education authorities in the United States to district and state officials in South Africa, Uganda and South Sudan, partners consistently highlighted WPDI's credibility, relevance, and readiness to collaborate.

The evidence, including quantitative results, independent evaluations, and stakeholder voices, points to the same conclusion: when peace education, opportunity, and healing are delivered together through community-owned structures like Youth Peacemakers and CLCs, they generate durable systems of local resilience. This is the strategic path we will continue to pursue and scale in the years ahead.



2025 Overview



PEACEBUILDING: 115,794 participants

15
Community Learning
Center (CLC)

34,107
Community Learning
Center visitors

1,383
Youth
Peacemakers

54,887
individuals reached by
Youth Peacemakers

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Centers

4,641
Conflict Resolution Education trainees

5,339
participants in Cinema for Peace

Peacebuilding in the Community

15,238
advocacy campaigns
participants

49
Community
Dialogues held

8,722
participants in
Community Dialogues

1,341
local leaders
trained

Peacebuilding in Schools

140
schools
hosting WPDI
programs

13,258
learners trained in
Conflict Resolution
Education

1,114
teachers and
school leadership
staff trained

284
parents and
guardians
trained

240
scholarship
recipients

5,872
advocacy
campaigns
participants



LIVELIHOOD: 31,103 participants

Capacity-Building

3,742
ICT
trainees

3,421
Business and
Entrepreneurship
trainees

2,313
Vulnerable
Women trained
in business

1,041
Financial
Literacy
trainees

601
Arts and
Crafts
trainees

1,094
Environment
trainees

Businesses

210
SMEs and VSLAs
created in 2025

1,140
businesses supported
by WPDI in total

255
businesses created through
VSLA group funding

14,167
beneficiaries of
businesses



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 11,835 participants

486
Sexual and
Reproductive Health
individual beneficiaries

1,730
Sexual and
Reproductive Health
event participants

1,509
Trauma Healing
individual
beneficiaries

7,461
Trauma
Healing event
participants

649
students trained
in Social and
Emotional Learning



SPORTS: 19,294 participants

64
female teams
managed by WPDI

109
male teams
managed by WPDI

2,804
regular training
participants

16,490
participants in
competition events

178,026

Grand total of people reached through WPDI's activities,
both directly and indirectly, in 2025



Key Highlights for 2025

WPDI attends the Paris Peace Forum

WPDI joined global leaders and organizations at the 2025 Paris Peace Forum. Chosen to host a booth as part of this year's exhibition at the Forum, WPDI transformed its space into a lively gathering point where visitors from across sectors came together to learn about our mission to empower communities.

Our booth highlighted the Youth Peacemaker Network in South Sudan, demonstrating the initiative's transformative impact and the success of WPDI's model worldwide. As part of WPDI's delegation, Nandego Magdalena Lokoro, a Youth Peacemaker from South Sudan, attended the Forum and engaged visitors at our booth, sharing personal thoughts on how WPDI's programs have empowered her and many others, helping to foster reconciliation within communities of South Sudan. Her story embodied the essence of WPDI's mission, demonstrating how trust, dialogue, and perseverance can transform conflict into opportunity. She was joined by Dagu David, WPDI's Country Manager for South Sudan. On the second day, WPDI contributed to two panel discussions that explored ways to strengthen civil society and amplify youth leadership.



Caroline Descombris, WPDI's Executive Director, participated in the session "Supporting Civil Society Under Pressure: How Charity Lotteries Can Help Reshape the Funding Landscape in Europe." The panel included representatives from the Association of Charity Lotteries in Europe (ACLEU), which counts two partners of WPDI: the People's Postcode Lottery of the UK and the Swedish Postcode Lottery Foundation, a long-time supporter of our work. She spoke about the growing challenges facing civil society organizations, including the increasing demand for services in education, mental health, and social cohesion, as well as limited access to sustainable funding.

Together with our partners and the communities we serve, we remain committed to a future shaped by hope, resilience, and the belief that peace is a skill that can be learned, shared, and sustained.



External Evaluation of WPDI South Sudan by STOOS Consulting

This year, WPDI, under its partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), commissioned an external mid-term evaluation of its peacebuilding and livelihoods programming in South Sudan. The evaluation was conducted by STOOS, an independent consulting firm engaged to assess both the relevance and impact of WPDI's interventions. This marks the first external evaluation that examines the combined peacebuilding and livelihood pillars of our work.

The evaluation affirmed the continued relevance of WPDI's model, noting that the initiatives directly responded to priority community needs in peacebuilding, vocational skills development, livelihoods, and empowerment for women and youth. Across project sites, evaluators observed positive outcomes in reducing violence and strengthening social cohesion. These effects were attributed to WPDI's integrated approach, which brings together conflict resolution practices with practical economic opportunities for vulnerable groups.

Summary of Key Findings

- **Relevance:** The project addressed fundamental community priorities: peacebuilding, vocational training, and socio-economic inclusion, demonstrating strong alignment with local needs and stakeholder expectations.
- **Effectiveness:** Activities contributed to measurable reductions in intergroup violence and improvements in social cohesion.
- **Efficiency:** Overall operations were executed effectively, despite logistical challenges related to access constraints, weather conditions, and localized operational issues that caused some implementation delays.
- **Sustainability:** The evaluation highlighted signs of sustainable impact, including the development of local facilitators, active community groups, and deepening ownership among stakeholders, all of which support continued progress beyond the project's timeframe.
- **Complementarity:** WPDI's programming effectively complemented existing initiatives by government partners, United Nations agencies, and other NGOs, particularly by filling gaps in peacebuilding and vocational training.
- **Gender Inclusion:** The project made significant strides in increasing women's participation and leadership. Evaluators also noted opportunities to expand outreach in more remote areas to further strengthen inclusion.
- **Tangible Impact:** Communities reported enhanced livelihoods and resilience. The evaluation also underscored the importance of managing community expectations regarding financial support linked to economic components of the program.

Selected Feedback from the Evaluation

"The model of combining peacebuilding with livelihood and entrepreneurship training has proven to be a holistic model. It combines both immediate needs to reduce conflict and promote peace as well as promoting long-term resilience through the provision of livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities."

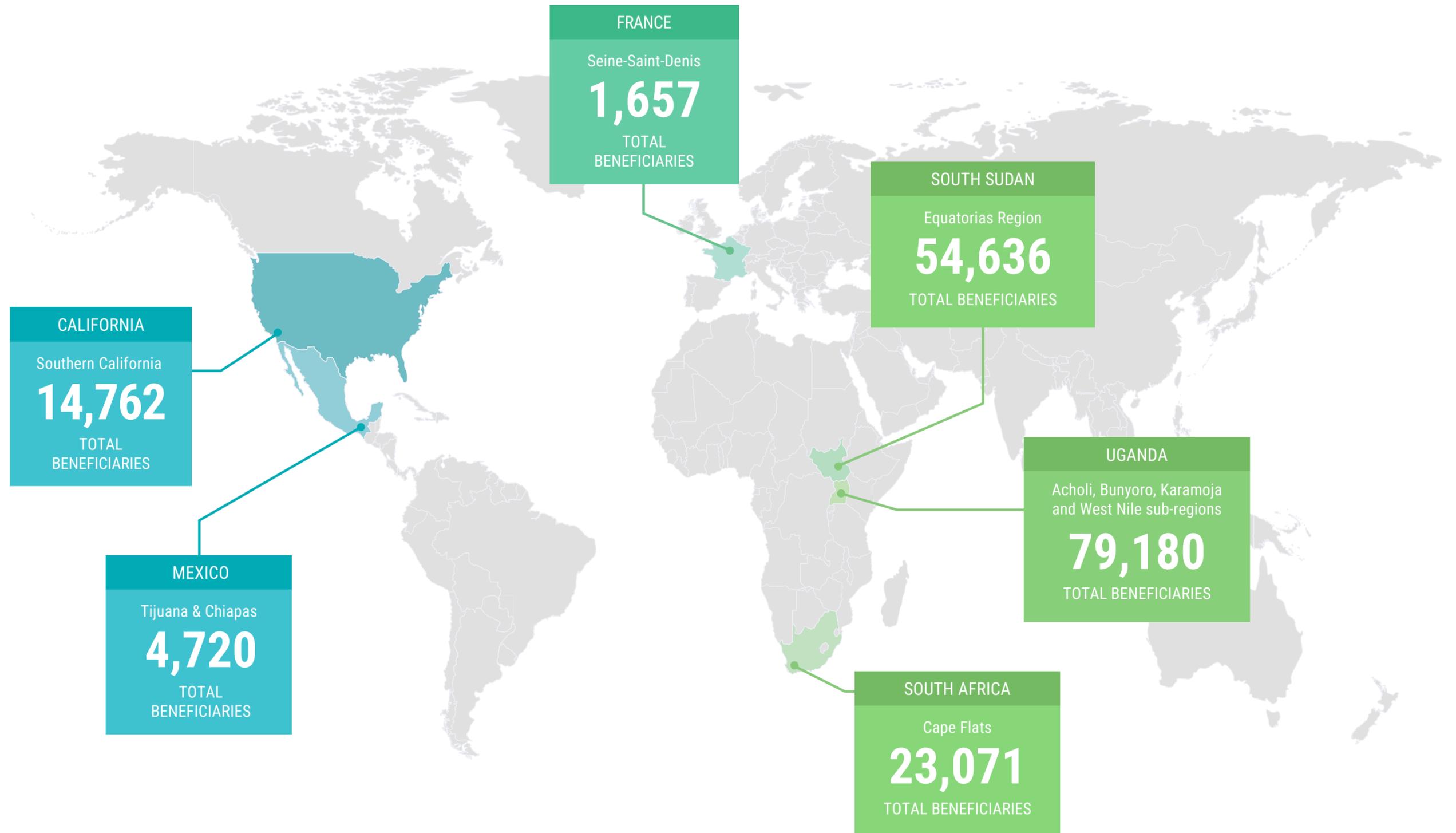
"Other organisations operating on the ground were found to have a particular focus on humanitarian aid, health or agriculture. The WPDI project was found to fill a gap relating to peacebuilding, vocational skills training and entrepreneurship. The focus on such areas builds long term resilience in communities of operation."

"In certain locations the effectiveness of the project has been highlighted by the fact that other NGOs, local government or religious organisations have adopted the approach of WPDI. For example, in Maridi, local church groups were found to have adopted the approach of WPDI with regards to conflict resolution in their programming."



WHERE WE WORK

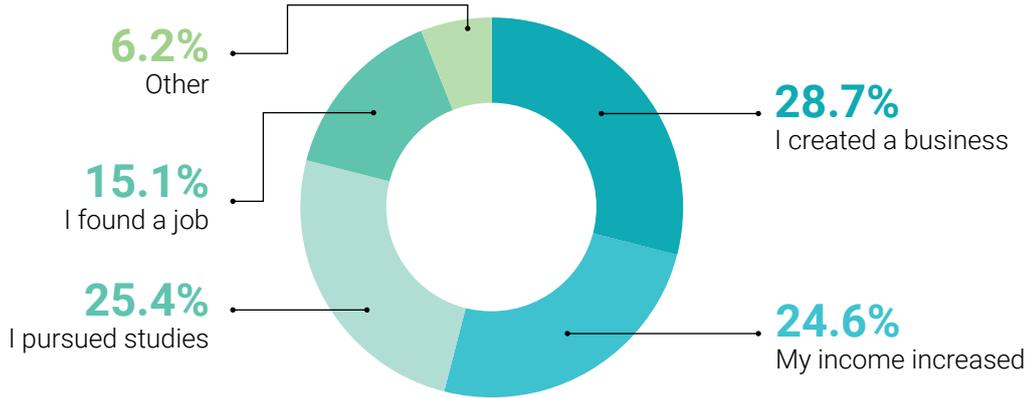
Total beneficiaries **178,026**



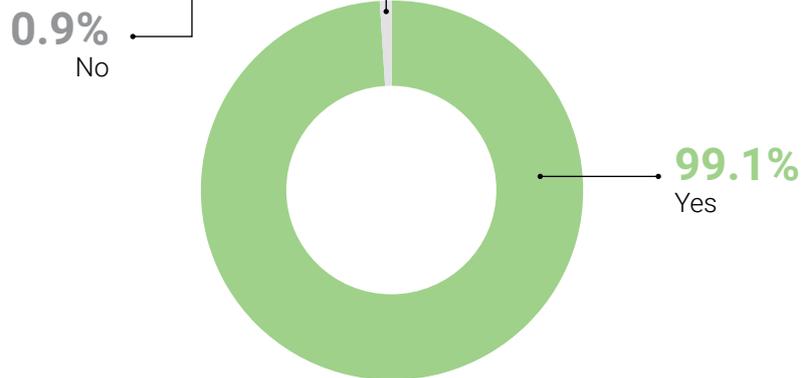
Post-training Questionnaire

Every year, WPDI conducts surveys in an effort to better understand the impact of our activities. In 2025, 6,306 individuals surveyed provided insight into the effectiveness of WPDI activities. In addition to the following responses, the report includes survey results specific to each pillar of actions under each appropriate section.

“How has the program improved your career prospects?” (3,445 responses)



“Have you been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in your personal or professional life?” (6,287 responses)



Stakeholders Tell Us What They Think of WPDI

Uganda

“This letter serves to affirm WPDI’s credibility, reliability and positive track records in collaborative efforts with our Government, particularly through a series of Memoranda of Understanding that have advanced Sustainable Peace Building Programs such as community dialogues, community Leaders training, CRE School programs and Sustainable Development in the Region. This endorsement extends to recommending the Organization as a preferred Partner for International Donors, NGOs and Government Agencies seeking to invest in Northern Uganda’s Development.”

Opiyo Christopher Ateker,
District Chairperson,
Gulu District Local Government



South Sudan

“Today, with the launch of the construction of the vegetable market in Torit, it marks yet again another great milestone among many others achieved already with the strong relationship and partnership of WPDI in Eastern Equatoria State (EES). We as the government of EES appreciate and are grateful to WPDI and its partners for the tangible support and development the organization continues to bring in EES. Setting up a vegetable market like this one WPDI is constructing has been a long-held community ambition to uplift our women in business to a higher level. Thanks to WPDI, this is now being realised. We look forward to deepening this relationship with WPDI to a more stronger level.”

Oyito Baptist Soforonio,
Hon. Mayor of Torit Municipality



South Africa

“The City of Cape Town has been a proud partner with WPDI because we recognize that youth are not just a passenger, they are the authors of our very next chapter. The City and WPDI has made sure to bring training closer to our communities to ensure skills development is not only an academic exercise but it’s practical, it is rooted and most importantly it is loved by yourselves, the youth.”

Eddie Andrews,
Deputy Mayor, City of Cape Town



United States

"I have had the privilege of collaborating with WPDI as a professional learning partner for school counselors. Their PBIS-aligned, multi-tiered model of peace education and conflict resolution, grounded in restorative practices, peer mediation, and social-emotional learning, beautifully complements our countywide work to build comprehensive, equity-driven school counseling programs.

What sets WPDI apart is the way they equip educators, students, and families with practical, relationship-centered tools for communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution that fit seamlessly within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). In our School Counselor Academy, their framework has helped counselors reimagine their role not just as responders to crisis, but as leaders in cultivating a positive school climate, elevating student voice through peer mediation, and embedding SEL skills into everyday practice. As a county leader, I deeply value their commitment to whole-school transformation and am grateful for the ways their work expands the capacity of school counselors to create safe, inclusive, and healing-centered learning environments for all students."

Anna D. Heinbuch,

Ed.D., PPS, Coordinator in the Mental Health and School Counseling Unit at the Los Angeles County Office of Education



Mexico

"WPDI staff are very professional individuals, and collaborating with them has been a truly enriching and valuable experience. The information shared during the workshops, combined with an engaging approach to facilitating both virtual and in-person sessions, has made the learning process highly enjoyable for all. I am deeply grateful to WPDI for this collaboration."

Alma Moreno,

Professor at Universidad del Bienestar Benito Juárez



France

"As an elected official in charge of City Policy and Social Impact, I measure the importance of collective commitment to developing more resilient and inclusive territories. The work of WPDI perfectly embodies this vision by providing innovative solutions based on education, peace, and social entrepreneurship. I had the privilege of participating in several of their initiatives, and WPDI also contributed to various events organized by the city this year. Their action is a source of inspiration to strengthen social cohesion, promote the autonomy of women and young people, and build a sustainable future, particularly in our neighborhoods."

Kouroum Sackho,

Deputy Mayor of Aubervilliers





Vectors of Change

At WPDI, we believe that working on resilience at the ground level requires establishing strong vectors of change, locally rooted mechanisms that enable communities to transform their own futures. In fragile environments, adversity often overwhelms the limited internal systems that people can rely on; creating durable resilience therefore depends on equipping a critical mass of individuals with the skills, networks, and confidence needed to drive positive and lasting change.

Our approach focuses on empowering communities not only to manage daily challenges, but also to withstand and recover from shocks such as natural disasters, economic disruptions, or outbreaks of violence. To this end, WPDI deploys two primary vectors of change: cohorts of Youth Peacemakers, trained to lead transformative action within their communities, and Community Learning Centers, inclusive spaces that provide access to learning, collaboration, and opportunities for personal and collective growth.

<p>34,107 visitors of our Community Learning Centers</p>	<p>284 Lead Youth Peacemakers</p>	<p>1,099 Local Youth Peacemakers</p>	<p>1,383 total Youth Peacemakers</p>	<p>54,887 individuals reached by Youth Peacemakers</p>
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Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

In fragile and conflict-affected environments, young people often carry a unique dual identity: they are deeply rooted in their communities yet naturally inclined to question the status quo and imagine something better. This makes them powerful transformative insiders: individuals who understand local dynamics intimately while possessing the drive to spark renewal. At WPDI, we see this potential every day. Rather than viewing youth as passive victims of conflict or marginalization, we invest in them as the engines of community resilience, dialogue, and peace.

The Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) taps into this energy and channels it into structured, collective impact. By equipping young men and women with Conflict Resolution Education, practical vocational skills, and opportunities for leadership, we empower them to initiate change from within: mediating tensions, guiding their peers, launching community projects, and modeling new possibilities for their neighborhoods.



“I am a university student from Chapultenango who loves the countryside, the outdoors, and nature. I am passionate about my studies and am preparing myself to build a better future for both my family and my community. I feel happy to learn new things here with WPDI’s Community Learning Group, and I appreciate getting to know the Whitaker Initiative, which allows me to learn and develop new tools for peacebuilding. During training I enjoyed meeting people from different municipalities with diverse perspectives; learning and building friendships is very important to me. Being here is shifting my worldview and motivating me to continue growing as a person and discovering new horizons. This inspires me to teach others so they can also benefit, allowing us to work together toward living in a peaceful community.”

María Alondra Sánchez,
Youth Peacemaker from Chiapas, Mexico



“The work we do in our communities and schools is so empowering and impactful. As a young parent myself, I hear other parents complimenting the changes in behaviour of their children who are undergoing CRE training. There is no doubt that our training in peacebuilding is making a big difference. The only problem is that there is a wide spread of bad behaviour and unruly ones in our communities and schools. Other teachers at the school where I train CRE say all the time that there is a change in most of the pupils’ behaviour especially resolving conflict through fighting but now they discuss peacefully.”

Thumeka Madadasana,
Youth Peacemaker from Cape Town,
South Africa



Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge, and Connectivity

WPDI's Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are not just facilities: they are safe, welcoming spaces that communities quickly make their own. In remote or underserved areas, the CLC becomes a natural gathering point: every day, people walk in to study, meet, explore ideas, or simply be part of a supportive environment. From free internet and certified training in Conflict Resolution, ICT, and Business and Entrepreneurship support, trauma healing services, and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) information, the centers offer practical tools that strengthen both skills and confidence. They also host peacebuilding and cultural activities such as sports, films, campaigns, and events that bring people together and build cohesion.



Satellite-powered internet connectivity to WPDI's Community Learning Centers in South Sudan and Uganda

To help bridge this gap, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative partnered with SES (formerly Intelsat) to provide satellite-powered internet connectivity to all of WPDI's Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in South Sudan and Uganda. These centers serve as local hubs for peacebuilding, digital education, and entrepreneurship, equipping young people and community members with the skills and tools to build sustainable livelihoods and peaceful societies.

With reliable, high-speed internet, learners can now access online courses, connect with trainers in real time, and explore digital entrepreneurship opportunities, even in some of the most remote areas.

WPDI's founder and CEO, Forest Whitaker, explained in a recent Forbes feature, "Connectivity is not only about access to technology. It is about access to possibility." Through this partnership, WPDI and SES are turning that possibility into reality, ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital age.

In recognition of this work, WPDI and SES received the "Changing Lives" Award at the AfricaTech Festival Awards 2025, honoring initiatives that use technology to create lasting social impact.





Our Programs In Action

Our programs, structured under four key pillars - Peacebuilding, Livelihood, Health and Well-being, 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 well-being, WPDI works to create lasting change around the world.

Grand total of people reached by WPDI in 2025: **178,026**



Peacebuilding
115,794
beneficiaries



Livelihood
31,103
beneficiaries



Health & Wellbeing
11,835
beneficiaries



Sports
19,294
beneficiaries

Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment

Our peacebuilding approach focuses on empowering grassroots initiatives and involving local communities. We mediate conflicts, promote peace values, and teach conflict resolution skills to community members, including leaders, students, and teachers, fostering a partnership with beneficiaries to promote peace in their communities. In effect, we enable our beneficiaries to become active partners in advancing peace and fostering resilience within their communities.



PEACEBUILDING: 115,794 participants

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Community Learning Center

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Community Learning Center visitors

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5,339
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Peacebuilding in the Community

15,238
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49
Community Dialogues held

8,722
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local leaders trained

Peacebuilding in Schools

140
schools hosting WPDI programs

13,258
learners trained in Conflict Resolution Education

1,114
teachers and school leadership staff trained

284
parents and guardians trained

240
scholarship recipients

5,872
advocacy campaigns participants



Conflict Resolution Education at the Community Learning Centers

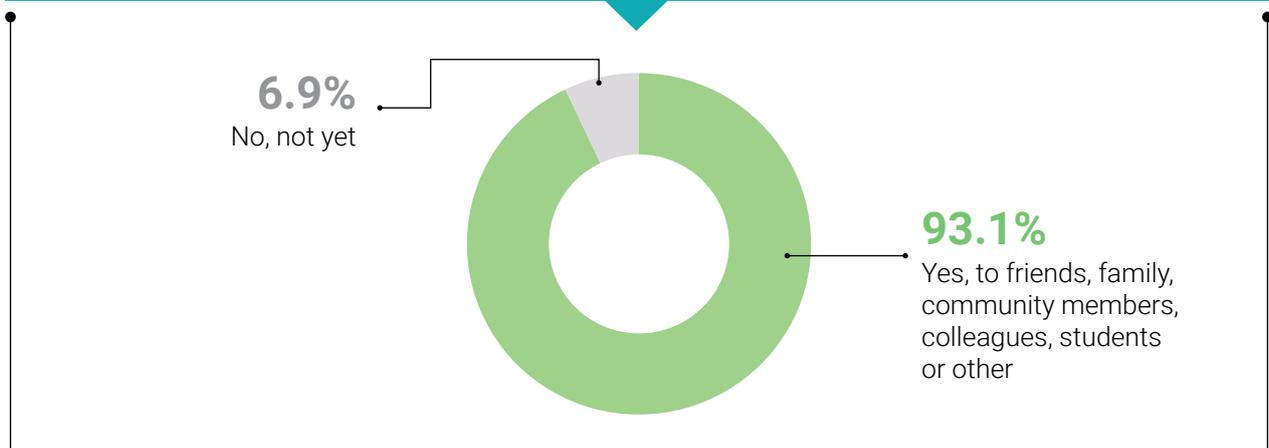
A major obstacle faced by fragile communities is precisely that they have limited or no access to such opportunities. This is one of the reasons why WPDI has a policy of establishing Community Learning Centers (CLCs) in the regions where it deploys its activities. Taught by expert trainers, the Conflict Resolution Skills program focuses on strengthening relationships within communities by addressing both individual behaviors and group dynamics.

3,065 Conflict Resolution Education trainees



The survey conducted during the year, reaching out to graduates six months after the training sessions, shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents go on to mediate conflicts, whether at home, in their community, at work, or elsewhere. Their feedback highlights how these efforts have enhanced their skills in conflict management and mediation, contributing to peaceful coexistence. Through the practical application of these learned skills, WPDI aims to cultivate a grassroots movement dedicated to fostering peace.

"I have taught my mediation skills to others since graduating" (921 reponses)



"The CRE training was highly engaging and informative. I learned about the different phases of conflict, from pre-conflict to post-conflict, and how skipping any stage can escalate situations into violence. The knowledge I gained was substantial and has transformed the way I understand and approach conflict as a peace ambassador. I am committed to promoting peace within the Lokopo Sub-County community."

Loyolo Mark,
Conflict Resolution Education graduate from
the Karamoja Sub-Region, Uganda



"I had the great pleasure of taking part in the 2025 cohort of CRE. Towards the end of the course, I surprised myself as I noticed I was using the skills I had learned, whenever I had tense discussions. I noticed how these tools allowed me to find communication pathways and that would help solve the friction point. Great course! CRE is transformative for us, for the community, it is concrete and helpful. I am very grateful for this!"

Aurélie Sers,
Conflict Resolution Education graduate from
Aubervilliers, France



Peacebuilding training in Pollsmoor Prison

The Pollsmoor Prison is a maximum security penal facility that continues to hold some of South Africa's most dangerous criminals. WPDI began its work at Pollsmoor Prison in 2024 focusing on training 50 prison officials. Following the successful training program, the prison leadership recognized the positive impact and saw the need to continue the collaboration and extend the training. In 2025, WPDI trained an additional 200 officials.



The aim is to equip correctional officers with the tools of how to keep peace and most importantly mediate conflicts thereby creating a culture of peace within the prison system. 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 classifications of peace and conflict dynamics, conflict effective communication and mediation.

Recognizing the positive impact of the training, the Area Commissioner made a special request to extend the training to include offenders in 2026.



"The difference between 'hearing' and 'active listening' is everything in this job. When an inmate is agitated, I no longer interrupt or rush to judgment. I use reflective listening techniques, paraphrasing what they said and acknowledging the emotion behind their words. This immediately calms them down because they feel genuinely heard for the first time. It turns a potential high-level incident into a manageable conversation and has been the single most effective tool for building rapport and de-escalating conflicts in my unit."

– Cynthia Davids, Pollsmoor Correctional Service Officer

"During a recent cell-block incident, the principles of peacebuilding and neutrality were crucial. Instead of reacting emotionally to the chaos, I used the structured mediation process to identify the key influencers and open a dialogue. This approach allowed us to resolve a potentially dangerous standoff without injury to staff or inmates. It proved that applying these techniques even under extreme pressure can prevent a crisis from turning into a disaster. The shift from a reactive to a proactive strategic response will be my tool moving forward. Thank You WPDI."

– Renier Frederick, Pollsmoor Correctional Service Officer

Community Dialogues for Sowing the Seeds of Peace

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 tends 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 longstanding tensions.

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.

49 Community Dialogues held in 2025 with 8,722 participants





Topics addressed during community dialogues



“The community dialogue meeting held today was timely with the community members, Kraal leaders, security providers and district leadership in attendance. The meeting, aimed at positive transformation as well as peaceful co-existence with the neighbors of Pian of Nabilatuk and Jie of Kotido will bring lasting unity. The security providers and the community members were involved in coming up with workable action points targeting to address the current vice of cattle theft and the leaders committed to support in the process of recoveries of cattle theft/raids by giving useful information to the security personnel. They also promised to engage their young people who are the perpetrators of the conflict to desist from such practices or will be handed over to the law. Thanks WPDI for facilitating the dialogue.”

Lochoro Jacob,
Local Leader from Lokopo Sub County, in the Karamoja Sub-Region of Uganda



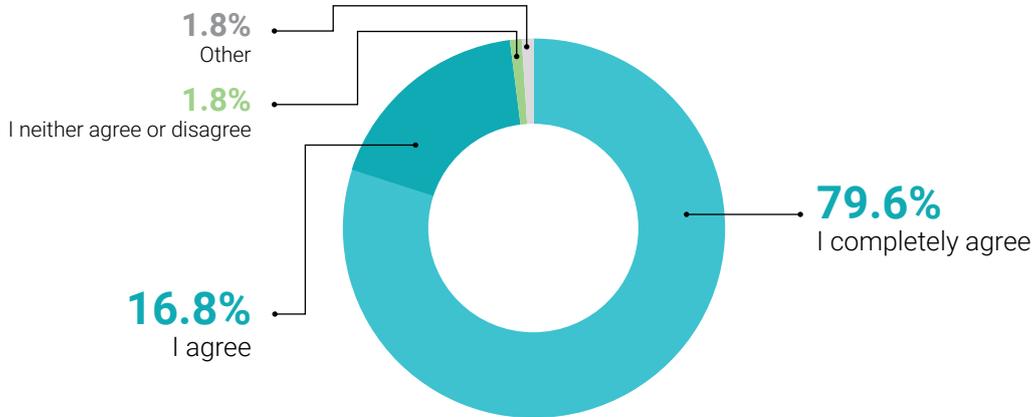
"It's rare for our community to come together like this and discuss important issues. Today I learned that by sharing our experiences and given the opportunity we can work together to make our communities better and more livable. This dialogue has shown me that we have the power to create positive change in our own neighborhoods."

Ryan Adams,
Community Member in South Africa



In a yearly survey conducted with community leaders, 96.4% agree that WPDI is making a lasting and positive impact in their community.

"WPDI is making a lasting positive impact in my community" (333 responses)



Weekly community dialogues to address conflict arising from sharp increase in refugee arrivals in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

Context

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement in Uganda experienced a significant increase in new arrivals from Sudan throughout 2025, which placed additional strain on already limited communal resources. These pressures aggravated ethnic tensions within the settlement and were accompanied by a noticeable rise in hate speech and the formation of smaller, ethnically based youth groups, early warning signs of potential conflict.

As fear grew among new arrivals and long-term residents alike, concerns about safety and rights violations increased. Local stakeholders recognized these developments as critical risk factors and promptly reported the situation to the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, and peacebuilding partners.

Response

Given this urgent context, WPDI and partners saw the need to intervene early. Weekly community dialogue meetings were convened with the purpose of directly addressing rising tensions, fostering mutual understanding, and restoring a shared sense of safety and coexistence.

Highlighted Community Dialogue

On March 6, WPDI facilitated the first community dialogue in Cluster G, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders:

- New arrivals from Sudan
- Long-term refugees
- Local leaders and elders
- Protection partners and humanitarian actors

The dialogue was intentionally open and inclusive, creating a safe space for participants to express concerns, describe personal experiences of tension and insecurity, and collectively explore the root causes of conflict indicators in the settlement. Facilitators guided the conversation toward identifying practical and community-driven solutions, emphasizing early reporting of violence, collaborative protection strategies, and shared responsibility for peaceful coexistence.

At the conclusion of the dialogue, the community, alongside WPDI and its partners, reached a set of key resolutions aimed at strengthening peace and security in Cluster G:

- Weekly Community Dialogues: Commit to ongoing weekly meetings to maintain open communication and relationship building.
- Capacity Building: Provide quarterly mediation and conflict-resolution training for community leaders.
- Early Reporting: Actively promote early reporting of tensions and incidents of violence to relevant authorities.
- Enhanced Collaboration: WPDI will work closely with the Police, UNHCR, and the Office of the Prime Minister to improve community policing efforts and joint response mechanisms.
- Joint Peacebuilding Efforts: All stakeholders agreed to work collectively to foster peaceful coexistence between new arrivals and long-term refugees.
- Monitoring: To ensure these commitments translate into lasting impact, regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be put in place to track progress and maintain accountability.



Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace

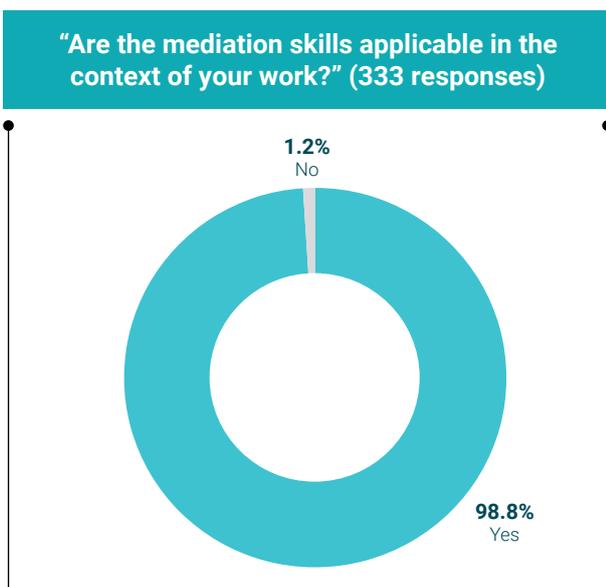
As part of its commitment to fostering sustainable peace and community resilience, WPDI provides specialized training for local community leaders, equipping them with essential mediation and conflict resolution skills. This training ensures that the progress achieved through Community Dialogues and other programs under the Youth Peacemaker Network is maintained and strengthened over time, becoming part of the grassroots culture. In 2025, WPDI trained 1,341 community leaders in Africa.



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 toolkit 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.

In our yearly survey, 99% of the community leaders surveyed said the mediation skills taught were applicable to the context of their work.



"Following the conflict resolution training facilitated by WPDI, I encountered a conflict situation in my Parish. Fortunately, I had just completed the course and acquired the knowledge and skills needed to address it. During a community baraza in my sub-county, tensions rose among participants, and the discussion became heated. Using the Win-Win conflict resolution approach, I guided the conflicting parties through a successful mediation process, ultimately helping them reach a positive agreement and resolve the conflict peacefully. My skills and efforts were recognized for fostering peace in my community. I am committed to continuing my work as a peace advocate and am grateful to WPDI for the training on peacebuilding and conflict resolution."

Nekesa Esther,
Senior Assistant Secretary, Amudat District,
South Sudan





Four-day workshop for the Terekeka County Legislative Council in South Sudan

In August, WPDI, in collaboration with Gemini Africa Enterprises and the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Local Government and Law Enforcement, conducted a four-day workshop for the Terekeka County Legislative Council. The training brought together 35 participants, including legislative council members, county executive officials, and representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and law enforcement agencies, to equip them to advance peace, good governance, and development in their communities.



The workshop focused on building participants' understanding of conflict resolution, servant leadership, human rights, and the role of legislative councils in fostering peace and stability. Topics covered in the training included conflict analysis, power dynamics, the concept of peace, the Local Government Act of 2009, and the responsibilities of council members in enhancing community representation and oversight. By engaging in interactive sessions, participants enhanced their skills and knowledge, preparing them to address challenges facing Terekeka County with renewed confidence and capacity.



"Before this training, we were unaware of our rights and responsibilities. It was painful to realize our potential. The training has enabled us to understand our roles within the community and the legislative process. We now know how to facilitate peace and development. We request that such training continue regularly to bring about positive change in our nation."

— Asunta Paul, Chairlady of the Terekeka Women's Association

Bringing Skills and Values for Peace Into Schools

WPDI facilitates the peace education and conflict resolution program tailored to learners. The peace education program provides learners with essential skills in communication, emotional regulation, and mediating conflict. Through interactive workshops and support from WPDI Youth Peacemakers, learners are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour, manage peer conflict constructively and build positive relationships. 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.

45,023 total beneficiaries of the Peace Education program in schools



Uganda

62 partner schools
 3,297 learners trained
 218 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 44 online trainees
 3,141 advocacy campaign participants
 240 scholarship recipients
 4,951 indirect beneficiaries



South Africa

40 partner schools
 8,119 learners trained
 237 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 6,000 indirect beneficiaries



South Sudan

13 partner schools
 1,211 learners trained
 202 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 5,546 indirect beneficiaries



Mexico

7 partner schools
 75 learners trained
 19 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 325 advocacy campaign participants
 368 indirect beneficiaries



United States

17 partner schools
 466 learners trained
 438 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 284 parents trained
 438 teachers, admin staff and leadership trained
 155 users of our online platform, the Virtual Center
 2,406 advocacy campaign participants
 2,406 indirect beneficiaries



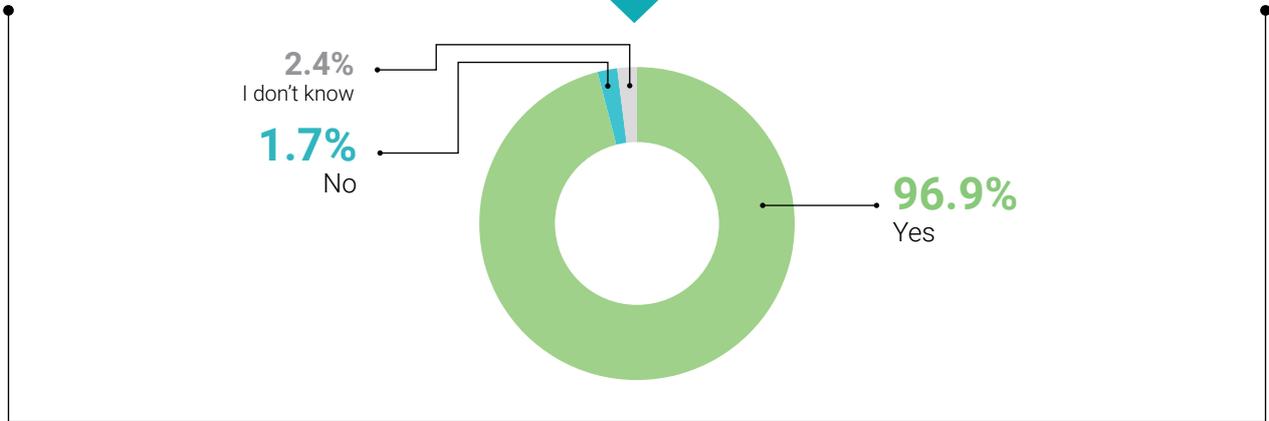
France

1 partner school
 90 learners trained
 150 indirect beneficiaries

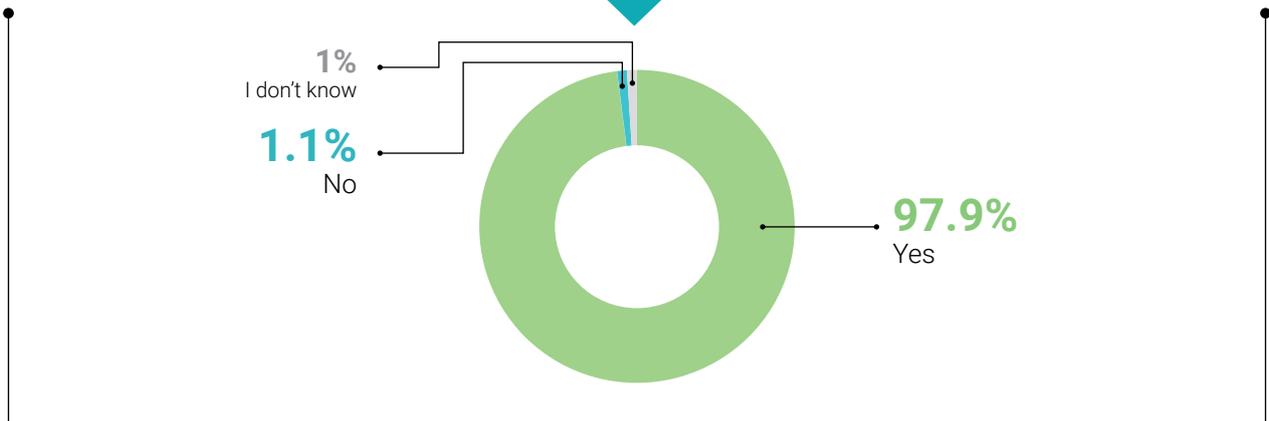


In 2025, WPDI worked with 140 schools (75 primary schools, 55 secondary schools and 10 high schools) throughout the countries in which we operate. This year, 241 individuals working in these schools and 2,215 students were surveyed to better understand the impact of the program in schools. The following responses were collected.

Students feedback on the training: Is there less fighting among students who attend this program?



Students feedback on the training: Does the program help you to be less angry with others?



"WPDI's intervention in our school went really well. We learned many new things. What stands out most for me was how to manage our emotions. I feel that I have really improved on understanding my emotions and the emotions of my friends and family. I will be more mindful of them in the future. What I have learned will improve my relationships. With my classmates, we were very attentive to the course but we also discussed it amongst ourselves. To me, that shows it had a positive impact."

Fatoumata,
Student at Jean-Pierre Timbaud high school
in Aubervilliers, France



"Many of our mediators have grown so confident in their skills that they are now able to guide on-the-spot mediations right in the classroom or out on the playground. We are beginning to see a real shift in our school culture. Students are no longer afraid to address conflicts directly, and we've created a community where they feel safe acknowledging mistakes and working together toward solutions. We are deeply grateful to WPDI for providing this incredible opportunity, by empowering our students to grow as leaders, allies, and peacemakers."

Martha Robles,
School counselor at Cresson Elementary
School in Norwalk, CA, USA



Scholarship Recipients

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.

240 girls supported through scholarships



**Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement,
Uganda**

120 girls in 'O' levels
30 girls in 'A' levels
15 girls in university levels



**Karamoja Sub-Region,
Uganda**

75 girls in 'O' and 'A' levels



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. The girls range from O-levels to undergraduate university students.

Their excellence is reflected in the strong results recorded: **an estimated 70% of the girls scored First and Second Grades in science subjects with an outstanding 85% achieving Distinction-level performance (A and B scores).**

Beyond the classroom, these achievements are translating into broader impact. The girls are emerging as role models and Peacemakers within their communities, actively applying the conflict-resolution and leadership skills they have gained. This transformation is closely linked to the program's holistic approach, which ensured timely school fee payments, consistent mentorship, and psychosocial support. These efforts were reflected in a near-perfect 98% school attendance rate and a 100% retention rate.

To ensure holistic progress, WPDI maintains a multi-tiered framework of engagement with local stakeholders and educational institutions. WPDI conducts structured termly mentorship and review meetings with school authorities at partner schools. These sessions evaluate academic performance, attendance, and welfare concerns.

Institutional collaboration is further reinforced through on-site mentorship sessions with scholarship recipients, providing academic guidance, career counseling, and psychosocial support. WPDI also maintains dialogue with broader stakeholders, including community leaders, parent representatives, and officials from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the District Education Office (DEO), ensuring interventions are culturally sensitive, aligned with national policy, and contextually responsive.

"Our partnership with WPDI is a model for effective community engagement. They consistently coordinate with our office to understand evolving needs, making their program responsive and sustainable. They strengthen the entire community structure."

Emmanuel Tryagyenda,
Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement Commandant at the Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda



"The termly reviews with WPDI are not just administrative formalities. We jointly analyze student reports, identify those needing extra help in mathematics or sciences, and devise immediate intervention strategies. This proactive approach has significantly improved overall scholar performance, benefiting the entire school."

Yasir Lagu,
Headteacher of Panyadoli Secondary
School, Uganda



"WPDI's involvement goes beyond scholarship provision. Their focus on the girls' overall well-being complements our efforts perfectly. When we raise concerns about a student's social integration or mental health, their team responds immediately, creating a true safety net."

Lestina Edina,
A Board of Governors representative at
Stella Matutina Girls' School, Uganda



The story of Nambogwe Mercy, a 23-year-old student at Kampala International University

I am Nambogwe Mercy, a 23-year-old student at Kampala International University, Western Campus, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. As I gratefully begin my third year of this four-year program, I reflect with hope and deep appreciation on the transformative two-year journey that the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative has supported me through.

Before WPDI, my future felt hopeless, like a seed planted on rocky ground. I roamed with no certainty, seeing a path to higher education as an impossible dream. Then came my rescuer, WPDI, who planted me in fertile soil and gave me hope for my academic journey. My sincere thanks go to the founders, funders, and facilitators of this initiative for your integrity and commitment to touching not only my academic life but my social well-being. WPDI, you are one in a million, and I promise to keep the candle burning until my goal is fully achieved.

Academically, I have maintained a high level of performance, as reflected in my consistent semester results. This success has been complemented by invaluable practical experience. During my internship training, I gained hands-on skills in steelwork, analyzing structural plans, and masonry. More importantly, I learned essential professional competencies such as teamwork, collaboration, critical thinking, and how to identify and solve problems directly, as well as how to effectively attend to clients. I firmly state that WPDI's support has been the essential tool in my academic journey. It is my heartfelt wish for this support to continue as I advance. I am fully committed to completing my course and returning to serve my community as a qualified civil engineer, contributing to its development and inspiring other young girls to pursue their dreams against all odds.



Training Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

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 only learn but also live - with their peers and with the adults of the community. In this sense, implementing a peace education program in schools 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 to convey values of non-violence and tolerance to other members of their communities.

This year, WPDI provided training to 1,114 teachers and school staff to build their ability to address conflict in schools.

1,114 teachers, administrative staff and leadership trained



Uganda
218



South Sudan
202



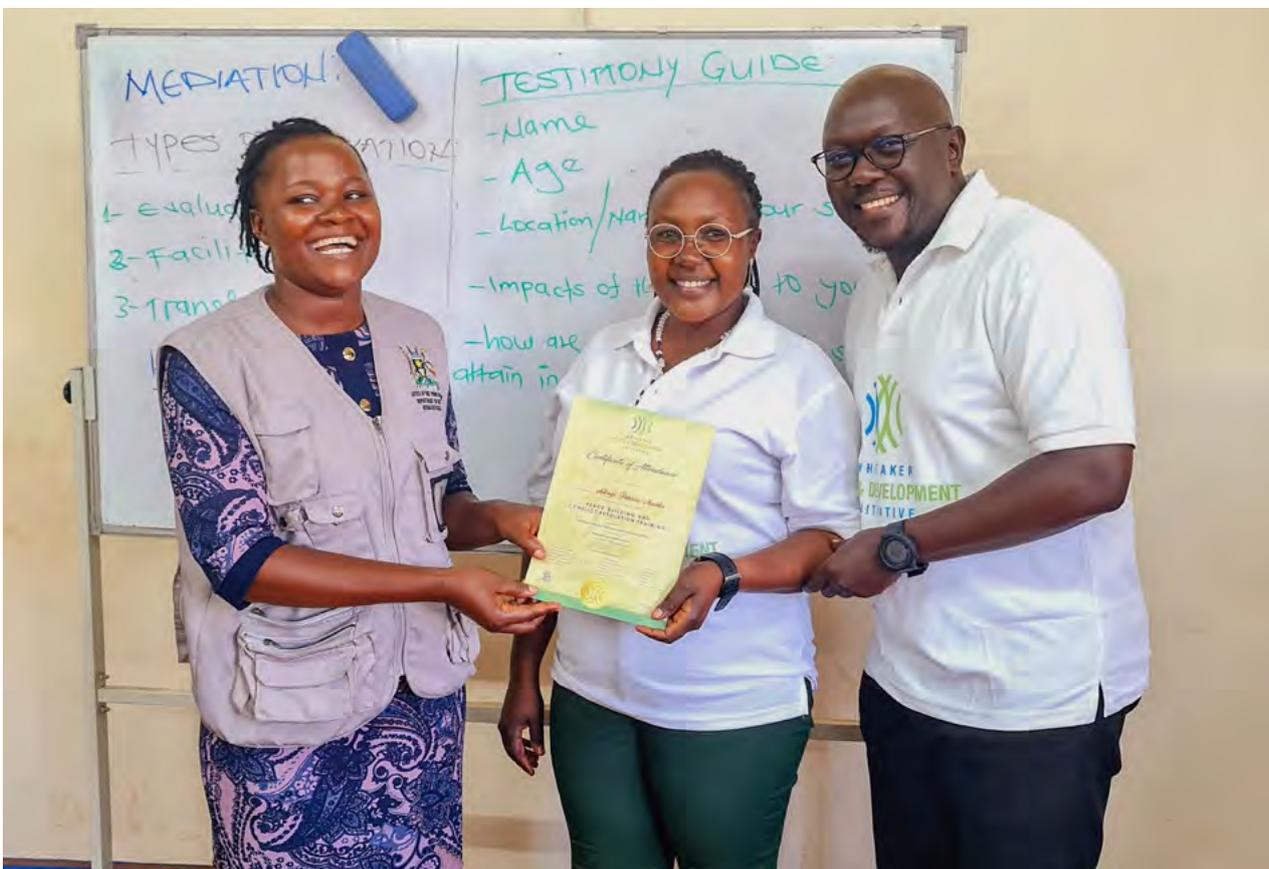
South Africa
237



Mexico
19



United States
438



Teachers trained in the Cape Flats

WPDI continues to strengthen peace education across the Cape Flats, in South Africa, through a series of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Trainings for teachers. Over two months, more than 130 educators from Lavender Hill, Gugulethu, and Langa have taken part in transformative workshops designed to help them manage classroom conflict, improve communication, and create safe, inclusive learning environments.

In communities where teachers work with students from underprivileged backgrounds and families facing socio-economic hardship, WPDI's training has become a source of both knowledge and renewal. Through interactive exercises, group discussions, and role-play, educators explored the roots of conflict and practiced strategies for prevention, de-escalation, and constructive dialogue: approaches that help students express themselves peacefully and build empathy.

A special focus was placed on teacher well-being, emphasizing that peace begins within. When educators learn to cultivate calm and resilience, they can better model these values for their learners, creating ripple effects that extend beyond the classroom.

By the end of each session, participants walked away with practical tools such as using storytelling to teach empathy or introducing "peace corners" for reflection, which integrate peace education into everyday lessons. These small but meaningful changes reinforce their role as peace ambassadors in their schools and communities.

By equipping educators with tools for emotional intelligence, conflict analysis, and communication, WPDI is helping schools across the Cape Flats become safer, more compassionate spaces for learning and growth.



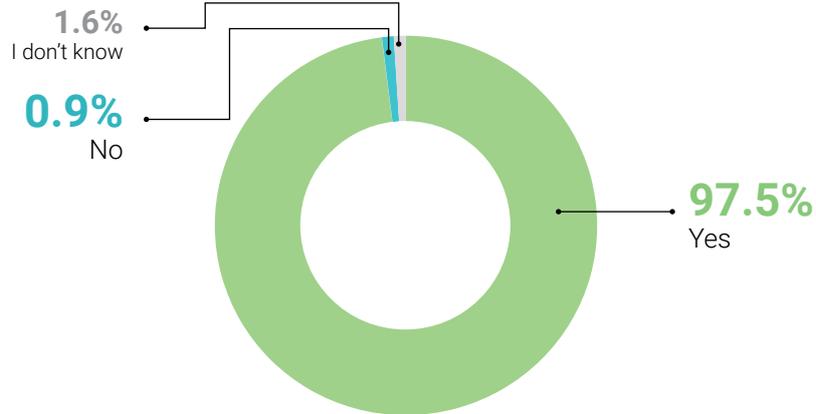
"The training was extremely insightful. It reminded me how to navigate challenges in my classroom and helped me understand the underlying causes of conflict. I will approach my learners with more empathy and constructive communication."

– Van Aswegen, Deputy Principal, Prince George Primary, Lavender Hill

"Often, as teachers, our focus is on academics and discipline, but this reminded me of the importance of peace in the school environment. I'm leaving this training with a renewed sense of hope for our school community."

– Nosphiwo Pepan, Teacher, Xolani Primary, Gugulethu

Teachers and staff feedback: Is the program a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school? (241 responses)



Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

Instilling a culture of peace in places that have experienced conflict, violence, and fragility for years requires disseminating the necessary values, attitudes, and behaviors directly at the grassroots. To this end, WPDI's advocacy campaigns aim to inspire, enable, and empower women and youth as advocates for peace and human rights. In 2025, 5,872 students and pupils participated in these events.

Through this initiative, whether in schools or in the communities around our Community Learning Centers, WPDI seeks to amplify voices on issues affecting 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.



Over 2,200 California Students Join WPDl USA for International Day of Peace Celebrations

In honor of the International Day of Peace, 2,271 students across WPDl partner schools in Southern California came together to celebrate the importance of peace. This year's theme, "Act Now for a Peaceful World," provided students with opportunities to participate in hands-on, social-emotional learning activities that foster empathy, collaboration, and leadership.

At STEAM Academy @ Burke, 50 students created pinwheels with messages of peace, while North Park Academy of the Arts engaged 60 students in art projects, heart-shaped reflections, and peer affirmations. Elementary schools also participated widely: Lakeland Elementary hosted 310 students in mindfulness exercises and chalk art, Jersey Avenue Elementary engaged 230 students in collaborative projects, and Studebaker Elementary involved nearly 300 students in creative peace activities during recess. Lake Center Middle School launched a new Gaming Club to practice empathy and teamwork year-round. Cresson Elementary involved 235 students and 18 staff in community-focused projects, while William Orr Elementary engaged 360 students in reflective peace activities. Paddison Elementary students painted 250 rocks as symbols of unity and hope, DNA Prep Academy prepared 280 lunch bags for those in need, students at Cypress High School engaged in crafts, and Switzer Learning Center students created peace journals to document reflections and messages of kindness.



"When we paint peace, we are not just decorating our rocks but bringing peace to our school. Each rock represents something special that brings joy, unity, and hope for all our school."

— A student from Paddison Elementary



Cinema for Peace

Cinema can be a powerful catalyst for reflection, inspiration, and personal growth. Our peacebuilding mandate has therefore been using film as a catalyst for positive transformation in the underprivileged communities. What young people often need is a medium that not only captures their attention but also challenges them to confront the complexities of conflict and violence in their lives, while helping them imagine that peace is possible, even in the most difficult circumstances.

5,339 Cinema for Peace participants



Uganda
1,703



South Sudan
2,940



South Africa
609



Mexico
77



France
10

"I am honored to share my gratitude for the impactful WPDI cinema for peace program. This transformative experience has profoundly strengthened bonds within my family, fostering love, empathy, and unity. Through my participation in film screenings and discussions, I have learned to embrace love, understanding, and peaceful coexistence in my family and the community. I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the facilitators in making this possible. Your work has created a ripple effect of peace and love."

Hanadi Ali,
26 year-old Sudanese refugee, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda





Screening at Kuyasa Primary School

At Kuyasa Primary School in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa, 227 pupils came together for a screening. They watched an animated film, which touched on powerful themes such as self-acceptance, resilience, emotional growth, and the importance of family and friendship. These messages resonated deeply with the group, prompting conversations about real-life challenges and how to navigate them with courage and integrity.



"I have learned many lessons from this movie today. But the most important lesson was being resilient and to never give up on myself and my dreams. I have learnt to always respect others and believe in myself. Thank you WPDl for bringing this activity to our school."

– Siyamthanda Ngu, Grade 4 student

"The movie screening has had a powerful impact, as shown in the meaningful conversations and reflections that followed. The learners were able to relate aspects of the story to their daily lives and draw lessons from there. This is something they have really looked forward to, and their feedback shows how beneficial it has been for them."

– Andisiwe Bokolo, Youth Peacemaker

"They were engaged throughout the session and their energy during discussions was vibrant and inspiring. These are the kinds of initiatives we value at our school and look forward to many more. Thank you WPDl and keep up the great work."

– Ms. Solomon, teacher at Kuyasa Primary School

Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment

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.



LIVELIHOOD: 31,103 participants

Capacity-Building

3,742
ICT
trainees

3,421
Business and
Entrepreneurship
trainees

2,313
Vulnerable
Women trained
in business

1,041
Financial
Literacy
trainees

601
Arts and
Crafts
trainees

1,094
Environment
trainees

Businesses

210
SMEs and VSLAs
created in 2025

1,140
businesses supported
by WPDI in total

255
businesses created through
VSLA group funding

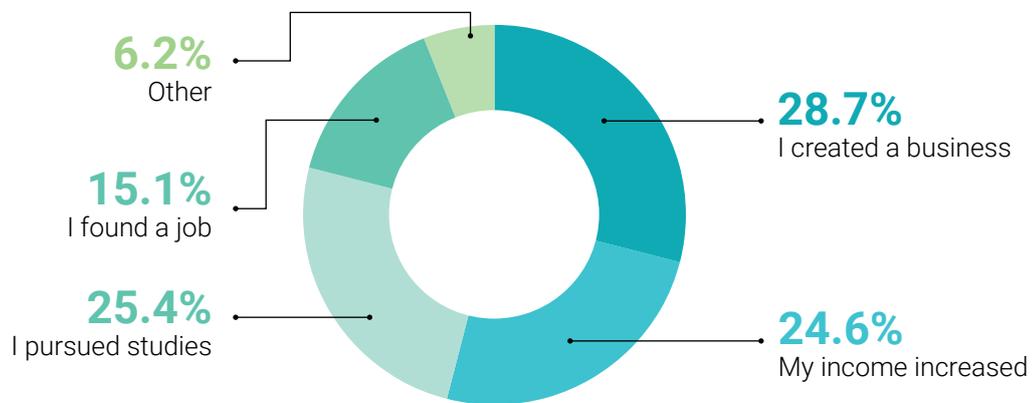
14,167
beneficiaries of
businesses



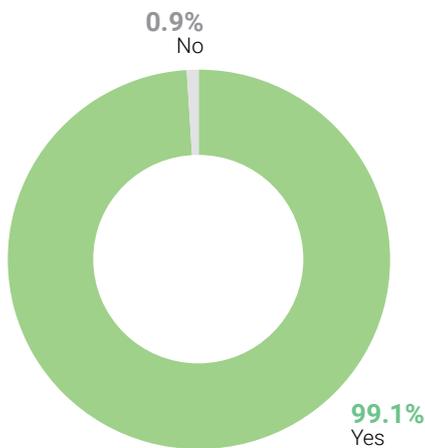
Vocational Skills for Personal and Career Development

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.

“How has the program improved your career prospects?” (3,445 responses)



“Have you been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in your personal or professional life?” (6,287 responses)



Business and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial skills do more than create livelihoods; they build resilience, enabling communities to thrive and break cycles of poverty and instability. By fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, we help lay the foundation for sustainable development, stronger social cohesion, and lasting peace. Equipping individuals with these skills promotes economic resilience while nurturing accountability and self-sufficiency, generating positive ripple effects that extend beyond participants to their families and communities.

Entrepreneurship is not only a pathway to individual income; it also drives local economic growth. Entrepreneurs introduce new products and services, respond to community needs, create jobs, and often train apprentices who gain valuable practical experience. For this reason, Business and Entrepreneurship is a core vocational track within the Business Bootcamp, which enrolled 3,421 trainees in 2025.

3,421 business and entrepreneurship trainees



Holiday Workshops in France

During the October school holidays, WPDJ France delivered a rich series of workshops designed to support children, parents, and entrepreneurs across the Seine-Saint-Denis region. These sessions blended two complementary approaches: trainings led directly by WPDJ facilitators and specialized workshops delivered by BNP Paribas and Mieux Entreprendre / La Plateforme RH 93.



WPDJ coordinated “My First Recruitment” during which participants learned how to calculate the financial cost of a first hire, integrate recruitment into their business forecasts, and navigate the responsibilities associated with this milestone. Participants described the session as “very useful” and “very clear,” with one entrepreneur sharing how the discussions helped her understand “the real responsibility behind hiring someone.” Another celebrated the opportunity to learn directly from experienced HR professionals, calling it “a rich and valuable experience.” WPDJ also offered “Introduction to Canva for Entrepreneurs.”

Supplementing these sessions, experts from our partner BNP Paribas Group delivered a comprehensive Marketing and Communication Strategy Workshop. Their marketing team worked directly with beneficiaries, guiding them through market analysis, client engagement, and strategic communication priorities. Participants were impressed by the mentorship they received, describing the BNP Paribas team as “attentive, experienced, and fully invested in helping us grow.” One entrepreneur noted that the two-hour workshop “went by far too quickly” and hoped it would be offered again.

The holiday programming also included workshops dedicated to family well-being. WPDJ facilitated a Parent-Child Dialogue Workshop, which helped families practice listening, expressing emotions, and communicating more smoothly at home. Through structured activities and guided conversations, children and parents explored how to understand each other’s needs in healthier, more empathetic ways. Parents shared how meaningful this session was. One mother said her usually shy daughter “felt safe and opened up more than she normally does,” while another explained that hearing from other families helped her “put words to experiences happening at school” and feel less alone. Children described the workshop as a moment where they could “express themselves freely,” leaving with a sense of confidence and connection.



Information and Communication Technologies

At WPDI, we believe that peacebuilding does not exclusively boil down to security-related activities, it includes equipping communities with a diverse array of skills that are needed to thrive in the modern world. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) training plays a crucial role in our programs because digital literacy is a powerful tool for empowerment, education, and social progress. Through ICT training, we aim to provide community members with essential skills that will help them access better opportunities and navigate an increasingly digital world with confidence.

In 2025, 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 needs 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. In 2025, 3,742 trainees participated in the training sessions across our Community Learning Centers.

3,742 ICT trainees



ICT Training for Children in Uganda

As part of our ongoing peacebuilding efforts in the Karamoja Sub-Region of Uganda, WPDI recently conducted an ICT training activity aimed at building the skills and knowledge of children in digital technology. The program introduced participants to computers, various applications, and essential digital tools. But the objective went beyond teaching them how to use a computer: it aimed to improve their reading, writing, and mathematical skills while also enhancing their social communication abilities.

Children were taught how to navigate a keyboard, format documents using word processors, insert tables and photos, and apply tools such as bold, italic, underline, and font size adjustments. They also learned how to save files on storage devices and differentiate between different types of computers, including laptops, desktops, and tablets. These foundational ICT skills will enhance their digital literacy and equip them with essential technical competencies, opening new career opportunities in the future.

For many participants, this was their first experience with a computer, but by the end of the training, they had already gained confidence in their newfound abilities.

"I heard about WPDI's program over the radio, and my parents encouraged me to join. Before this training, I had never used a computer, but now I can write a letter using Microsoft Word and understand how a keyboard works. I will return to school with so much knowledge, and I am grateful to WPDI for this opportunity."

– Lokee Eric, from Kambizi village in Moroto district

"My mother told me about the program and took me to register. At first, I was nervous because I had never seen a laptop before. But now, I can create folders, write letters, and save my work on a desktop. This training has inspired me to become an ICT teacher so I can help others the way my facilitator helped me."

– Faima Subra, from Champswahili Juu village



"I am a farmer, dedicated to cultivating corn and beans as well as raising poultry. During the dry season, I work as an artisan. After the training with WPDI, I can complete my assignments directly from my mobile without requiring a computer. The skills I have acquired help me not only with my school work but also in downloading images, creating and sending letters or digital designs. Throughout the course, I felt at peace, inspired, and happy. I am satisfied with this new learning experience; I have gained specialized knowledge that was previously unfamiliar. Thank you very much."

Paulina Pérez Hernández,
ICT graduate from Chiapas, Mexico



Arts and Crafts

As part of its mission to equip beneficiaries with practical skills that enhance their livelihoods, WPDI 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.

601 Arts and Crafts trainees



South Sudan

56



Uganda

534



Mexico

11



"I dropped out of school because my mother could no longer afford university fees. After that, I stayed home idle and frustrated, unable to earn any money for myself or to support my family. Life felt very hard. One day, my cousin told me about the WPDI training, so I immediately registered. I joined both the Arts & Crafts and Tailoring courses. At first, I thought tailoring was only for women, but the training completely changed my mind. I discovered I love designing and creating clothes. Our trainers constantly encouraged us to work hard and aim for self-reliance. I learned how to measure, cut, design, and sew many styles, including mermaid dresses, circle dresses, agbada, and many other fashionable garments. My dream now is to work hard, save money, and one day open my own men's African wear line. I am confident that, with the skills I have gained and continued determination, my life and my family's future will be much brighter."

Open Rwot Alfred Ceaser,
Arts and Crafts graduate, 23 years old, Acholi Sub-Region, Uganda



The Business Bootcamp

Upon successfully completing our training programs, graduates 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 the highest hurdle to entrepreneurship, especially in the areas where WPDI operate, where financial services are scarce if not nonexistent. This is what motivated WPDI to organize Business Plan Competitions (BPCs) where vocational training graduates can apply for funding 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 in which participants are trained to refine their projects and present them to a jury of experts, which includes representatives of WPDI and local partners who understand the business sector and the region. Having projects selected by a jury is effective because it boosts participants' confidence and ensures the process is fully transparent and fair, which is key to the appropriation of our programs at the grassroots level.

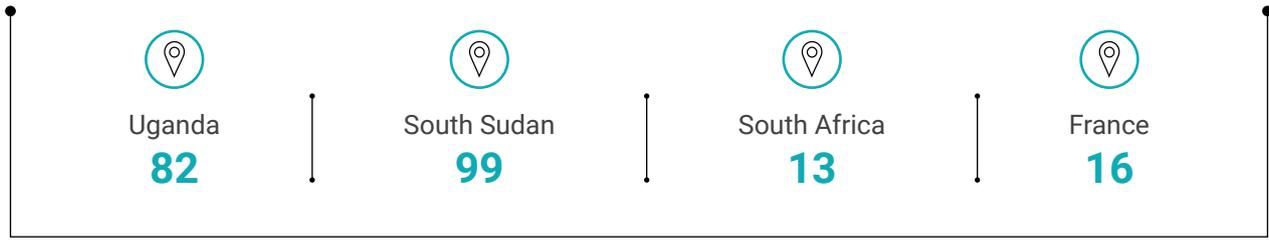
Following the identification of promising projects, the winners join our incubation platform, which helps address a lack of experience and provides strategic advice as the supported business grows.



1,140 SMEs supported by WPDI in total



210 SMEs created in 2025



4,724 founders and employees



14,167 indirect beneficiaries (families)



"I was part of the second cohort of trainees in 2025 who completed the business skills training. I am truly grateful for the training because it equipped me with essential skills in business management, financial management, record-keeping, and many other areas. Most importantly, I learned the value of self-awareness before starting any business. For a long time, I survived as a casual labourer, taking any job that could earn me money. But thanks to the knowledge I gained from WPDI, I was able to start my own business. I now manage it successfully using proper record-keeping and effective marketing strategies, which have helped increase my sales. I now earn at least 20,000 UGX per day. This income that has completely transformed my life and allows me to support myself with dignity. I sincerely thank WPDI for investing in Uganda's young generation at a time when jobs are scarce. Instead of waiting for employment, you have empowered us to create jobs for ourselves and for others in our communities."

Ayubu Flora,
Business graduate from Acholi Sub-Region, Uganda



Types of active businesses supported by WPDI



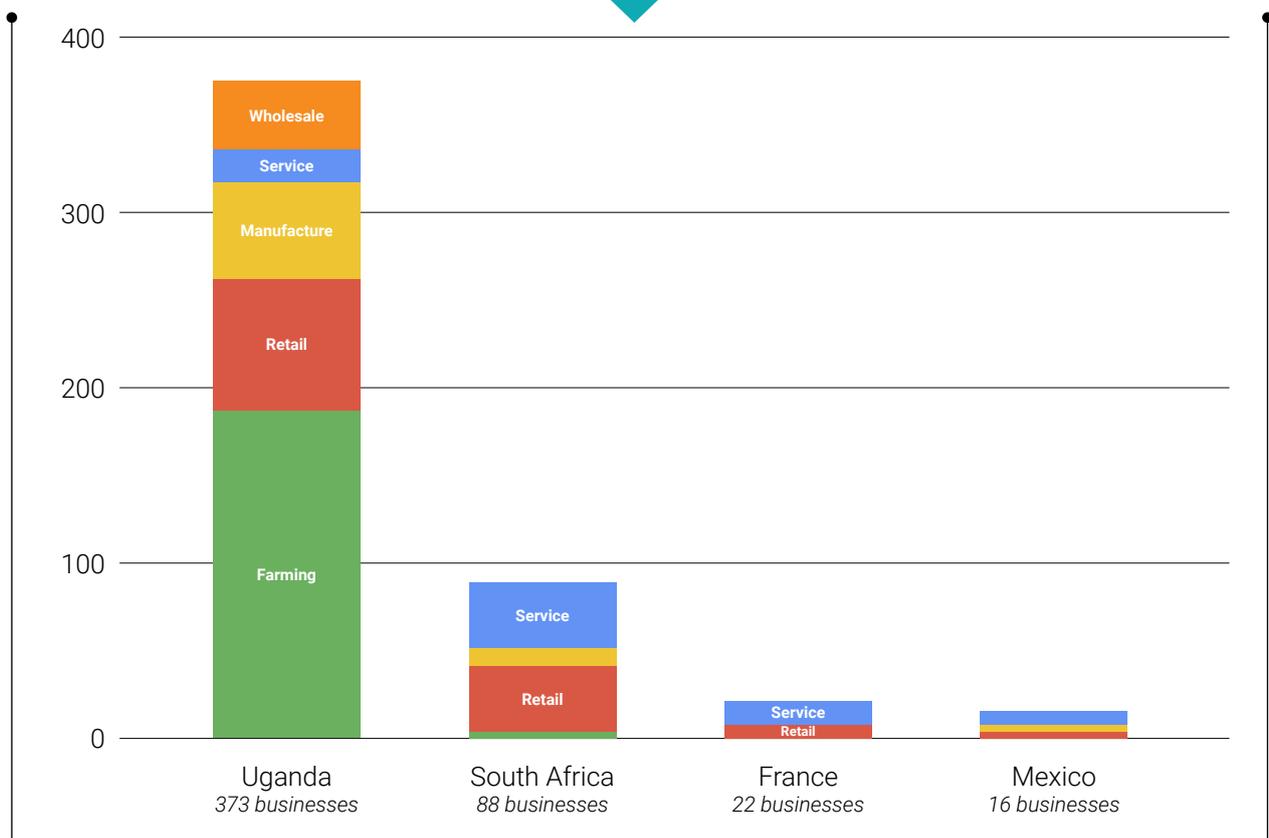
The Women's Livelihood Program

In a world where the immense potential of women for entrepreneurship is too often overlooked, WPD'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, 2,313 participants gained 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, WPD's effort aims at building a foundation for long-term stability, ensuring that they become active contributors to local economies and agents of positive change.



Types of women-led businesses supported by WPD



Success story: Alham Ben Laga, participant of the Women's Livelihood Program in Aubervilliers, France

Trained as a pattern maker, Alham worked in this profession for nearly twenty years, developing strong technical skills and substantial professional experience. However, as the sector faced increasing difficulties, she eventually found herself unable to secure new employment.

Having learned about WPDI France through her sister, who had completed the ICT program, she discovered the Community Learning Center in Aubervilliers. At the time, she already had an entrepreneurial idea focused on creating gift boxes for new mothers and their babies, and she was introduced to WPDI's entrepreneurship program.

She joined the September 2025 cohort and greatly appreciated the quality of the support provided, both through collective workshops and one-on-one mentoring sessions. While she entered the program with a strong concept, she had not yet identified all the necessary steps to successfully develop her project. Today, thanks to what she learned at WPDI, she feels fully aligned with her choice to pursue entrepreneurship and far more confident in managing her activity - selecting suppliers, calculating product costs, and identifying and reaching customers.

Most importantly, she regained self-confidence through her experience at the center. The team's kindness, attentive listening, and non-judgmental support were essential to her progress, as were the strong relationships built among participants throughout the program.



Village Savings and Loan Associations

The Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) program seeks to address local constraints by equipping women with practical skills, mentorship, and support structures that strengthen their participation in the economy. Its overarching goal is to enhance women's economic capabilities, reduce gender disparities in business performance, and contribute to peacebuilding and sustainable development.

The business training component equips participants with essential management competencies, ranging from financial decision-making and record-keeping to market research and legal compliance, which, when applied, tend

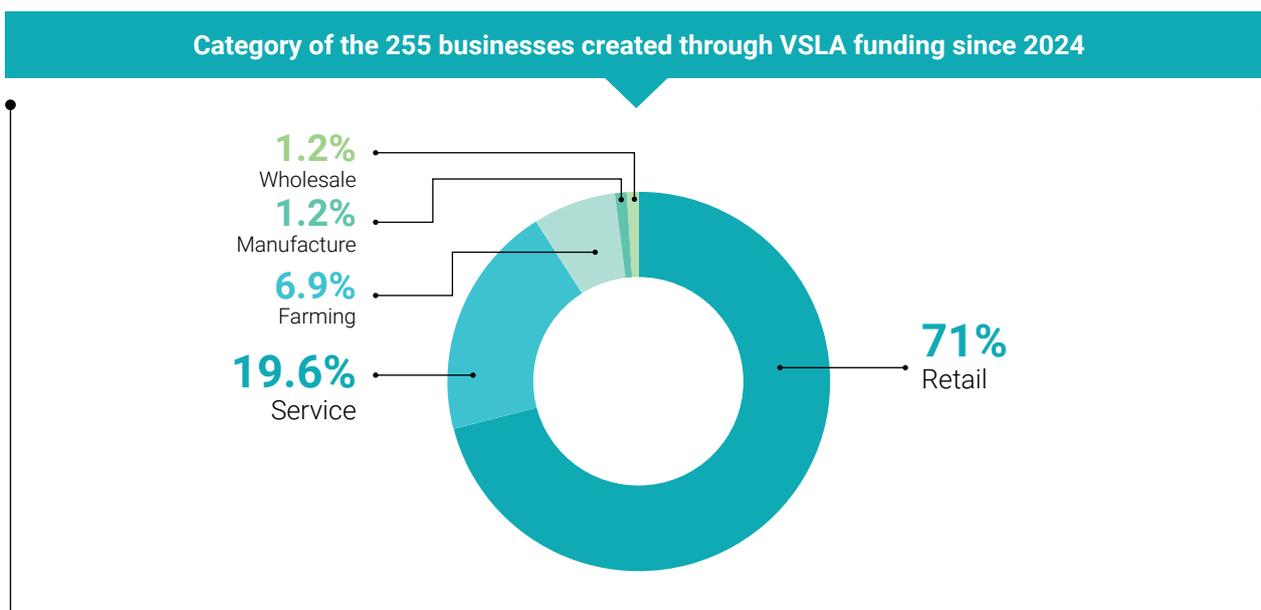


to increase income, foster self-reliance, and enable more substantial contributions to their households and communities.

Socially, VSLAs foster solidarity and mutual accountability. Monthly meetings serve not only transactional functions but also act as hubs of peer support, enabling women to navigate economic and personal challenges collectively. Improved financial literacy also supports women in making informed choices, reinforcing their economic autonomy. Simultaneously, entrepreneurship training enhances self-esteem, confidence, and leadership capabilities, encouraging women to take charge within their enterprises and social circles.

As women successfully launch and grow their businesses, they generate employment opportunities and drive local economic development, reflecting findings that women-led ventures contribute disproportionately to job creation, innovation, and community investment.

WPDI has been implementing this program in South Sudan and Uganda.



164 women form VSLA groups in support of local business creation

For the second year now, and in continued collaboration with community leaders in South Sudan, WPDI trained 164 women in Business management and Entrepreneurship. To ensure we reached out to women who are most and in need of the program, WPDI worked closely with Boma chiefs and payam leaders in the targeted areas. The Boma chiefs and Payam Leaders helped in identifying the most vulnerable women (women living in poverty, widows, survivors of GBV, single mothers and women with chronic illnesses facing challenges to meet their basic needs for treatment).

WPDI supported these 16 groups in establishing and managing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), each governed by a five-member committee: a chairperson, treasurer (box keeper), secretary (record keeper), and two money counters.

Members regularly contribute savings to the group's common fund, from which they may borrow to start or expand their businesses. Loans are repaid, typically monthly or at another mutually agreed interval, with interest, thereby rotating capital within the group.

These VSLAs have empowered vulnerable women through multiple channels. First, structured training in financial management has enabled participants to save securely and access low-interest credit, which is critical in contexts where formal banking is largely inaccessible.

Health and Well-being: Pathways to Inner Peace

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 well-being. By fostering healthier communities, we lay the foundation for social stability, enhanced productivity, and a greater sense of hope for the future.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 11,835 participants

486
Sexual and Reproductive Health individual beneficiaries

1,730
Sexual and Reproductive Health event participants

1,509
Trauma Healing individual beneficiaries

7,461
Trauma Healing event participants

649
students trained in Social and Emotional Learning



Trauma Healing Services for Improved Resilience

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. Over 9,500 people from South Africa, USA, Uganda, and South Sudan have benefitted from an activity under this pillar.

Trauma healing awareness is delivered in schools and community spaces to inform people on mental health, to challenge misconceptions, and to 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.

1,509 Trauma Healing individual beneficiaries



Uganda
1,208



South Africa
301

7,461 Trauma Healing event participants



Uganda
2,430



South Africa
1,110



United States
3,921

649 students trained in Social-Emotional Learning



Uganda
580

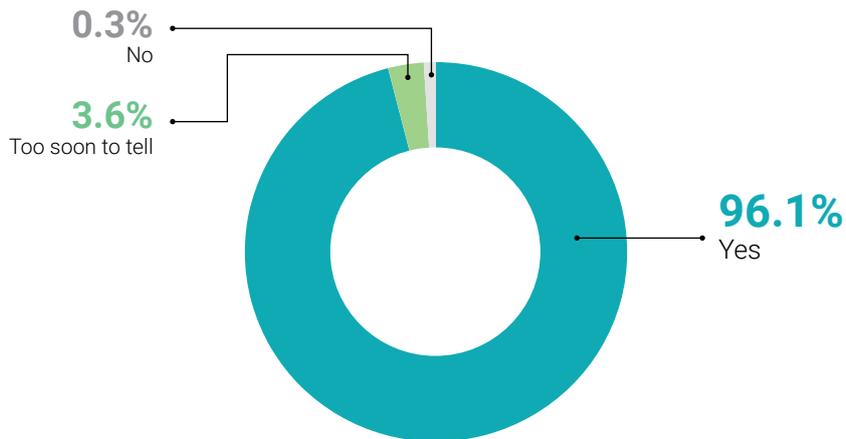


South Africa
18



United States
51

"I have a better grasp of myself and my emotions" (635 responses)



"I fled conflict and experienced significant losses including separation from my family. I struggled with depression and anxiety during resettlement in Uganda. Through the individual psychosocial support that I received at WPDI I gradually regained my emotional stability. My counselor used a culturally sensitive approach that included my cultural identity and faith into the therapy. Talking about my pain in a safe space made me feel heard and less alone. Bit by bit, I learned how to manage my fears and imagine a future for myself."

Lemia Abshadil Faujoub,
39 year-old South Sudanese refugee in
Uganda



"I came to WPDI at a time when I felt completely overwhelmed by everything happening in my life. Through the counselling sessions, I was given a safe space to speak about my trauma, my struggles with depression, and the pain I had been carrying for years. The support helped me understand my emotions and find healthier ways to cope. I no longer feel alone, and I now know where to seek help when things become difficult."

Natasha,
Trauma Healing Beneficiary from Hanover
Park, South Africa



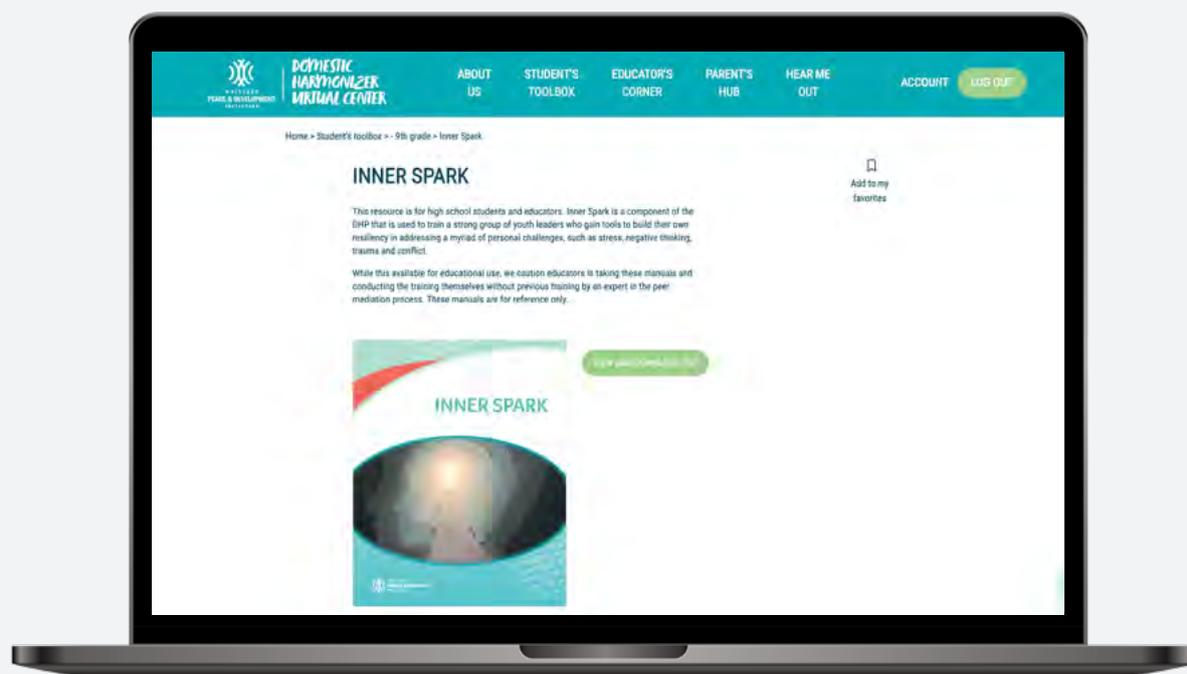
New Social-Emotional Learning Content on the Virtual Center

The Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center, expanded its offering with a free, online educational center for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and peace education resources for schools and families. This new release brings fresh tools and content designed to help students, educators, and parents strengthen their communication, problem-solving, and emotional awareness skills.

Among the most exciting updates are seven brand-new videos that explore powerful SEL concepts, including shadow work, cognitive restructuring, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and other concepts that help individuals thrive. Each video is built on the latest research in neuroplasticity and personal growth, giving students, parents, and educators tools to rewire patterns of thought and behavior. By combining engaging storytelling with practical exercises, these videos don't just share information; they empower learners to practice self-awareness, regulate emotions, and build healthier relationships.

The Virtual Center also features five new manuals, offering both updates to existing resources and entirely new materials. The peer mediation manuals have been refreshed for elementary, middle and high schools, giving clear, step-by-step guidance on the process. The Inner Spark Leadership Manual has also been improved, continuing to help youth connect with their values and strengths, and build healthier relationships with themselves and others. In addition, WPDI has created two brand new manuals: a Conflict Coaching Manual for Schools, which provides educators with a clear framework for guiding educators and students through constructive conflict resolution. Finally, we have curated a unique Transformative Social-Emotional Learning Facilitator's Guide, part of WPDI's popular Lunch 'N Learn series, which equips schools to host monthly SEL activities on various SEL themes such as creating a growth mindset and showing gratitude. Together, these resources make it easier than ever for schools to weave SEL and peacebuilding into the fabric of their communities.

For the first time, the Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center also includes a Parent's Hub. This new space is designed specifically for parents, offering accessible tools and insights on conflict resolution and SEL. From learning how to communicate more effectively with children to gaining a deeper understanding of emotional needs, the Parent's Hub ensures that families, not just classrooms, benefit from these transformative approaches.



WPDI provides psychosocial support to new refugees in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

At the request of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), WPDI was asked to step in and provide trauma healing support to families fleeing violence in Sudan. Most of the new arrivals had escaped traumatic circumstances. Arrival in the settlement brought safety from immediate danger, but it also introduced new pressures: unfamiliar surroundings, language barriers, uncertainty about the future, and the emotional weight of displacement. Without early intervention, many were at risk of sinking deeper into anxiety, depression, isolation, and family conflict.

WPDI responded by delivering structured trauma healing support to 216 refugees (114 women and 102 men) from Sudan. The approach combined individual counseling, group therapy, peer support, and community-based healing activities.

For children, WPDI established safe spaces where they could play, feel secure, and begin to process their experiences in an age-appropriate environment. For adults and youth, trained youth peacemakers and a trauma officer provided both individual and group counseling sessions. Storytelling circles and peer support groups created safe environments where participants realized they were not alone in their pain. Psychoeducation sessions helped normalize trauma reactions and equip families with practical coping strategies. Individuals showing signs of severe distress or post-traumatic stress were screened and referred for specialized care.

The impact has been significant. In their first days at the settlement, many arrivals described feeling overwhelmed, fearful, and disoriented. Today, many report feeling more grounded and better able to navigate their new environment. Families are communicating more effectively, resolving conflicts peacefully, and supporting one another. Children who once struggled to concentrate are re-engaging in school and rebuilding routines.

Group-based healing has helped restore trust and social connections fractured by conflict. As friendships and support networks reform, isolation has decreased. Early intervention has prevented minor distress from escalating into long-term mental health crises. Participants are now taking steps beyond survival—enrolling children in school, joining livelihood programs, and participating in community activities.

Importantly, the initiative has also strengthened protection outcomes. Among those who participated, reports of violence and exploitation have decreased. While risks in displacement settings remain, stronger social ties and improved emotional wellbeing have reduced vulnerability.



Sexual and Reproductive Health

WPDI is supporting access and retention of adolescent girls and young people in school through ensuring functional school health clubs that are able to create awareness and sensitization of learners on Sexual and Reproductive Health issues. As support to professional staff, our Youth Peacemakers are trained on topics that include family planning, menstrual hygiene, sexuality and gender, peer education, referral, communication and facilitation skills. They were also trained to be able to conduct outreach and referrals in their communities. Over 2,200 participants to these activities were sensitized on key issues.



486 Sexual & Reproductive Health individual beneficiaries



Uganda
356



South Sudan
100



South Africa
30

1,730 Sexual & Reproductive Health event participants

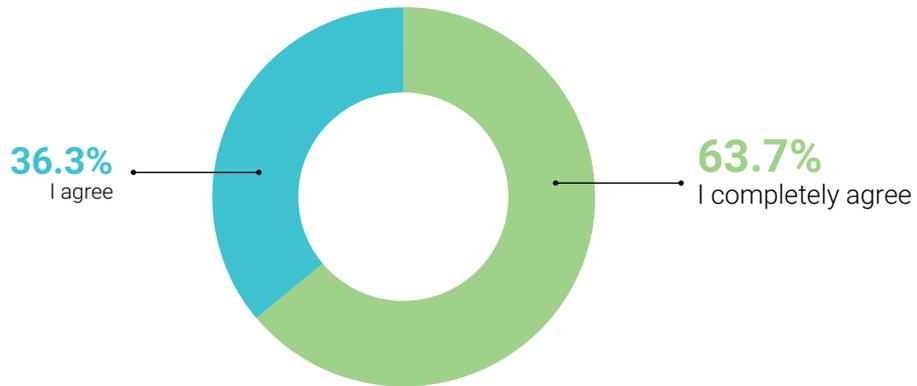


Uganda
1,480



South Africa
250

"Understanding and addressing personal issues has put me on a positive path" (636 responses)



NB: 100% of responses were positive.

"WPD's awareness events provide our learners with information they desperately need but don't always receive at home. The sessions were respectful, informative, and empowering. I noticed learners becoming more open, confident, and informed, especially around menstruation and personal boundaries."

Mrs. Jacobs,
Teacher at Abedere Primary School,
Delft, South Africa



"The HIV testing and counseling service helped me face something I had been avoiding for a long time. The counsellor was kind and patient, and I left feeling relieved, informed and more confident about looking after my health."

Female participant in the Community Empowerment Health & Wellness Career Development Day, Cape Town



PILLAR 4 Peace Through Sports



SPORTS: 19,294 participants

64
female teams
managed by WPDI



48 in Uganda
6 in South Sudan
10 in South Africa

109
male teams
managed by WPDI



83 in Uganda
16 in South Sudan
10 in South Africa

2,804
regular training
participants



2,239 in Uganda
325 in South Sudan
240 in South Africa

16,490
participants in
competition events



4,950 in Uganda
10,000 in South Sudan
1,540 in South Africa

Sports activities and events can serve as powerful platforms for fostering dialogue, promoting inclusion, and even resolving conflicts. Through the Peace Through Sports program, WPDI 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. Rooted in values such as cooperation, healthy competition, tolerance, and respect for rules, sports serve as an ideal vehicle to:

- Entertain and motivate children and youth
- Foster health in general with benefits for mental health and well-being
- Promote global citizenship education through teaching key social and civic skills



To fully activate this tremendous potential of sports, WPDI has established Peace Through Sports, a full-fledged sports strategy that features:

- Regular sports practice with certified trainers
- Awareness workshops on peace and values of tolerance and (self-)respect
- Sporting events that engage communities
- Participation in official tournaments and competitions
- Promotion of gender inclusion in and through sports
- Training and certification of coaches and referees
- Educational opportunities (scholarships and vocational training)
- Access to other WPDI programs (peace education, vocational training or trauma healing)

With these actions, the purpose of the Peace Through Sports program is to educate and train individual children, youth, girls, refugees and others so that their energy infuses the community with positive attitudes and a spirit of openness.

Peace Through Sports was first launched in 2014 for children and youth living in displacement camps in South Sudan. Recognizing its impact as a tool for peace education, the program later expanded to Uganda in 2018 and South Africa in 2023.

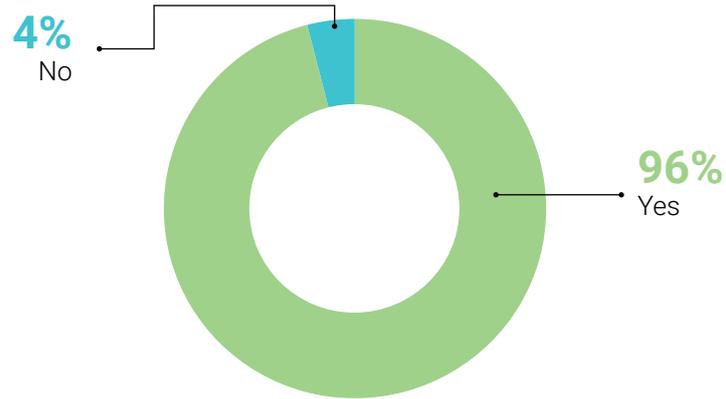
This year, WPDI continued to work with 173 basketball and soccer teams across Africa to promote the healthy practice of sport and engage in activities that improve social cohesion in the long-term. In addition to playing sports, 2,804 young team members and coaches are also exposed to CRE and ICT training to build their employability skills, some are awarded scholarships to pursue formal education. WPDI has also included trauma healing sensitization as part of the curricula to provide needed support as the youth engaged in this program have often dealt with traumatic events linked to the conflict-affected communities in which they live.



"Playing sports together helps community members get along and reduces conflict" (1,078 responses)



"Do you think that the program helps girls to assert themselves?" (1,112 responses)



WPDI Trains 32 Coaches in Torit, South Sudan, for a FIFA Certification, strengthening their skills and the development of football in the country

WPDI, in collaboration with the Swedish Postcode Foundation and the South Sudan Football Association (SSFA), conducted a 12-day D-License coaching course in Torit, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, in November as part of our Peace Through Sports program. This initiative aims to harness sports as a tool for peacebuilding while simultaneously promoting football and sports in general across the country. The comprehensive course, designed to enhance the technical capacity of the program and its participants, included 80 hours of theoretical and practical training, culminating in both written and practical exams.

The D-License certification enables coaches to train teams ranging from under-6 to under-19, equipping them with the skills needed to nurture young talent, instill team spirit, and promote fair play. Graduates of this program also gain membership in the coaching committee of the SSFA, enabling them to train grassroots teams in South Sudan and pursue further advancements in their coaching careers.

The course covered an extensive range of topics designed to provide a solid foundation for aspiring coaches. These included football fundamentals such as the history of football, theories of coaching, and basic skills for players and coaches. Team strategies were emphasized, including techniques such as dribbling, playing from the back, agility, and flexibility. Player development topics included an introduction to girls empowerment through and in football, basic motor skills, and warm-ups for under-15 and under-17 players. Specialized knowledge was provided on basic sports medicine, injury prevention, nutrition, and doping awareness. Conflict resolution training was also integrated into the program to help coaches foster unity and teamwork. Administrative skills such as logbook development, portfolio preparation, record-keeping, and assignment presentations rounded out the curriculum. Participants also received guidance on the laws of the game and technical and tactical skills to develop their teams comprehensively.

By equipping 32 coaches with D-License certifications, WPDI is actively contributing to peacebuilding and the development of sports in South Sudan. The program empowers young people with the skills to excel in football while promoting unity and teamwork, reflecting WPDI's commitment to creating sustainable and inclusive opportunities for communities across the region. As the newly certified coaches embark on their careers, they stand poised to make significant contributions to grassroots football development, peacebuilding, and youth empowerment in South Sudan and beyond.

"Through the course, I now know that a coach is more than a teacher to the players. The training has taught me that a football coach's work combines technical expertise, leadership, strategy, and personal management to guide a team toward success both on and off the field. The skills I acquired will enhance my team's performance and help me foster a positive environment for individual players. Most importantly, I learned that a coach's role includes building unity, teamwork, and resolving conflicts among players. I thank WPDI for supporting this course and the instructors for this wonderful training, as it is the first of its kind in my life."

— **Dusman Ihisa, coach-trainee**

"This training is very expensive to organize, and without WPDI, it would have been impossible to conduct. The D-License certificate is like a driving license for coaches, enabling them to train players and clubs across South Sudan. For those seeking to advance their coaching careers internationally, attending C-License and B-License courses will be essential. I encourage participants to value and pursue such training opportunities."

— **Dr. Peter James Wani, SSFA's Coaching Director and FIFA Instructor for coaching education**

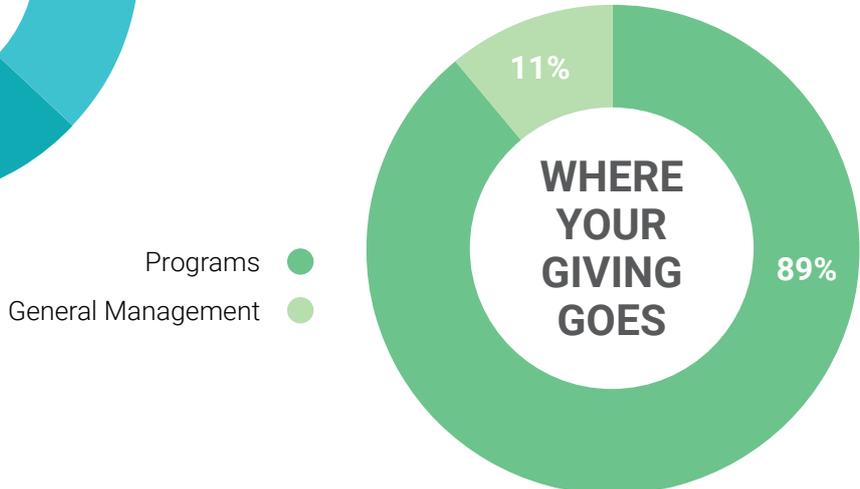
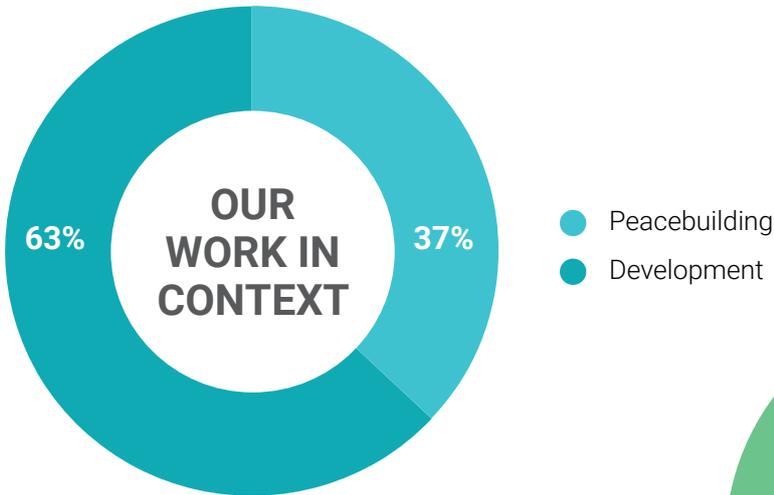
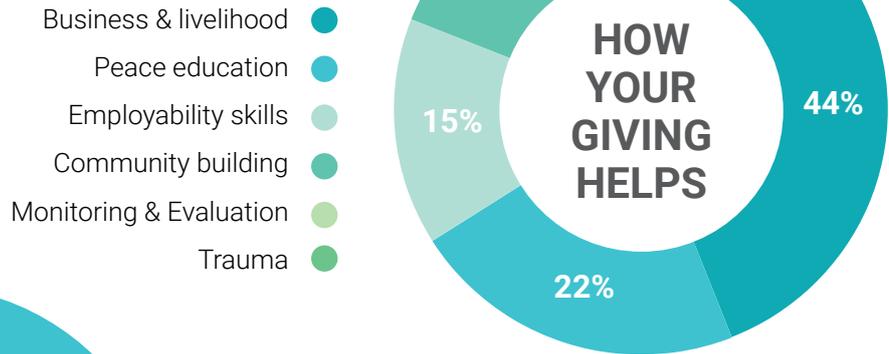
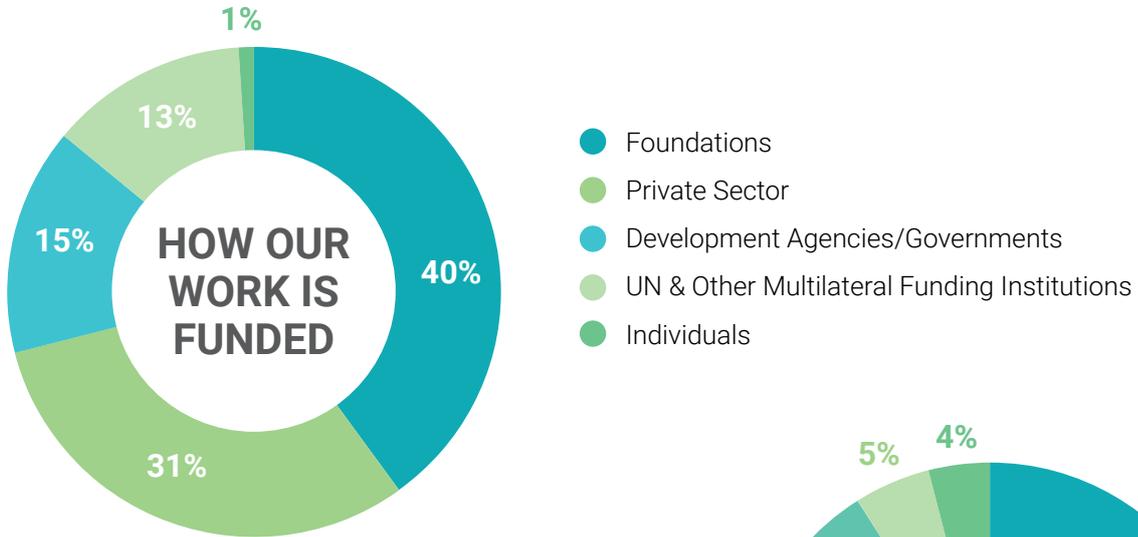
"WPDI's initiative to empower young people through sports is commendable. This project of peace through sports has transformed the mindset of youths engaged in these activities. Sports inspire, transform, and change lives: bringing unity, developing talent, and fostering a sense of one big family."

— **Dr. Salyi Lolaku Samuel, SSFA's Technical Director**



Financials

Total budget for 2025: \$6 million



Sustainable Development Goals



12 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are pursued by WPDI 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 WPDI, 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

The year 2025 confirmed that resilience is not a static condition but a collective, evolving practice, one that grows stronger when communities are equipped to shape their own pathways to peace and development. Across all of WPDl's locations, we were reminded that the most sustainable forms of progress arise when solutions are co-designed with the very people they seek to serve. Through thousands of trainings, dialogues, and community-based initiatives, we listened to youth, women, teachers, local leaders, and entrepreneurs, each of them expressing, in different ways, the same core insight: lasting change begins when people feel seen, supported, and capable.

From South Sudan to South Africa, from Chiapas to Seine-Saint-Denis, communities demonstrated that they already possess the foundations of resilience: solidarity, knowledge of local dynamics, and an unyielding desire for stability. What they often lack are the tools, platforms, and opportunities to translate these assets into durable progress. This is what our four-pillar model seeks to provide, and in 2025 we saw once again how peacebuilding, livelihoods, well-being, and sports reinforce one another in practice. When learners mediate conflicts, when women launch businesses, when youth access trauma support, when clubs and classrooms become spaces of dialogue, the social fabric strengthens from within.

Several lessons stand out. First, resilience deepens when programs integrate psychosocial well-being with economic opportunity and civic engagement. Communities repeatedly affirmed that resolving conflict, earning an income, and healing from trauma are interdependent steps toward the same goal: dignity. Second, connectivity and digital access are no longer optional; they are accelerators of inclusion, education, and entrepreneurial growth. The expansion of satellite internet to our CLCs did not simply improve access to services: it expanded horizons. Third, external evaluations and stakeholder testimonies reminded us that the WPDl approach is most effective when it is locally anchored, replicable, and able to adapt to shocks, whether they stem from violence, economic hardship, or climate pressures.

Most importantly, 2025 reinforced that resilience is co-created. WPDl's role is not to impose solutions but to accompany communities as they mobilize their own strengths. This means continuing to refine our programs based on community feedback; continuing to invest in Youth Peacemakers and local leaders; continuing to integrate climate-aware and well-being-oriented approaches; and continuing to ensure that our actions respond to aspirations expressed by beneficiaries themselves.

As WPDl crosses the milestone of 2.47 million lives reached, we know that scale has meaning only when matched with depth, trust, and long-term relevance. We overcame a difficult year; we kept our commitments; we protected what mattered most. The path ahead will demand imagination, discipline, and perseverance. But we move forward with clarity and renewed determination: empowering people so that resilience takes root, and peace becomes possible, durable, and shared.



WPDI 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. 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.



WPDI 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 WPDI 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.

WPDI 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 WPDI. 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 a 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

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



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

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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



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