Making Peace Happen: Year 10
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PEACE IS CONTAGIOUS
www.wpdi.org
For the second year in a row, WPDI’s teams, beneficiaries, and partners have had to operate under the pale of COVID-19 and I want to commend them all for their dedication and attachment to WPDI’s mandate. They did not waver as lockdowns prevented us from teaching pupils and students in their schools or as social distancing measures limited our capacity to organize business plan competitions that meant so much for so many aspiring entrepreneurs. All in all, as most organizations in the world, we can only observe that 2021 was another year of challenges met – but it was also a year of challenges overcome. However, more than the actual constraints that have weighed on our activities, what surfaces is that our teams and our partners remained committed to nurturing seeds of change across the vulnerable communities in which we operate. In this sense, COVID-19 revealed how important it was to stay the course, if only because the areas where we work had more needs than other places in the world and that failing to respond to them would worsen their future prospects. This lesson asks back to the very fundamentals of the reasons why I created WPDI, that fragility for a community or an individual amounts to a lack of resources to rebound and kick back at fate, which severely undermine their capacity to face major shocks. In this sense, when the pandemic and its ensuing constraints hit the communities where we work, the shock was not that different from those created by the crises that have crippled these places sometimes across decades because of how armed conflict, gang violence, economic disasters and social marginalization can feed off each other – with disastrous impacts on youth and women. But, this time, some of these communities could absorb a measure of shock thanks to the availability of a new resource, our Peacemakers, whose skills as community organizers and communicators were available to reinforce the response to the crisis. They have made a difference in helping their communities to “rebound and kick back at fate”. Beyond the daily results of our specific activities, this is an overall impact of our work that I view as essential because it demonstrates that such communities are not hopeless and that they can, with respectful work and patient investment, be rekindled from the inside and regain their capacity for resilience, sustainability and autonomy.
WPDI was born out of Forest Whitaker’s belief that, in order to foster peace in places trapped in cycles of violence, conflict, and fragility, people at the grassroots must be provided with resources and opportunities that will allow them to prove themselves as agents of positive change. Too often, the very people living in these places are not considered assets for transforming their communities. This is in particular the case for women and youths, who are, in many regions, disproportionately represented among the poorest and most marginalized segments of the population. Women, for instance, are often directly targeted in contexts of conflict and yet, they are rarely mobilized when it comes to mediating or preventing conflicts. This means that, while they represent half of the population, they are underrepresented in the decision circles that concern the whole community. As for youths, who often figure prominently among both the victims (e.g., abduction and rape of young women) and the perpetrators (e.g., young men enrolled in armed groups or gangs), they will mostly be treated as a problem to solve rather than a part of the solution. This means that, while 600 million young people live in areas impacted by conflict and violence, they are almost never part of peace processes, which nevertheless aim to shape the future of the community that theoretically belong to these very youths. Aiming to help vulnerable communities become more peaceful, prosperous, and resilient over the long-term, Forest Whitaker decided to turn the tables on these left behind groups and to hand them the driving wheel of change.

WPDI seeks, therefore, to empower youths and women from vulnerable communities not just as a goal but also as a strategy whereby we provide them skills and support so they can work with us to make a difference and become partners and leaders of change. Since 2012, our programs in Mexico, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United States have reached over 1.3 million people, seeding seeds of long-term peace and sustainable development. 10 years after our founding, WPDI is more determined than ever to pursue this objective. WPDI seeks, therefore, to empower youths and women from vulnerable communities not just as a goal but also as a strategy whereby we provide them skills and support so they can work with us to make a difference and become partners and leaders of change. Since 2012, our programs in Mexico, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United States have reached over 1.3 million people, seeding seeds of long-term peace and sustainable development. 10 years after our founding, WPDI is more determined than ever to pursue this objective.

Why WPDI

WPDI The Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are objectives adopted by the international community as part of the 2030 Agenda. They aim to help build peace and sustainable development by tackling some of the world’s most pressing issues, such as the elimination of extreme poverty, gender inequality, and youth exclusion.

The SDGs offer a robust platform for collaboration between governments, the business community, and civil society.

In light of his work as UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation and as the CEO and Founder of WPDI, Forest Whitaker was reappointed by Secretary-General Guterres to the SDG Advocacy Group to help raise awareness of these goals. In addition to these efforts, WPDI is also working hard to make substantive contributions toward achieving the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda.
With a mandate to generate long term results in terms of peace, education, and development in our target communities, we have in 2021 continued to ensure that vulnerable people from fragile communities are handed an opportunity for tomorrow, reaching over 100,000 beneficiaries across Mexico, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United States. In this light, our programs are conceived with the aim of providing participants with resources – mostly skills but also seed capital for income-generating projects – that they can use for and by themselves in their immediate environments. This is the reason why education and training are such an important component in our approach. We could, for instance, undertake conflict resolution education programs in 109 schools reaching around 18,000 children and adolescents whom we have equipped with skills that they can now in their schools, their neighborhoods, or even their families. Likewise, 42,000 people who participated in activities offered at our 14 Community Learning Centers have made long-term gains, in particular those who took part in the vocational trainings we offer in Information & Communications Technology, Business & Entrepreneurship, and Arts & Crafts. Testifying to these gains, surveys we conducted in South Africa, South Sudan, and Uganda among 1,376 former vocational trainees six months after their time with us revealed that 90% of them experienced positive career outcomes, with 28% pursuing studies outside of WPDI, 15% finding a job, 20% increasing their income, and 27% starting a business. With more than a quarter of them creating a business of their own, we can only feel obligated to maintain and increase our efforts. On this front, the 265 businesses have been supported by WPDI in 2021 hold, by their mere existence, a strong message, namely that, for all the difficulties that they face, these communities are ready to embark on a path of transformation. This expectation was expressed directly in the numerous Community Dialogues that our staff and youths managed to hold, often to mediate conflicts at the express request of local leaders and civil society organizations. Having local stakeholders seek our contribution to address their most complex issues is probably one of the most meaningful signs of success for WPDI in its quest to assist vulnerable communities on their path to peace and sustainability. Hoping that next year, as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, we will be back to full capacity, we can nevertheless affirm that, in 2021, we could continue to serve the future.
**Where We Work**

**Southern California**
- **2,000** beneficiaries in 2021

**Tijuana & Chiapas**
- **4,000** beneficiaries in 2021
- **35** peacemakers

**Transborder regions between Cameroon, Chad & Gabon**
- **980** peacemakers
- **22,500** beneficiaries in 2021

**Equatorias Region**
- **929** peacemakers
- **60,000** beneficiaries in 2021

**Cape Flats**
- **360** peacemakers
- **12,000** beneficiaries in 2021

Where We Work

**AT A GLANCE**

**SINCE 2017**
- **Southern California**
- **Tijuana & Chiapas**

**SINCE 2019**
- **Cape Flats**

**SINCE 2012**
- **Equatorias Region**
- **Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Karamoja Sub-Region & Acholi Sub-Region**
Key Figures 2021

- **AT A GLANCE**
- 109 SCHOOLS hosting our CRE program
- Around 18,000 PUPILS & students trained
- 42,000 DIRECT PARTICIPANTS in activities and training in our 14 CLCs
- 100,000 PEOPLE REACHED directly by WPDI activities and campaigns
- 3.975,000 LIGHT TOUCHED BENEFICIARIES from radio talk shows
- 12 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS are pursued by WPDI programs
- 265 BUSINESSES are currently supported
- 135 COMMUNITY DIALOGUES held by our Youth Peacemakers
- 1,286 COMMUNITY LEADERS trained in mediation and peacebuilding
- 1,286 COMMUNITY LEADERS trained in mediation and peacebuilding
- 44% of our beneficiaries ARE WOMEN
- 12 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS are pursued by WPDI programs
- 265 BUSINESSES are currently supported
Post-Training Survey

Throughout the year, our field offices share a survey with trainees six months after their graduation. Between 1,437 and 2,113 people responded to each question.

Program Attended

- ICT
- Peace Education
- Business
- Arts & Crafts
- Peace Education in Schools
- Other

Outcome Post-Vocational Training

- I am pursuing further studies (outside of WPDI)
- I created a business
- I found a job
- I increased my income
- None of the above

Have You Recommended this Training?

- Yes
- No

Our Local Partners Share Their Feedback

We work with a wide array of international, national, and local stakeholders. Their buy-in is instrumental for the success and sustainability of our programs. We therefore systematically collect their feedback to ensure our collaboration remains effective.

Acholi Sub-Region, Uganda

“I would like to thank WPDI for inviting me to launch and close this community leadership training and for the interaction with the leaders. I am confident that the skills shall be put in use and my office will no longer have to address as many conflicts because leaders will have handled that at the community level. I trust WPDI and their impact within our community because I have been following their key work within my district and I applaud the management for the great work.”

- Mr. Onyuk Andrew Resident District Commissioner Agago District

Chiapas, Mexico

“As the context has become more complicated and violent in recent months, we see now more than ever the importance of supporting youths. WPDI analyzes the context well and has proposed very pertinent initiatives despite the context.”

- Marina Pages, Coordinator at SIPAZ: (Servicio Internacional para La Paz)

Los Angeles, United States

“Participating in the Domestic Harmonizer program has been such a great experience for me as an educator. The program that I am really impressed with and am so glad to be a part of is the Peer Mediator Program. I love watching the students learn about the Peer Mediation process and seeing their growth from the first day of training to doing their first Peer Mediation. It is exciting to see the students’ growth in their personal skills of identifying their own unmet needs and helping their peers do the same to help resolve conflict.”

- Anh Nguyen School Counselor, Ball Jr. High School

Central Equatoria State, South Sudan

“Community dialogues that have been conducted by WPDI so far have been fruitful and have made some headway. With the help of local youth and peacemakers, conflict issues are identified in a particular area and the conflicting communities come together. Room is left for them to suggest solutions to their own local problem. This has brought peace and stability in those communities. But there is a need to follow up resolutions reached.”

- Elizeo Paul Rasu, State Ministry of Public Service

Cape Flats, South Africa

“WPDI is doing amazing work in our community and surroundings. I admire the work ethic of your young leaders.”

- Saadieqah Goliath, Bonteheuwel Joint Peace Forum
Empower people living in vulnerable and fragile areas to become our partners in helping their communities transform into more secure, productive, and sustainable places.
Before my WPDI training, I had no idea how to resolve a conflict or build peace in my community. But, using the knowledge I have received, I already have been able to resolve a conflict over a land boundary among two families in my village. I know I can do more, and I will work for peace.

Grace, a recently graduated Youth Peacemaker in Karamoja Sub-Region, Uganda.

The Youth Peacemakers trained the local youths directly in their communities in Conflict Resolution Education and Business & Entrepreneurship, with each lasting 90 hours.

After successfully completing the trainings and taking a final exam, 318 of them graduated in November 2021, in presence of representatives of our partners BNP Paribas and the RCS Group as well as our Executive Director and one of our Board Members.

These 318 young women and men are now ready to be effective peacemakers themselves. If their enthusiasm is any indicator, the local youths are well on their way to becoming effective changemakers in their communities, serving as a bright indicator for the future of communities in Cape Flats.

In summer 2021, WPDI’s cohort of 42 Youth Peacemakers in Cape Flats, all of whom were trained and graduated in 2020, successfully recruited 339 local youths from communities across Cape Town’s Cape Flats neighborhood to expand the youth-led, grassroots peace force that we are building there, to foster a culture of peace and non-violence.

Building a cohort of Youth Peacemakers begins with selecting a group of young men and women - taking into consideration diversity and gender equality - from fragile communities whom we train in collaboration with local stakeholders and institutions. We train them intensively over one year in topics including Conflict Resolution Education, Information & Communications Technology, Business & Entrepreneurship, Human Rights Education, Public Speaking, and Life Skills.

These cohorts work to spark transformative change in their communities. Each of them individually has the power to reach hundreds and thousands of people per year. They are the very agents of our strategy to build peace in places that need it most, and with the necessarily knowledge and skills, they can conduct community dialogues within the community, train pupils in schools or Community Leaders in Peace Education, or train others in how to start successful businesses.
In December, Esther and James, two Youth Peacemakers from Uganda and South Sudan, traveled to Doha, Qatar, to attend the 2021 WISE Summit. There, they shared their experience in a special session titled “South Sudan and Uganda Youth Film: Peacebuilding Through Their Eyes,” expanding on a filmmaking training that they completed, made possible by our partners, the Education Above All Foundation and the Doha Film Institute.

As a Global Youth Ambassador, Mary Valentino was asked to be a speaker at the Dubai Expo on the topic of “Girls’ Education in Emergency Settings.” At the expo, Mary - an educator at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement who joined WPDI’s Youth Peacemaker Network program there in 2017 - shared her experience as an advocate, highlighting the importance of leaving no one behind and building bridges to higher education.

At the COP26 Conference in Glasgow, Victor Santiz Garcia, one of our very talented Youth Peacemakers in Chiapas, Mexico, was invited to showcase his contribution to climate action as a speaker. The invitation served as a testament to his work supporting indigenous communities through the promotion of the environment. In his words, “Attending the COP26 Conference was an opportunity for me to learn from many different young people, all working around the world, for the environment. I met professionals who work on brilliant projects, in fields similar to mine. It has made me even more ambitious than before and has fueled my dream of contributing to community-level advancements from an international platform.”

Once they complete their training, WPDI Youth Peacemakers truly become the leading advocates of peacebuilding and positive change in their communities, whether that be through starting new businesses, hosting community dialogues to resolve conflicts, or training other young people in topics like Business & Entrepreneurship.

The results speak for themselves: Our Youth Peacemakers have resolved longstanding, violent conflicts, held hundreds of dialogues, started dozens of businesses, spoken at prominent international forums, and trained thousands of others. Their actions are remarkable, indeed.
A New Community Learning Center in Mitontic

With the center set to open in early 2022, WPDI is excited to support Victor and Jose in their promising initiative.

In the spring of 2021, two of WPDI’s Youth Peacemakers in Mexico’s Chiapas state - Victor and Jose - began efforts to open a new Community Learning Center in their state’s highlands region.

Home to mostly indigenous communities, Victor and Jose plan to provide civic and vocational training to hundreds of people per year, empowering the population with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their livelihoods.

WPDI Graduates its Largest Class of Trainees in Moroto

In December of 2021, WPDI held a graduation ceremony for the 1,213 people who completed civic and vocational trainings at our Community Learning Center in Moroto, the capital city of Uganda’s Karamoja Sub-Region.

Representing our largest cohort of trainees yet, WPDI was excited both by each graduate’s potential as well as by the impact we know the cohort will have in Karamoja, which has the lowest developmental index score out of all of Uganda’s sub-regions.

As Sarah, a 17-year-old Information & Technology course graduate told us at the ceremony, “Before the training, I didn’t even know how to turn on a computer. But now, I have new skills that will help me find a job.”

PROGRAM

Communities have better chances at peace and development when they have easy access to information and knowledge and can communicate freely.

In this light, it is striking to observe that fragile communities often lack such access.

In response, WPDI has developed a strategy to establish Community Learning Centers within the communities in which we have deployed branches of the Youth Peacemaker Network.

At present, we have 14 Community Learning Centers in South Sudan, Mexico, South Africa, and Uganda.

Managed by local professional staff that WPDI continuously trains, the centers provide free standalone courses in topics such as Conflict Resolution Education, Information & Communications Technology, Business & Entrepreneurship, and Arts & Crafts.

The Community Learning Centers also host events for the public under our Peace Through Sports and Cinema for Peace programs in addition to other cultural activities and Community Dialogues.

The Community Learning Centers also serve as platforms for partnerships with local stakeholders, which in turn, strengthens our presence and viability on the ground.
At my job in public service, I need to be able to use Microsoft Office to draft documents. I never felt comfortable doing that until now. Thank you for making this training accessible. I look forward to future trainings.

Tere, a trainee in Tijuana, Mexico

Mobilizing partners from the educational and IT worlds, we were able to re-design and transfer most our curricula to digital formats, including in the form of a comprehensive virtual center accessible online. Those improved tools, including new curricula provided by partners, will support a blended approach to learning and training that will both expand the reach of our courses and improve the quality of learning, notably for our trainings in business and entrepreneurship. But our engagement could not stop there since many of our beneficiaries reside in remote underserved areas where they cannot access online or even digital services for lack of relevant hardware. To address this challenge, we have undertaken to develop an IT Lab strategy, whereby our Community Learning Centers can be expanded to host learning stations that beneficiaries can access to take fully digital certified trainings or simply complement the courses that they take in person at the centers.

Since WPDI began working in and around the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement in 2017, residents have long expressed interest in the vocational training courses we offer at our Community Learning Center there — especially the Information & Communications Technology course, as ICT skills have become increasingly important in the 21st century economy.

Thanks to support from the Western Union Foundation, in early 2021, WPDI began building a new Information Technology lab at the center.

This new facility will host 25 training stations and will allow trainees to take e-learning courses on their own. For the first time ever, WPDI developed educational materials specially designed for digital and video learning, in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). These courses will be offered in ICT, Conflict Resolution Education, and Business & Entrepreneurship.

The IT lab aims to train 50 trainees per day, empowering hundreds of settlement residents per year with knowledge and skills that will lead to improved vocational and career opportunities.
In several countries in which WPDI operates, children—especially those living in vulnerable communities—have very few educational opportunities. With skills in and knowledge of ICT increasingly needed to thrive in the 21st century, WPDI has designed specialized courses designed to help children learn about ICT. Since their inception, thousands of young people have learned about computers and how to use the Internet, among other skills, empowering them and their futures.

“I am excited about the new course that I have just started at WPDI. They offer free computer courses. When I started this course, I knew nothing about computers or how to do the work, but our lecturer Steff is amazing. Now I know how to copy documents from the Internet and paste them where I want them to be. I also know how to do research in an accurate and effective way. I am so grateful for this opportunity. It will indeed make a difference in my life as it will now enable me to type my own CV and look for a job so I can earn money, instead of sitting at home. Now I have something to do. It is indeed an opportunity as it changes many people’s lives. I would definitely share this in my community and change someone’s life. Instead of people committing crime they could take this opportunity or any other offers from WPDI’s selection of courses and activities.

Esethu, Nyanga, South Africa, an Information & Communications Technology course trainee

ICT for Children

In several countries in which WPDI operates, children—especially those living in vulnerable communities—have very few educational opportunities. With skills in and knowledge of ICT increasingly needed to thrive in the 21st century, WPDI has designed specialized courses designed to help children learn about ICT. Since their inception, thousands of young people have learned about computers and how to use the Internet, among other skills, empowering them and their futures.
Community Dialogues

Peace cannot be achieved when there is no space for dialogue. This is a basic principle of diplomacy that is true at all levels. WPDI’s mission is to provide spaces for dialogue in all places, however remote they are or entrenched their conflicts may seem to be. The point in organizing these dialogues is to be in tune with local realities and to take all the time necessary to listen to everyone. They are conducted by our peacemakers, who, as insiders, have intimate knowledge of local situations and can gain the trust of local populations and leaders more easily than external actors.

I’m happy to have participated in a community dialogue. Our differences cannot be resolved by fighting. We just want to live in peace and harmony.

Joseph, a local chief in South Sudan’s Terekeka State

In May, WPDI Youth Peacemakers in Uganda’s Karamoja Sub-Region held a series of successful community dialogues that ended a longstanding violent conflict between two local tribes there.

The dialogues came about after the Youth Peacemakers heard from leaders in several villages that other local youths from two different tribes, the Turkana and Dodoth, were increasingly engaging in violent cattle raids. In response, our Youth Peacemakers worked closely with government officials and other key stakeholders to organize meetings and bring together members of both tribes - 185 in total. In the first dialogue meeting, members of the two tribes were invited to share their perspectives and motivations behind the longstanding conflict, and, after, the Youth Peacemakers were able to show them how they had more in common than they previously thought.

After several more constructive meetings, both tribes came together and agreed to end hostilities and live together in peace. Under the terms of the agreement - which was brokered by our Youth Peacemakers - the tribes gave up their weapons and their youths agreed to work with WPDI to learn about peacebuilding. All parties also agreed to use dialogue to resolve any future disputes. As Luka, a Moroto District official told us, “In my opinion, this dialogue was long overdue. Thanks to the Youth Peacemakers, we were able to reach out to community members and resolve insecurity in the sub-region. So many people have lost animals, property, and even family members due to this conflict, but now the conflict has been resolved.”
To help in the efforts to foster long lasting peace in their communities, WPDI’s Youth Peacemakers regularly train groups of community leaders in Conflict Resolution Education. This training is designed to help the leaders gain or improve their knowledge and skills in conflict resolution and mediation, resulting in them being able to manage conflicts they may encounter in their daily responsibilities as leaders.

In 2021, WPDI’s Youth Peacemakers in Cape Town worked hard to grow their impact on communities within Cape Flats, home to some of the most historically marginalized communities in the larger Cape Town metropolitan area.

A key aspect of their efforts included conducting trainings in Conflict Resolution Education for targeted groups of community leaders in some of the areas most conflict-impacted townships. These trainings - which reached 300 leaders over the course of the year - sought to strengthen the capacity of the trainees to address conflicts they may encounter on a daily basis, helping to understand their underlying motivations, and to successfully mediate the conflicts they encounter.

Post-training, many of the community leaders have expressed to WPDI how impactful their new knowledge and skills in conflict resolution has been. Nonzukiso, a 37-year-old community leader from Langa Township told us that “I have learned how to mediate conflicts, which I know will be useful when helping my community disentangle itself from disagreements. I fully comprehend the role I should play in the peacebuilding process.” Similarly, Reginald, a 47-year-old community leader from Langa Township spoke about how she “has learned about the importance of being impartial at all times, especially in how I identify sources of conflict.”

In the spring, WPDI launched a new initiative in Baja California designed to train incarcerated youths in the state’s prison system in Business and Peacebuilding. Over a three-month period, despite challenges posted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Mexico, WPDI managed to train 52 youths. With many of them set to be released from prison in the coming years, these new skills will give them a newfound opportunity to grow - and thrive - as they set out to rebuild their lives.

Brandon F., an incarcerated youth in Baja California said, “I like this training because it helps me prevent conflict and it taught me how to act when facing one. I have also learned how to relax through meditation. Thank you for teaching me.”
WPDI and The United States Embassy in South Sudan Build a Virtual Bridge to connect South Sudanese and American Youths

In the fall, WPDI - thanks to support from the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy in South Sudan – launched a new initiative to connect 180 students from three secondary schools in Southern California and 14 secondary schools in South Sudan’s Equatorias region.

Designed to establish a ‘virtual bridge, the “Youth Peace Bridges between South Sudan and the United States” program harnessed technology to help youths in the United States and South Sudan learn about each other and their respective countries, develop strong relationships, and forge a cultural bond while learning about perspectives on peace and conflict from each other.

Over the project’s six-month timeframe, students held regular exchanges designed to open up new perspectives and lines of thinking about topics they all encounter in their daily lives, including conflict resolution, mediation, and how to manage conflict.

Teaching Conflict Resolution Education to young people in schools is a key component of our work, as planting the seeds of peace in the minds of youths is an important aspect of building long lasting peace.

Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to education systems worldwide, we have managed to keep on-track with this important work. In South Africa’s Cape Town last year, our staff and Youth Peacemakers worked with 33 primary and secondary schools to train more than 8,000 students, while in South Sudan, we worked with 38 schools to train around 5,700 youths.

Meanwhile, in the United States, WPDI’s Domestic Harmonizer Program has taken its innovative Conflict Resolution Education-influenced curriculum to new audiences through the launch of the Domestic Harmonizer Virtual Center and educational game. Through these new platforms, the program will now reach schools, students, and the public at large across the nation.

Conflict Resolution Education in Schools

Teaching Conflict Resolution Education to young people in schools is a key component of our work, as planting the seeds of peace in the minds of youths is an important aspect of building long lasting peace.

109
PARTNER SCHOOLS

18,000
STUDENTS TRAINED

2,300 5,714 222
in Uganda in South Sudan in Mexico

8,100 1,467
in South Africa in the United States

+ 1,028 teachers trained & 300 scholarships awarded

STUDENTS TRAINED

PARTNER SCHOOLS

18,000

2,300 5,714 222
in Uganda in South Sudan in Mexico

8,100 1,467
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+ 1,028 teachers trained & 300 scholarships awarded
The Business Bootcamp is a business incubation platform that serves to promote entrepreneurship in places where opportunities are disproportionately scarce. For lasting peace to happen, communities must have the capacity to rely on endogenous forces and resources. Possessing concrete skills that can lead to a job or a business is empowering in itself; it brings self-confidence and the values necessary for maintaining a livelihood — and fostering peace. Disseminating a culture of entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses designed and managed by young people, women, and local community members at large is a key component of our work.

Over the past few years, WPDI has trained thousands of trainees and conducted dozens of Business Plan Competitions to support entrepreneurship in vulnerable communities. Currently, we support 265 businesses in various areas, especially retail, wholesale, and services.

Numbers of Businesses Supported by WPDI in 2021

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Types of Businesses Supported by WPDI

![Graph of business types supported by WPDI]

The businesses are operated by youths, vulnerable women, or community members; they can be cooperative or independent and provide the community with a new service or a new product. What is sure is that, where there is development, peace can be achieved. This is why our Business Bootcamp has become such a key component of our work.
The Weavers of Peace Project in Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon

In 2021, WPDI launched a new component of its program in the cross-border regions of Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon. WPDI is partnering with UNESCO to establish a network of 1,800 youths who will act as key players in conflict prevention and peacebuilding there, “The Weavers of Peace”. This project specifically aims to provide 160 youths with intensive training in Business & Entrepreneurship and support them as they establish cooperative social enterprise projects - the component WPDI is implementing partner for.

The project kicked-off in September with a first field visit of the implementation team to meet with local authorities and partners. In the remaining months of the year, WPDI conducted a field study to interview young people and associations in order to adapt our curriculum to the local context of the regions.

The youths will be recruited by WPDI early 2022 and trained in Business & Entrepreneurship skills over the course of three months. During that time, they will receive training about the concepts of social enterprise, how to design a business idea, stock management, basic financial knowledge, and more, ensuring that they will have the knowledge and skills required to successfully start - and maintain - their businesses. They will then gather in groups of 10 to work on their business ideas and pitch them at a Business Plan Competition to be held in the summer. The 16 winning projects will then receive financial and backstopping support from our Business Bootcamp manager.

The Women Livelihood Program

This livelihood program is designed to offer vulnerable women opportunities to develop cooperative businesses, that will help them sustain themselves and their families. The program started at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, when a delegation of women approached us, pleading for us to assist the resident women who had no resources and sometimes no formal education, some of them widows or single mothers. Many of them had ideas for small businesses but lacked not only funding but also knowledge on how to operate a viable venture. This prompted us to create a program that would first equip 285 with the skills needed to manage a business - including components of group dynamics to handle the challenges related to operate cooperatives - and, subsequently, provide them grants and backstopping to develop 19 businesses (15 women per group). The success of the program was immediate, even at the training stage, as many of the participants felt empowered by the knowledge they were receiving. This prompted us to expand the program to other locations and mainstream it in our programs for entrepreneurship and business.

750 YOUTHS were selected and are going to be trained to create 160 BUSINESSES

The Weavers of Peace Project

WPDI Empowers 224 Vulnerable Women in the Acholi Sub-Region Through Trainings in Business & Entrepreneurship Skills

In the fall, WPDI launched a new initiative in the Acholi Sub-Region designed to empower 224 women from vulnerable backgrounds there with knowledge and skills in Business & Entrepreneurship.

The trainings began in September and were led by 30 of our Youth Peacemakers in Acholi. Over the course of three months, the women learned about a variety of topics, such as how to generate business ideas, conduct market research, manage a business, and more. These fundamental skills laid the groundwork for the women to develop businesses that will generate income for themselves, their families, and provide their communities with benefits as well.

With the women now graduated from the training, they are now - in 15 groups - developing business plans in close concert with WPDI’s trainers. Taking into account their comprehensive understanding of business, enthusiasm, and determination, we are confident that each will prove to be a successful entrepreneur - and a transformational figure in their respective communities.
A Burn Victim’s Recovery: Lucia’s Story

When one of WPDI’s Youth Peacemakers met Lucia, a woman from Namalu Sub-County in the Karamoja Sub-Region, she was in a fragile mental state: She had suffered from burns on much of her lower body as a result of an accident and she did not receive medical attention.

After working with WPDI’s Trauma Healing Officer in Karamoja, Lucia began to pick herself up and reflect on her life. Although she had also suffered greatly due to her husband and children leaving her, she realized that she needed treatment. About a month later, her wounds had healed and her mental state started to show signs of improvement.

Indeed, Lucia started to display a new lease on life, telling others about how proactive she wanted to be in making improvements to her wellbeing. As she later told WPDI, “I loved the encouragement from and what I learned with WPDI. It helped me stop negative thoughts and unnecessary worries that I used to have. Right now, my heart has cooled down and I am very peaceful.”

As a community leader, attending to Gender Based Violence-related cases had become a daily and hectic task. However, since the introduction of WPDI’s Trauma Healing program in the settlement, incidents have plummeted and, families have become more peaceful and productive.

Sulaiman Abubakar, a Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement community leader

In communities that have been impacted by conflict or are otherwise vulnerable, youth empowerment can often be hampered by sexual attitudes and behaviors that negatively impact women and girls. With this in mind, WPDI disseminates information about Sexual & Reproductive Health, including information about diseases and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, to target populations. These programs, conducted in partnership with organizations like UNESCO, AMREF Health Africa, and UN Women, are popular among both men and women.

PROGRAM

Trauma Healing & Sexual Reproductive Health

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2021 Key Figures

**5,996**
TRAUMA BENEFICIARIES

**2,653**
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH TRAINEES

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2021 Key Figures

**5,996**
TRAUMA BENEFICIARIES

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SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH TRAINEES
In communities impacted by conflict, the minds of many people may be closed to ideas concerning reconciliation, tolerance, and forgiveness, among others. Cinema, however, is a medium that helps people deal with the complexities of their experiences and envision a new, brighter, more peaceful future. In this way, cinema has a remarkable ability to engage and present us with characters and stories in a way that can transform how we conceive of people and events as well as our past, present, and future.

We should watch these types of movies more often because they help us to grow up and become active citizens.

Thandiwe, a student at Intshinga Primary School, Cape Town

Filmmaking Training With The Doha Film Institute

Thanks to the support from two of WPDI’s partners, the Education Above All Foundation and the Doha Film Institute, over the summer, 27 WPDI youths received an opportunity to participate in an online training to learn about filmmaking and documentaries. Hosted by the German cinematographer Marcus Zaiser, the nine weeks of intensive training and group work culminated in the youths - in groups of seven - creating seven short documentary films that told stories about peacebuilding in their respective communities. Later in the year, in December, two of the Youths, Esther and James, were invited to the WISE Summit in Doha to talk about their experiences and to showcase their work. All seven films were screened during a special session titled “South Sudan & Uganda Youth Film: Peacebuilding Through Their Eyes”, with panelists noting how each provided a genuine testimonial of what peacebuilding looks like on the ground and all the different forms it can take to change someone’s life.

We should watch these types of movies more often because they help us to grow up and become active citizens.

Thandiwe, a student at Intshinga Primary School, Cape Town

The film making training is vital for my youth advocacy work in South Sudan... It helps me in my peacebuilding work in the community.

James, a Youth Peacemaker in South Sudan and filmmaking trainee

In 2021, our Cinema for Peace program reached 7,056 PARTICIPANTS

4,907 in Uganda
868 in South Sudan
1,010 in South Africa
271 in Mexico

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WPDI’s Peace Through Sports program aims to combine sports with peacebuilding activities. Teams established and supported by WPDI practice regularly and also engage in workshops, which focus on values like peace and tolerance or activities such as trauma healing or sexual and reproductive health. Further, through Peace Engagement Days – events that double as sporting competitions and opportunities for disseminating values conducive to peacebuilding to attending audiences – communities come together to view matches while also engaging in the fostering of peace.

Meet Esther Kide, a WPDI-Trained Soccer Player Who Recently Joined South Sudan’s National Soccer Team

“My name is Esther Kide and I am South Sudanese. Until recently, I lived at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement in Uganda. It is at the settlement where I learned how to play soccer and fight negative stereotypes about women and girls. The sports program has been an amazing place for making friends with people from other groups and tribes. The settlement hosted people from different tribes that were hostile at home and before WPDI arrived, we saw that as a bad thing. We did not speak to each other and, sometimes, there were fights. But, with the Peace Through Sports program, I started meeting with girls from other tribes and we came to know each other and became friends. This changed my perspective. I learned that I must be tolerant and open to others. I also learned to believe in myself. Thanks to WPDI, I gained knowledge and skills like how to dribble, how to score, and I also learned how to behave with others on my team. I practiced hard and, thanks to my skills, was noticed and became captain of WPDI’s female football team; last year, I was asked to join South Sudan’s Female Soccer Team as a striker.

Since I joined the national team, I have scored nearly 80 goals and have been able to travel internationally for matches. I have also been able to have an impact by confronting the belief that women and girls cannot play football and support their families. This is simply not true: There are many women who are able to play soccer and also support their families, in many countries. I want to thank WPDI for training me while I lived as a refugee at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. They helped empower me not only to play soccer but to also support women and girls. This has transformed my life, and, now, I want to help other young people find sports and create a better world for the generations to come.

Today, I can proudly testify that I am a changed person. The coaches and other supporting staffs at WPDI have a great impact in my life as a youth in the settlement. It is nice to take part in the trainings and pre-match talks held by WPDI, I participate with the youth leader of our cluster in spreading the message of peace. Through WPDI programs like peace through sports, we are able to transform the community by what we do in the community. Some of us are now peace ambassadors in our own communities and I am proud person to speak about peace to my family, friends, neighbors, and the community at large. Peace is essential for every person regardless of tribe, culture, religion, or race.

Nasradin, 25 year-old soccer player from the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda

In 2021, in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, we supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAMS</th>
<th>PLAYERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>3,200</td>
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213 FOOTBALL MATCHES
Conclusion

Despite the limitations imposed on by the pandemic, this report confirms that 2021 has been a year of progress for WPDI. Beyond the 100,000 people that we reached our target countries, we must stress that our model has continued to generate increased interest among more stakeholders. As proof of this, 2021 was devoted to laying the ground for the launch of new partnerships in new locations, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the cross-border regions of Cameroon, Chad, and Gabon, and in France. The growing recognition of our work was also illustrated in the fact that some of our youths were invited to participate on behalf of WPDI in such major global events as the Dubai World Expo, the WISE summit on innovation in education, or the 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Climate Convention. Confirming that they are our partners as much as they are our beneficiaries, the youths and the women we support are demonstrating that they have a potential for leadership that must be reckoned with. We can therefore also conclude that we have reached a turning point, when we need to change gear. This is the very spirit in which we devised and adopted our new strategy for the next decade. Building on our unique experiences of the past ten years since the creation of WPDI, we have focused on one goal: to aim higher.
Financials

Total Budget for 2021: $ 4.5 Million

- **Private Sector**: 31%
- **Foundations**: 25%
- **Governments & Development Agencies**: 17%
- **UN Organizations**: 17%
- **Individuals**: 9%

**HOW OUR WORK IS FUNDED**

- **Peacebuilding**: 83%
- **Development**: 17%

**OUR WORK IN CONTEXT**

- **Peacebuilding**: 49%
- **Development**: 51%

**HOW YOUR GIVING HELPS**

- **Community Building**: 23%
- **Employability Skills**: 34%
- **Business & Livelihood**: 31%
- **Peace Education**: 25%
- **Peace Through Sports**: 24%

**WHERE YOUR GIVING GOES**

- **Programs**: 17%
- **General Management**: 3%

WHERE YOUR GIVING GOES

- **Programs**: 83%
- **General Management**: 17%
Our Plans for the Next Decade

With over 800,000 people reached in the last five years alone and more than 1.3 million people since 2012, we have been able to help dozens of communities on their path to peace, by mobilizing children, youth and women as stakeholders who are both native to their communities and nonetheless open to new perspectives and ideas. Taking lessons from these achievements and maintaining our drive for innovation and transformation, our ambition for the coming decade is to reach over 3 million people directly and indirectly across Africa, America and Europe, building on our experience and opening new avenues for our activities.

Expanding on the lines of actions featured in this report, our programs will notably aim at the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR AMBITION FOR THE NEXT DECADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,000,000 people reached</td>
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<tr>
<td>across Africa, America and Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,000,000 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>reached through</td>
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<tr>
<td>conflict mediation</td>
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<td>and awareness campaigns</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,300,000 children,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youths and teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>reached through the CRE in school program in 3,260 primary &amp; secondary schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>12,000 Youth Peacemakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>trained as mediators,</td>
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<tr>
<td>entrepreneurs, trainers and</td>
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<tr>
<td>community organizers</td>
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<tr>
<td>260,000 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>to participate in activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>and vocational trainings</td>
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<tr>
<td>3,140 businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>generating benefits for around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Community Learning Centers</td>
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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 father, Jerry, founded the firm in 2002 with Keith Smukler. Upon graduating from the California State University at Northridge with a degree in finance, Brandon began his career in the entertainment industry working from the ground up as an agent trainee at a top Los Angeles agency. While this job was not Brandon’s calling, it allowed him a much broader understanding of the entertainment industry which has ultimately benefited his business management clients in extraordinary ways. As a result, he has a deeper and more hands-on knowledge of all aspects of the business. Brandon’s client list includes 20 - 30 entertainers, producers, and executives scattered throughout all disciplines of the entertainment business. These clients have a combined net worth in excess of $225,000,000.00. Brandon is hands-on in overseeing his client’s investments ranging from stocks and bonds; multi-family and commercial real estate; closely held corporations; and more. Brandon joined his father’s firm in 2003. His understanding of the business management industry came incredibly naturally to him, as his father learned in the practice; Brandon was promoted to partner in 2009. 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. Brandon lives in Encino, CA, with his wife and two children.

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 coordinator 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 organizations including the UN Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, Institute for Government and Amos Bursary.

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 Savi Technology, a provider of sensor technology and predictive analytics for complex supply chain needs to the U.S. Department of Defense and commercial customers and Common Energy, a U.S. clean energy service and technology provider. Dana is a founding advisor to the World Champions Rodeo Alliance, the premier for-profit U.S. rodeo organization. Until forming the Advisory Group in 2016, Dana was Managing Partner of the Washington, D.C. office of Chadbourne & Parke, a premier U.S. law firm. For several decades, Dana was a partner in Chadbourne’s corporate practice and chair of its telecom, media, and technology practice. Before that, he was a corporate partner with the law firm of O’Melveny and Myers.

Elaine Weidman-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, where among other things she headed the company’s humanitarian and disaster response program. She pioneered the concept of Technology for Good and created some of the most impactful partnerships in this field. She is on the boards of the European Sustainable Growth Acquisition Corp., Azelio AB and Sweco AB. 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 UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the Boards Impact Forum, and is a member of the International Women’s Forum. She is also the co-author of 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.

Nandita Bakhshi is the President and CEO of Bank of the West and co-CEO of BNP Paribas USA Inc. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Bank of the West and BNP Paribas USA, and is a member of Bank of the West’s and BNP Paribas USA’s Executive Management Committees. In her more than 30-year career in banking, Nandita’s leadership has been constantly recognized and she has been named on Barron’s list of the 100 Most Influential Women in U.S. finance, Forbes’ 50 Over 50 list, and American Banker’s Most Powerful Women in Banking. She makes an impact by partnering with like-minded organizations that are focused on a more equitable future through sustainability and diversity.
Our Board Members

Hans Vestberg is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Verizon, the world’s largest wireless, fiber-optic and global information networks and services company. In 2017, Hans served as Verizon’s Chief Technology Officer and President of Global Networks, responsible for developing the architecture for Verizon’s fiber-centric networks. He was appointed CEO in August 2018 and Chairman of Verizon’s Board of Directors in March 2019. Hans has transformed Verizon’s business, leading the company to be first in the world to deploy 5G home and mobile technology including the nationwide launch of 5G Ultra Wideband in 2021. Before joining Verizon, Hans was Chief Financial Officer and CEO of Ericsson, where he led the company’s transformation from its focus on hardware to software and services. Hans is a founding member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Broadband Commission for Digital Development, where he has led climate-change and digital-health initiatives. He is a board member of BlackRock, the UN Foundation, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, and is Co-Chair of the New Jersey CEO Council, a coalition of leaders from the state’s largest companies. He chairs The World Economic Forum’s EDISON Alliance for digital inclusion, which aims to impact 1 billion lives with affordable and accessible digital solutions by 2025. Born in Hudiksvall, Sweden, Hans earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Uppsala in Sweden. He is married with two children and is fluent in Swedish, English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Niclas Kjellström-Matseke is a Swedish-South African business leader with a two-decade career as a marketing-oriented CEO and international investor in Europe and Africa. He has a special focus on sustainable business, engaged in UN’s pioneering work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Board Member of the SDSN (Sustainable Development Solutions Network). Niclas was the CEO of Novamedia Nordics from 2005-2015. Novamedia/The Postcode Lottery has under Niclas’ 10 years as CEO showed tremendous growth and became the industry’s most profitable company. Niclas has also over a decade of experience investing for social impact, since Novamedia/The Postcode Lottery became the world’s third largest private donor, after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Wellcome Trust, distributing approximately $11 billion. In 2016, Niclas relocated to South Africa to build a portfolio of investments in the real estate, environmental engineering, and finance industries. 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 Babson College, USA. He also holds a degree in Economics and Social Science from Uppsala University.

Frank Cooper III is a Senior Managing Director and the Global Chief Marketing Officer of BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager with more than $9 trillion of assets-under-management. Frank leads the company’s marketing across every region of the world, where his responsibilities include building BlackRock’s brand and reputation, leading data analytics & digital transformation, designing innovative content and experiences and developing enterprise-wide strategies for purpose-driven leadership. Frank’s career spans multiple industries -- from entertainment and consumer goods to media, technology and finance. He has worked as a senior executive at two of the world’s most iconic music labels: Motown and Def Jam. He served as the Chief Marketing Officer of PepsiCo Global Beverages, as well as the Chief Marketing and Chief Creative Officer of BuzzFeed. Frank’s career has driven change and industry-wide transformation, by leveraging his deep understanding of business, culture and technology.

Frank has been lauded by Fast Company Magazine as one of the “100 Most Creative People in Business”; was a four-time recipient of Billboard Magazine’s “Power 100”; and recipient of AdColor’s coveted Legend award. He has been published in the Harvard Business Review and quoted across a wide range of business and cultural publications. He has appeared on network and cable television -- including Oprah’s “100 Black Fathers” special that aired in the summer of 2020.

Elizabeth Roscoe is Executive Director of the Western Union Foundation, a global non-profit that has donated $119 million to support education and disaster relief as pathways to a better future. With 25 years of experience as a marketer and non-profit leader, Elizabeth has focused the power of the Western Union brand behind connecting migrants and refugees to the global economy through workforce development. Elizabeth has been a driving force behind increasing the scope and reputation of the foundation through partnerships, advocacy programs, and donor stewardship. Elizabeth was previously the head of Global Marketing for Western Union Payments which moves money for non-profits, governments, small businesses, and educational institutions. Prior to this, Elizabeth oversaw marketing efforts for American Express, PepsiCo, and Nestle among other well-known brands. Born in Wales, Elizabeth has lived in the UK, Netherlands, Austria, and the USA. She has a BA and MSc from Manchester University and an international diploma from Erasmus University. She has completed the High Potentials Leadership Program through Harvard Business School Executive Education.
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 Mexico, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United States as well as Cameroon, Chad and Gabon. 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, Forest 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. In recognition of his role as artist and activist, he has been honored with the Crystal Award at the 2017 edition of the Davos World Economic Forum. In recognition of his work serving those affected by conflicts and violence, the French Government appointed him in the Order of Arts and Letters in 2013 as Knight and in 2021 as Commander. In 2022, he was awarded the International Peace Honors for his philanthropy and humanitarian service.

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 led him to closely associate with UNESCO, the UN branch 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 empower former child soldiers has also led him to actively collaborate, since 2014, with the UN office for Children and Armed Conflict including in the role as an Advocate for Children Affected by War. Forest Whitaker is also member of the Sustainable Development Goals Advocacy Group since its creation by the UN Secretary-General. Membership in this unique platform allows him to disseminate ideals of peace both on the global scene and at the grassroots, in line with his belief that: “Even a seemingly small action can cause ripples that make an enormous impact.”
Our Partners
Partnerships ensure WPDI’s ability to develop and continue its critical work. That might involve training cohorts of future peacemakers in South Sudan, empowering vulnerable communities in South Africa’s Cape Flats, supporting youth-led social businesses in Northern Uganda, helping develop self-sustaining entrepreneurial ventures in Mexico’s rural Chiapas state, or teaching conflict resolution in schools in the United States. Your commitment – large or small – will make a meaningful impact for thousands of young men and women around the world.

Contact us
1000 N. Alameda, Suite 104
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.625.0410
info@wpdi.org
www.wpdi.org

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