



# WPDI SOUTH AFRICA

2024 Annual Report

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# Introduction

In 2024, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) continued its dedicated efforts in South Africa, focusing on empowering communities and fostering resilience, particularly in the Cape Flats, an area exposed to violence, marginalization, high unemployment and poverty resulting in a chronic disenfranchisement of its residents, chiefly women and youth. Guided by its mission to promote peace and sustainable development, WPDI worked to empower women and youth as direct contributors to the resilience, security and welfare of their communities.

To this effect, we increased our efforts towards livelihood activities that provide skills and resources for individuals to improve their economic prospects, notably through our program for underprivileged women, through which we trained 162 women and helped a selection of them to establish six businesses. We have also sought to sow seeds of transformation by deepening the reach of our action in schools of Cape Town, 41 of which have joined our network and hosted peace education as well as mental wellbeing activities. In prolongment with school-based activities, we have expanded our presence in key institutions by starting a conflict resolution education program in prison. It was very well received by wardens and their administration at large, which bodes well for future interventions in this environment.

Additionally, 2024 has been marked by the rise of environmental actions, in line with the strategic recast we have undertaken in 2023. In this respect, WPDI mobilized its network of Youth Peacemakers to tackle environmental issues such as illegal dumping, organizing clean-up campaigns, and raising awareness about the health risks associated with improper waste disposal. Collaborating with local authorities and community members, WPDI addressed dumping hotspots in Sea Winds, benefiting an estimated 30% of households affected by waste mismanagement. These efforts included distributing disposal bins and advocating for stricter enforcement of waste regulations to promote sustainable practices. These activities not only provided immediate relief but also strengthened community bonds and inspired collective action. Overall, the Youth Peacemakers reached 9,800 beneficiaries, representing a third of our yearly impact in the area, totaling 29,839 beneficiaries.

WPDI also supported grassroots initiatives addressing basic needs, such as distributing food during the harsh winter season to over 260 children and families in vulnerable communities. Through its teams and its Community Learning Center (CLC) in Athlone, WPDI delivered services to the community in the form of trainings, livelihood programs, and trauma healing services, positively impacting individuals and their families and laying a foundation





for sustainable development, peace, and resilience across the communities. In partnership with NBA Africa, WPDI engaged over 240 youth and coaches through basketball clinics and tournaments designed to teach technical skills and promote values such as teamwork, tolerance, and collaboration, fostering unity among diverse communities. These sportive activities, along with other initiatives undertaken by WPDI in Cape Town, contributed to making the communities more welcoming for their members, women and youth in priority.

A key part of our success lies in the fact that these efforts were carried out in close consultation and cooperation with local stakeholders, including public and civil society organizations, whose support remains an indispensable component of our success.



# Key Achievements

**1,365**  
Community Learning Center  
(CLC) visitors

**360**  
Youth Peacemakers

**9,845**  
individuals reached by  
Peacemakers

## PEACEBUILDING

### Capacity Building

**487**  
Conflict Resolution  
Education trainees

**746**  
participants in  
Cinema for Peace

**774**  
participants in CLC  
Advocacy Campaigns

**2,007**  
total participants in  
Peacebuilding activities  
at the CLC

### Peacebuilding in Schools

**41**  
schools hosting  
WPDI programs

**8,560**  
learners  
trained

**216**  
teachers and school  
administrative staff  
trained

**171**  
people reached  
through advocacy  
campaigns in schools

**8,731**  
total participants  
in school-based  
Peacebuilding

### Peacebuilding in the Community

**9**  
Community  
Dialogues held

**592**  
participants in  
Community Dialogues

**306**  
local leaders  
trained

**898**  
total participants  
in community-level  
peacebuilding

## LIVELIHOOD

### Capacity Building

**338**  
Information and  
Communication  
Technologies (ICT)  
trainees

**499**  
Business and  
Entrepreneurship  
trainees

**162**  
Vulnerable  
Women trained in  
business

**136**  
Financial  
Literacy  
trainees

**1,135**  
total trainees  
in vocational  
courses

### Businesses

**16**  
businesses created in 2024

**114**  
businesses supported by WPDI in total

**2,416**  
beneficiaries of all businesses

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**1,096**  
participants in  
Trauma Healing  
activities

**2,300**  
students trained in  
Social-Emotional  
Learning

**514**  
individuals  
receiving trauma  
healing counseling

**5,031**  
participants  
in Sexual &  
Reproductive  
Health activities

**8,941**  
total Health  
and Wellbeing  
beneficiaries

## PEACE THROUGH SPORTS

**20**  
sports teams managed  
by WPDI

**240**  
regular training  
participants

**3,320**  
participants in  
competitions events

**3,560**  
total participants in all  
sportive activities

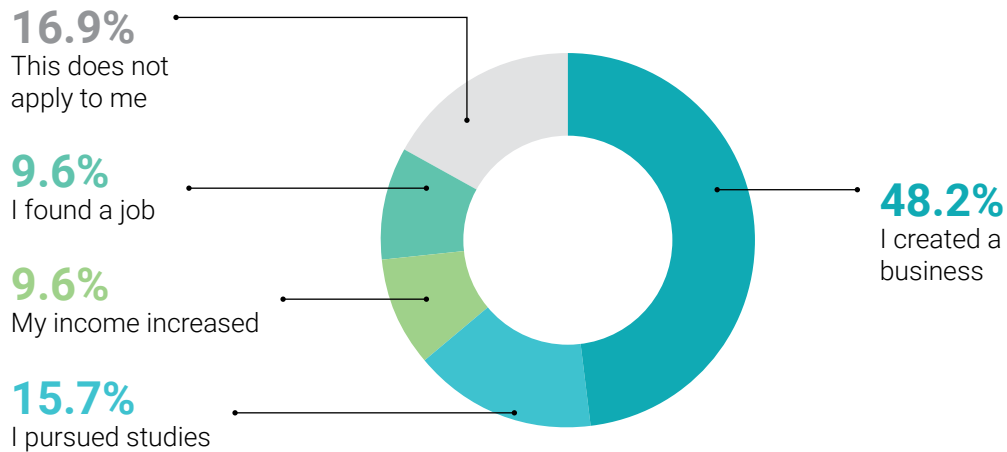
**29,839** Grand Total for people reached through the activities of WPDI in the region directly and indirectly



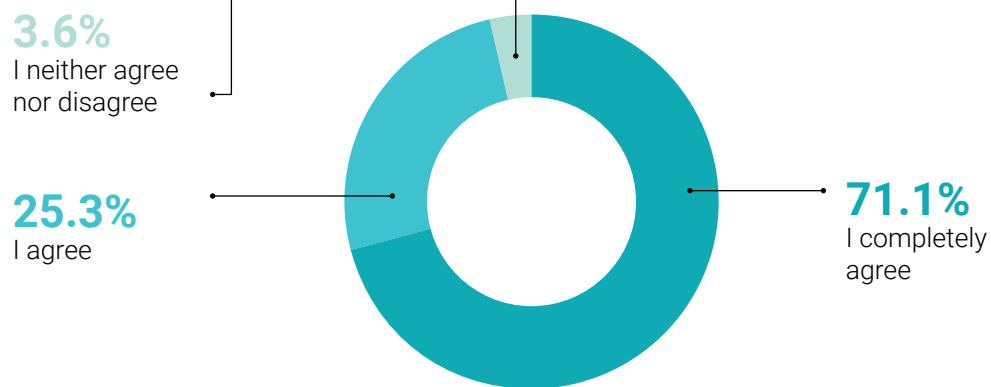
# Survey Results

Out of 83 individuals surveyed, the following responses were collected.

## Has the program improved your career prospects?

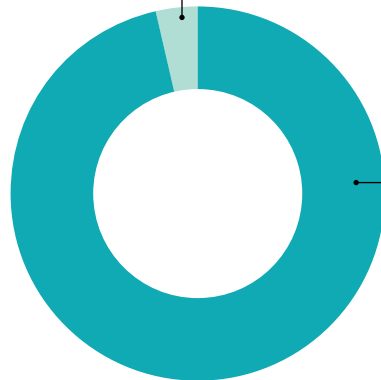


## "I have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in my personal or professional life"



### Have you ever recommended the WPDl program to other people?

3.6%  
No



96.4%  
Yes

### The peace education program of WPDl is a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school (23 responses from 2023 to 2024)

47.8%  
I agree

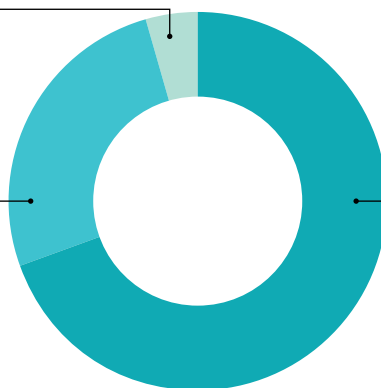


52.2%  
I completely agree

### The Peace Education program of WPDl helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school (23 responses from 2023 to 2024)

4.3%  
I disagree

26.1%  
I completely agree



69.6%  
I agree

# Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders

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

**Eddie Andrews,**  
Deputy Mayor, City of Cape Town, South Africa



"Initiatives such as WPD I have contributed to reducing violence and rebuilding trust and peace among our community members. We are confident that our collaborative efforts, combined with your innovative approaches are crucial in achieving lasting peace. Your organization's creativity, commitment and consistency have been instrumental in empowering our people with essential skills in conflict resolution, computer skills and psychosocial wellbeing to better deal with traumatic incidents we encounter regularly. We have witnessed tangible results as some of our youths are now proud owners of their own businesses and others have taken up the role of mediating conflicts within our community structures. Your contribution to this achievement has not gone unnoticed and we deeply appreciate your efforts. Regrettably violence remains a challenge in our communities. However, I am convinced that by collaborating, empowering and supporting our youth who comprise the majority of the unemployed population we can eradicate these challenges and build a brighter, more resilient and peaceful community."

**Mandy Marr,**  
Ward Councillor







# Vectors for Change



1,365

CLC  
visitors

42

Lead Youth  
Peacemakers

318

Local Youth  
Peacemakers

360

total Youth  
Peacemakers

9,845 individuals reached by Lead Peacemakers

## Youth Peacemakers and Local Youths

The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative has been empowering youths in South Africa since 2019 through the Youth Peacemakers Network. This program trains young women and men from fragile communities to act as catalysts for peace and development in their environments. WPDI's approach begins by carefully selecting promising individuals from underserved areas and providing them with a comprehensive year-long training. The core curriculum covers Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Entrepreneurship, Human Rights Education and Advocacy, and Trauma Healing to help participants find inner peace as a key step towards bringing peace in the community.

In 2024, WPDI worked with 42 Youth Peacemakers and 318 Local Youths, who live and work in the Cape Flats, therefore with an in-born understanding of what it means to live with high crime rates and

limited opportunities. Having collectively contributed directly to 32% of our impact in Cape Town, each of them has, on average, reached 234 beneficiaries. These talented young women and men are instrumental in implementing WPDI's peacebuilding and entrepreneurship programs in their communities and schools. Their initiatives include teaching CRE to students in primary and secondary schools, organizing peace-related activities, supporting WPDI-funded businesses, and conducting community dialogues to address local challenges.

Since WPDI's core belief is that peace is a skill, these Youth Peacemakers are the perfect embodiment of that vision. Equipped with skills and mentorship, they not only foster peace or drive sustainable development, they are also living examples of success learned through genuine efforts and dedication, becoming models that the children and youth of the Flats can aspire to.



"It has been a truly heartwarming experience to witness the transformative power of 'Peace Through Art'. Through their daily and weekly meetings as Peace Club Ambassadors, it is evident that these young individuals have found healing in creative activities such as painting, knitting, drawing, and coloring. The skills they have acquired will have a profound ripple effect benefiting not only themselves but also their families and communities. I am confident that they will inspire other youth to cultivate a culture of peace and self-reliance. I firmly believe that peace begins within. Thank you, WPDI for empowering me with various skills to empower other young people like me."

**Usher Mandindi,**  
WPDI Youth Peacemaker





“Facilitating the peace education program at Kuyasa Primary in Khayelitsha has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. In a community where challenges like violence and inequality are common, I’ve witnessed how teaching peacebuilding skills, like conflict resolution and active listening can inspire real hope and change. One moment that stands out for me was when a student shared how our sessions helped them resolve a conflict at home. It was a reminder that these lessons don’t just stay in the classroom, they spread out into families and the broader community. This has taught me that young people are eager to be part of the solution when they are equipped with the right tools. Seeing their growth and confidence strengthens my belief in the power of young people to create lasting peace. It’s an honor to be part of this incredible movement.”

**Andisiwe Bokolo,**  
WPDI Youth Peacemaker



“As a girl who grew up in a child-headed household, I had a very difficult childhood, we lacked even the smallest things that were needed to survive. I wanted to further my studies but due to financial constraints I couldn’t afford to do so. That’s when I was introduced to WPDI and since then I never looked back. Training CRE in schools has given so much hope to kids like me and for my community. I have always wanted to empower young people, thus WPDI has helped my dream to come true as I am able to help learners’ lives to change for the better. The training I did in Kalkfontein Primary school in 2024 has impacted a lot of learners. I see positive change in their lives, school work and social life. Challenges are there but because we strive for solutions, we always have a strategy to solve the problems due to the techniques and skills which we were trained with by WPDI. Thanks to WPDI for making me grow up, skilled and empowered, as I use similar skills to empower pupils at the school and I am enjoying training these pupils.”

**Itumeleng Monyela,**  
WPDI Youth Peacemaker



# Community Learning Center

In 2024, WPDI's Community Learning Center (CLC) continued to serve as an essential hub for education and community engagement in South Africa. The center provides a vital access point for local residents seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The center not only hosts WPDI's core programs but also offers a safe space for residents, who can use our services, including access to computers, and to external stakeholders and partner organizations, who have benefited from the center's reliable infrastructure, such as solar-powered electricity,

which has helped mitigate disruptions caused by load-shedding.

These daily services, on which we have received positive feedback, reflect WPDI's commitment to being a community-focused organization. By disseminating practical skills and fostering dialogue as well as cooperation among individuals and groups, the CLC contributes to peacebuilding and sustainable development, reinforcing the capacity of the Cape Flats communities to achieve their dreams of progress and resilience.







# Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding activities are a key pillar in fostering resilience, understanding, and harmony through community-led initiatives. Lasting peace is rooted in grassroots efforts, through which individuals and communities actively engage in addressing and resolving conflicts. Our program consequently emphasizes empowering local individuals and stakeholders, be they community leaders, civil society activists, students or educators to take on roles as peacebuilders, equipping them with conflict mediation skills, tools for advocacy, and conflict resolution training to cultivate a culture of peace.

In 2024, we have been particularly pleased to start training correctional officers with the objective of helping them foster a culture of peace within the challenging environment of prisons. Besides training courses, we have disseminated the values of peace through advocacy campaigns that address more targeted and pressing concerns of the community, such as gender-based violence.



# Peace among Community Members

**898** Total participants in community-level peacebuilding

**9**

**community  
dialogues held**

**592**

**participants  
in dialogues**

**306**

**local  
leaders trained**

## Community Dialogues

Community dialogues offer a vital platform for local communities and stakeholders to openly discuss pressing issues, voice their concerns, and collaborate on solutions. These forums enable participants to work together, within and between communities, to address challenges and develop actionable and sustainable resolutions for local issues.

In 2024, WPDI facilitated nine community dialogues in various areas within the Cape Flats including, Athlone, Dunoon, Kraaifontein and Langa, reaching 592 individuals. The dialogues focused on addressing pressing issues in Cape Flats communities, including gang violence, youth unemployment, plastic pollution, illegal dumping, school violence, and domestic violence. These initiatives fostered meaningful collaboration among community members, leaders, and organizations like WPDI to implement practical solutions. Outcomes included self-defense training,

awareness campaigns, business and peacebuilding workshops, waste management improvements, and conflict resolution programs.

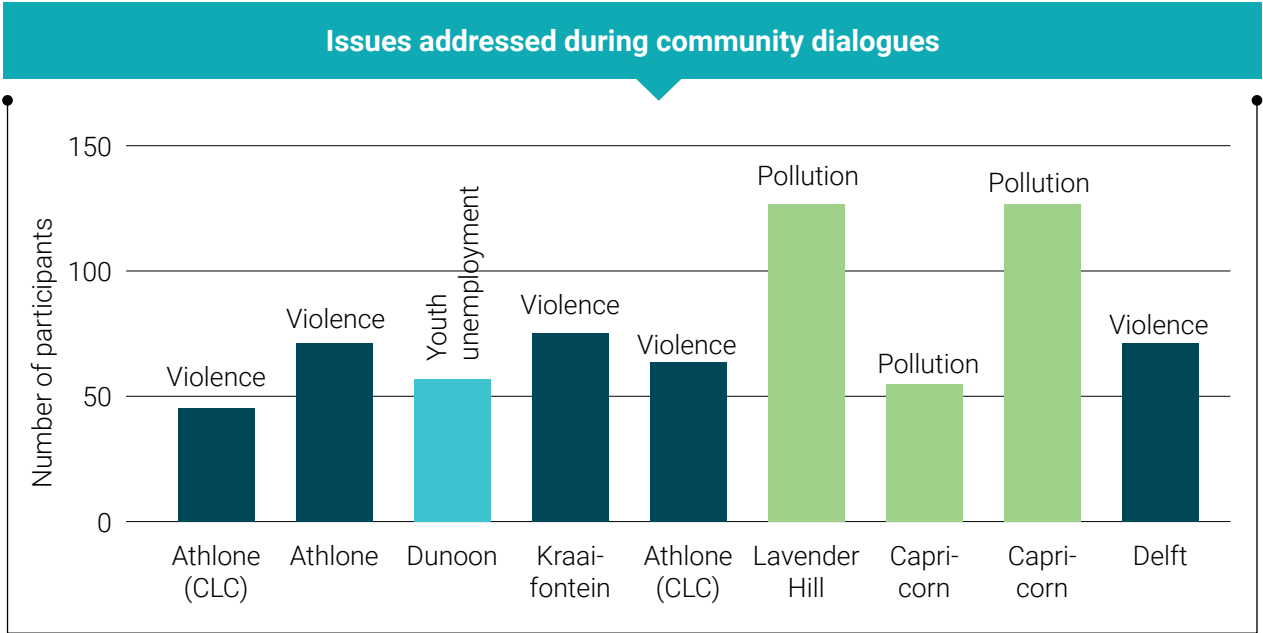
Among notable successes was a dialogue held to address youth unemployment, which was identified as a critical barrier to addressing crime in Dunoon. Community members emphasized that unemployment forces many youths to engage in criminal activities, and noted the added challenge of existing criminal records that hinder young people from finding jobs. A lack of recreational facilities and positive outlets for energy further exacerbates these destructive behaviors, such as gangsterism and drug abuse. However, the dialogue sparked a surge of hope, with participants acknowledging the importance of peacebuilding and reconciliation, as broken individuals often perpetuate cycles of harm. WPDI's facilitation encouraged the establishment



of a team to mobilize unemployed youth, connect them with WPDl programs, and upskill them with tools for personal and professional growth. Now, the community aims to provide these youths with access to resources, mentorship, and business opportunities.

In addition to the more traditional issues raised, new topics emerged such as the need to safeguard common natural resources. Community dialogues also served the local community in Lavender Hill, where illegal dumping emerged as a major concern due to its impact on health and on the environment, affecting the community's health. Residents discussed how the practice contributes to pollution,

spreading decomposed materials, toxic waste, and unpleasant odors that contaminate rivers and dams during heavy rains, threatening clean water supplies. Recognizing that everyone has a responsibility to manage waste, the community emphasized the need for collective action to safeguard the environment for future generations. As a result of the dialogue, WPDl's Youth Peacemakers committed to launching an awareness campaign in collaboration with a local recycling facility. This initiative aims to educate community members on the dangers of illegal dumping, promote proper waste disposal practices, and encourage participation in authorized waste collection services. A follow-up dialogue scheduled for 2025 will monitor the progress of these efforts.





"Our youth are facing a number of challenges, especially unemployment. Having nothing to do has pushed some of our young girls in resorting to sex work and engaging in transactional relationships, which at times leave them vulnerable to gender-based violence, or the acquisition of life-threatening STIs, some turn to crime to survive, while others seek comfort in the abuse of alcohol and other substances. We are so grateful for organizations like WPDI that seek to empower our youth despite their past. Thank you WPDI for leading this dialogue and for giving our youth a second chance to better their future. We are taking it upon ourselves as leaders to ensure that they are involved in all the programs that you offer."

**Courtesy Pieters,**  
Street Committee Member in Dunoon



*"[Reflecting on self-defence training as a resolution of a dialogue addressing gender-based violence]* While we may not always feel safe and secure in our communities, learning self-defence can be a game changer. It will give us the ability to not only defend ourselves, but also to feel more in control of our own safety. Thank you WPDI for organizing this session for women. I am excited to start and also want my kids to be part of these classes as well because they are also vulnerable and this is getting worse in our communities."

**Fredeline Jantjies,**  
Community Police Forum Member





## Empowering Women Against Fear: A Community's Fight Against Kidnappings in the Cape Flats

*"I can now walk through my community with my head held high,  
and feeling better equipped to handle difficult situations."*

Kidnappings continue to plague many communities in the Cape Flats. This alarming surge has prompted women from various areas to reach out to one of our Youth Peacemakers to organize a dialogue with local stakeholders including the police, to discuss the issue and find ways to protect themselves. Many of these women live in constant fear after witnessing loved ones being kidnapped.

This has become a national crisis in South Africa, as many cases go unreported due to the fear of victim intimidation. After careful deliberation, it became clear that women and children are increasingly becoming targets of kidnappings. The motivations behind these kidnappings vary from financial gain, drugs, feuds and in some cases the use of human body parts for muthi (traditional medicine). While there have been arrests, the release of some suspects on bail is a major concern and generates an atmosphere of general anguish and diffidence.

As a solution, the women agreed to take self-defense classes. A class was therefore organized to train them on what to look out for. As a result, they feel more confident and have enrolled their children in self-defense classes, finding it empowering and anxiety-reducing. Currently, we have 35 young people registered to start the training in 2025.

### **Keanu Smith, WPDI Peacemaker, Shares his feedback as Coordinator of the Peace Dialogue**

"I felt the need to empower women through self-defense, especially after my own experience. I was kidnapped right in front of my house, and I was lucky to survive. If I had known how to communicate effectively in dangerous situations, I might have been able to escape. It's unfair that women constantly live in fear. I'm excited to continue with this initiative because it has boosted my confidence, and I can now walk through my community with my head held high and feeling better equipped to handle difficult situations. I thank WPDI for supporting women and working tirelessly to amplify our voices. I believe that if this initiative has worked for my community, it can work for others as well."

### **Marcus Ackermanns, Local Community Leader, Shares his Experience**

"As community leaders, we constantly face challenges. Sometimes, we struggle to serve our communities due to a lack of resources, or we encounter long wait times for services. It's especially disheartening that women and young girls are often the ones who suffer most from these challenges. Thankfully, WPDI is here to empower our women. These types of services are rare and expensive, so we're incredibly grateful for WPDI. We have already received numerous requests from women who want to come to your facility for training. Many women have shared how these programs have helped them not only physically but emotionally as well. Thank you, WPDI."



## Community Leaders Training

Organic to WPDl's theory of change is the notion that training, mentoring, and empowering community leaders is strategic to ensure that the values, attitudes and behaviors that we promote live on in the community beyond our intervention. Transforming communities involves expanding the scope of tools available to community leaders for addressing conflict and instability. These sessions equip leaders with the knowledge and skills needed

to foster peace, mediate conflicts effectively, and prevent the resurgence of conflict or violence.

In 2024, WPDl conducted training sessions for over 300 community leaders across the Cape Flats, in locations such as Atlantis, Kuilsriver, Manenberg, Pollsmoor, and Kraaifontein, focusing on topics including peace and conflict understanding, conflict analysis, mediation practices, communication, active listening, and negotiation techniques.



## Training at Pollsmoor Prison

The Pollsmoor prison is a maximum security penal facility that continues to hold some of South Africa's most dangerous criminals. WPDl began working with correctional officers in this prison this year. However, WPDl has expertise working with prison staff and youth in detention centers in Uganda and Mexico. As these programs proved to be successful, WPDl expanded this initiative to South Africa.

The initiative aims to equip correctional officers with the tools to mediate conflicts, fostering a culture of peace within the prison system. In 2024, WPDl conducted a training program for 50 prison officials equipping them with essential tools and strategies to manage conflict and instability using nonviolent methods in their daily work. Given the inherent

challenges of confined environments it is crucial that officials are equipped to effectively interact and mediate conflicts on a daily basis.

The training covered key topics including understanding peace and conflict, conflict classifications and dynamics, effective communication and mediation. Upon completion of the program, the participants shared how impactful and life-changing the training has been, expressing their commitment to transforming the prison environment into a more peaceful and habitable space in the future. The prison's leadership has requested the continuation of WPDl's program in 2025. Therefore WPDl will provide training to inmates and continue to work with correctional officers.

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

**Shannon Flandorp,**  
Pollsmoor Correctional Service Official



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

**Matwell Saunders,**  
Pollsmoor Correctional Service Official





# Conflict Resolution Education

## Creating Access to Skills at the Community Learning Center

**487** Conflict Resolution Education trainees

WPDI provides free conflict resolution education programs through its Community Learning Center (CLC). These programs are specifically designed to meet the needs of local residents, with content created by WPDI and adapted by trained local teams to ensure that it is relatable and easy to understand for participants.

In 2024, WPDI conducted six trainings from February to November across the Cape Flats, including Atlantis,

Kuilsriver, Gugulethu, Langa, and Athlone, reaching 487 people. These sessions covered a comprehensive range of topics, including understanding peace and conflict, mediation practices, communication and active listening, human rights and identity, emotions, and negotiation, equipping participants with the skills necessary to foster peace and manage disputes effectively within their communities.



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

**Daylonn Dirks,**  
Conflict Resolution Education Trainee





"These days, it's hard to find free training, especially in our communities where most people are unemployed. Thank you WPDI for choosing my community. This course has definitely made me a better candidate for the neighbour watch, something I have been wanting to do but couldn't afford the training for before. Thanks for bringing this to our area, WPDI. There are a lot of people who could really benefit from this training."

**Sasha Lee-Rossouw,**  
Conflict Resolution Education Trainee



## Conflict Resolution in Schools

**8,947** Total participants in school-based peacebuilding

**5,740**

Primary  
school pupils

**2,820**

Secondary  
school students

**8,560**

Total Conflict Resolution in  
Schools learners

**41**

schools hosting WPDI  
programs

**216**

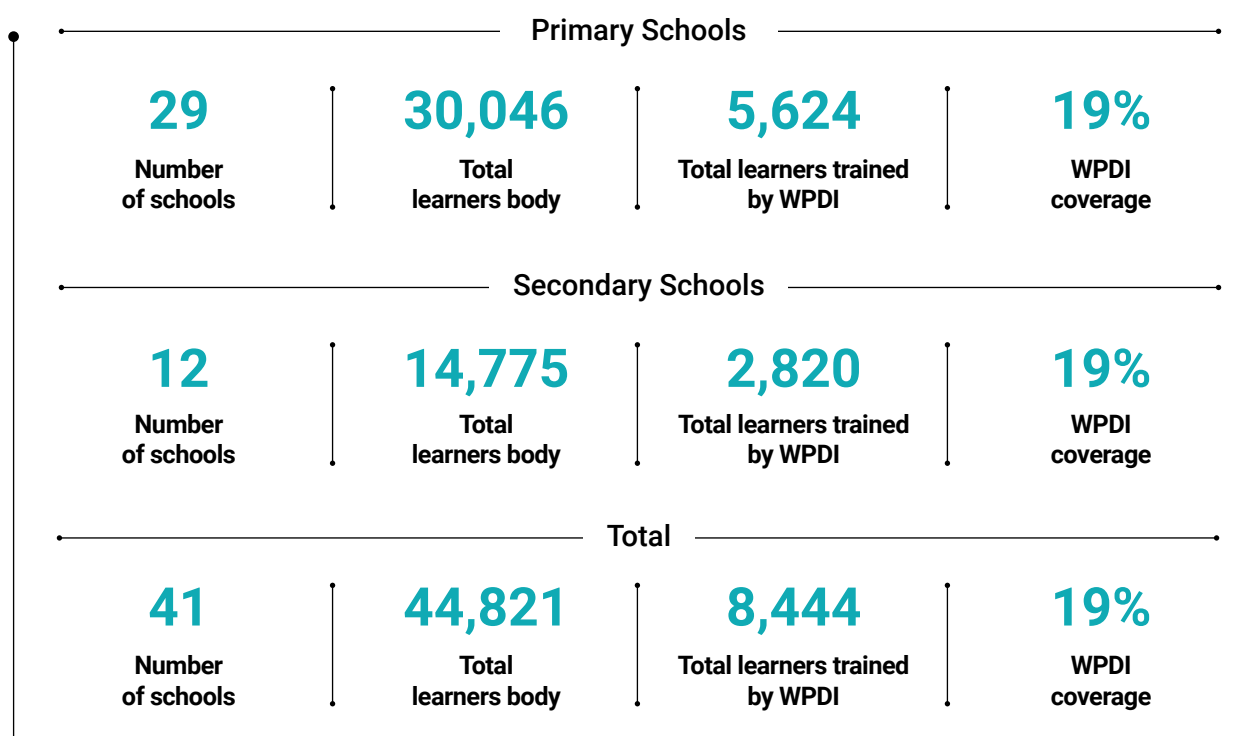
Teachers and school  
administration trained

**171**

People reached through  
advocacy campaigns in schools



## Coverage in schools where WPDI is active



The Conflict Resolution Education in Schools program empowers children and youths with essential skills in conflict resolution, empathy and emotional intelligence, creating a positive shift in school environments and setting the groundwork for long-term societal change. By introducing concepts of peacemaking and conflict resolution at an early

age, these programs aim to address vulnerabilities to negative influences such as gangsterism while creating safer and more conducive learning environments. The success of these initiatives is reflected in the positive behavioral shifts observed by educators, highlighting their impact on nurturing peaceful communities.

"On behalf of our school, I would like to thank the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for bringing your program to our school. The Youth Peacemaker has done great work with a challenging group this year. He has shifted the mindsets of many learners who have changed their behaviors and encouraged other learners to become peace ambassadors. The youth in Lavender Hill lack positive role models and the Youth Peacemaker has been a great role model of peace and educating them on the importance of peace. We look forward to seeing the progress this program will continue to make at our school. Thank you WPDI."

**Ms. September,**  
Teacher at Lavender Hill High school  
in Lavender Hill

"Learning about peace and conflict this year has changed my perspective on many things. In my community I have been exposed to so much violence and I always thought that was normal but this training helped me realise that we have to change the narrative and become leaders of change. I was inspired by WPDI and will continue to spread the message of peace in my school and community. I want to thank every individual who has made this possible for me and my fellow students."

**Luke Davids,**  
Learner at Bridgetown High in  
Bridgetown

## Conflict Resolution Education for Students

In the primary and secondary schools of the Cape Flats, WPDI facilitates the peace education and conflict resolution program tailored to learners. Sessions are interactive and help learners to manage disputes constructively and equip them with tools of how to positively navigate their daily challenges. These activities are guided by WPDI staff and Youth Peacemakers who serve as mentors, ensuring that students not only learn these principles but also practice them daily. Despite the many socio-economic challenges in the Cape Flats, the program continues to yield remarkable outcomes. In 2024, 5,740 learners were trained in 27 primary schools and 2,820 learners were trained in 14 secondary schools. Principals and teachers reported a noticeable improvement in learner behaviour with a decline in incidents of bullying and physical altercations.

At the end of the year, WPDI and participating schools in the Cape Flats hosted graduation ceremonies to celebrate the learners who have completed their training. The ceremonies included speeches from Youth Peacemakers, teachers and learners as well as presentations by students showcasing what they learned during the program. Learners received certificates of completion, symbolizing their commitment to upholding the values of peace and non-violence. These graduations play a greater role of creating awareness of the program's impact and encouraging young graduates to pursue peacebuilding efforts in the future.







"I used to get into fights a lot, but now I've learned how to stay calm and talk things through. The peace sessions taught us how to respect each other's differences and to always choose peace. The program has helped me to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence by using my peer mediation skills."

**B. Johannes,**  
Learner at Riverside Primary in  
Athlone



"WPDI's peace education has been a game-changer. Our learners are more disciplined and we've seen fewer incidents of violence on school grounds. The training has also empowered our teachers to address conflict constructively. The program has helped us to create a school environment that is harmonious and conducive for teaching to take place."

**Ms. S. Sauls,**  
Teacher at Imperial Primary in  
Mitchells Plain





## Conflict Resolution Education for Teachers and School Staff

Recognizing the critical role teachers play in shaping school environments, WPDI implements a comprehensive peacebuilding and conflict resolution training for educators across schools in the Cape Flats. This program equips teachers with the knowledge, tools and confidence to foster a culture of peace and non-violence in their classrooms and schools, as teachers serve as role models and frontline agents of change, influencing not only their learners but also their peers and the wider school community. This integrated approach contributes to long-term transformation, helping schools in their mission to offer safe and inclusive spaces that foster personal and collective growth. In 2024, 216 teachers were trained in conflict resolution at various schools in the Cape Flats.



“Before attending the training, I often felt overwhelmed by the conflicts I witnessed in my classroom and school. The program gave me a new perspective and strategies to address these challenges effectively. I now feel equipped to not only resolve conflicts but also to prevent them by demonstrating a habit of respect and open communication. The impact of this training is visible, my students are more engaged and the school feels like a safer, more peaceful space. It has inspired me to encourage peacebuilding beyond the classroom and into the community.”

**Ms. Boltman,**  
Teacher at Riverside Primary  
in Athlone

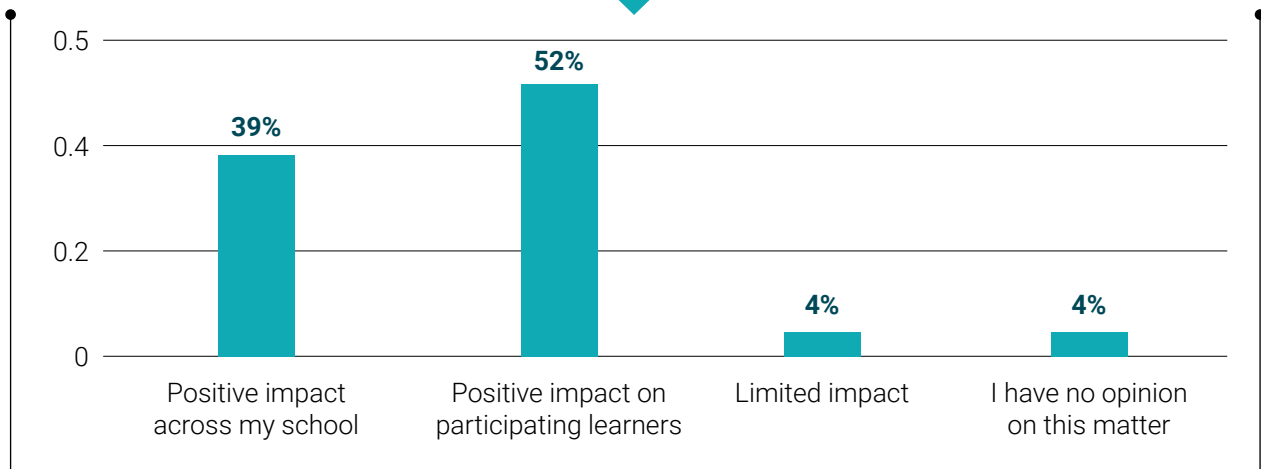


“The peacebuilding training was truly eye-opening. It helped me understand the root causes of conflict and how to address them constructively. I now incorporate peace education into my teaching and my learners respond positively to it. What’s more, I’ve noticed a ripple effect, their improved behaviour influences their peers and even their families. This training isn’t just for teachers, it’s for everyone who believes in creating a better future for our children.”

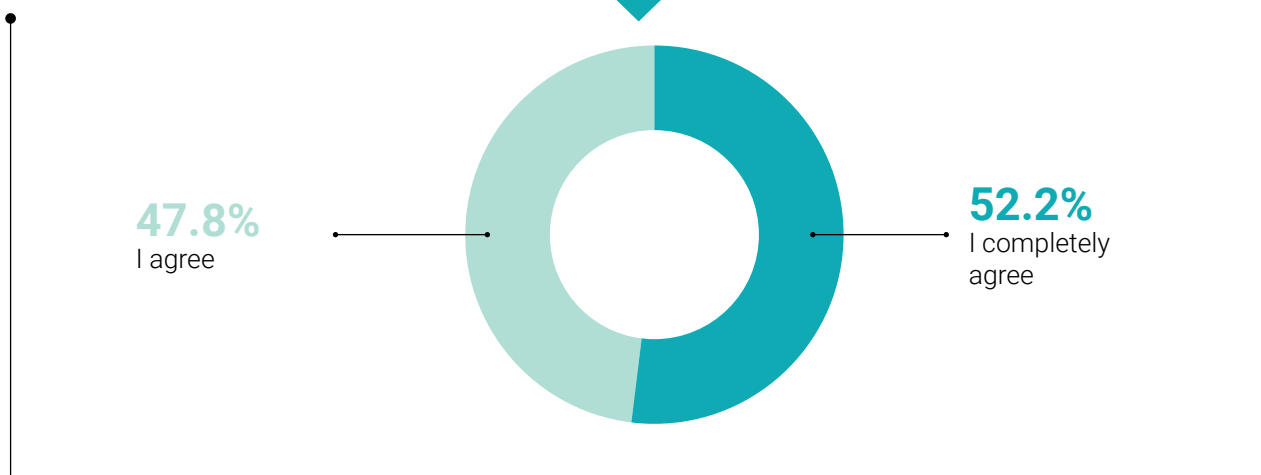
**Ms. Davids,**  
Teacher at Crestway  
Secondary in Steenber



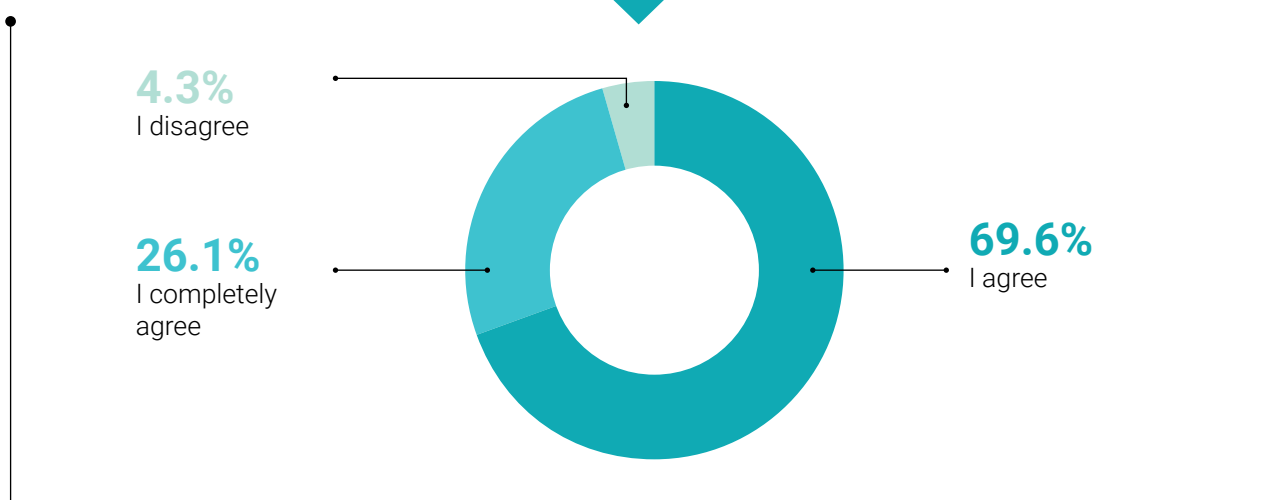
**How do you see the impact of WPDl's program on your school?  
(23 responses from 2023 to 2024)**



**The peace education program of WPDl is a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school (23 responses from 2023 to 2024)**



**The Peace Education program of WPDl helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school (23 responses from 2023 to 2024)**



## Peace Activities and Advocacy Campaigns Engaging Community Members

**945** participants in Peace Activities and Advocacy Campaigns

Advocacy campaigns have played a pivotal role in fostering unity, resilience, and positive change within local communities. These initiatives, led by WPDI Youth Peacemakers, tackled critical social issues through targeted activities.

In Khayelitsha for example, 30 participants took part in an advocacy event addressing the struggles of students during load shedding. Rechargeable lights were donated to help them study for exams, alleviating a major issue for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In Hout Bay, a "Peace through Feeding the Needy" campaign supported a local soup kitchen, feeding 262 children during the winter holiday. This initiative provided emotional support to vulnerable children while addressing food insecurity. In Langa,

a school holiday program engaged 32 participants in arts, sports, and discussions on the role of youth in peacebuilding. The program aimed to keep children off the streets and away from drug-related activities, focusing on positive and healthy activities during the holiday period. In Delft, a campaign themed "Peace is Crucial for Coexistence" brought together participants, including refugees, foreign nationals, and locals, to address tensions and promote harmony. The session included training in conflict resolution and paved the way for a follow-up dialogue in 2025 to strengthen peaceful coexistence. These advocacy efforts highlight the transformative power of community-centered action in creating sustainable change.

### Peace Clubs Drive Awareness Campaigns in Schools

Peace Clubs are initiatives that fosters a culture of peace, cooperation, and social responsibility within schools. Indeed, through Peace Clubs, young people engage in activities that promote harmony and address societal issues. Throughout the year, these students facilitated a series of impactful awareness campaigns across schools, engaging fellow students in meaningful activities that promoted peace and environmental responsibility. In July, participants took part in a recycling initiative at Riverside Academy, raising awareness about sustainability. August saw students at Timbany Primary School actively involved in an anti-bullying campaign, fostering a culture of kindness and respect. In September, students from Kulani Secondary School participated in a "Peace Through Arts and Crafts" workshop, using creativity to explore peace-building concepts. October was marked by two significant events: students at Delta Primary School planted trees for peace, highlighting the connection between environmental care and peaceful communities, while students at Christway High School formed the Book Peace Club, promoting peaceful literacy and dialogue. These activities reflect the ongoing efforts of Peace Clubs to inspire and educate young people about the importance of peace in their daily lives.

"I am proud to have been a member of the peace club. It has taught me to be a better leader and how to mediate conflicts. Being a peer mediator gave me the confidence to always spread the message of peace. The peace club had the privilege of running the recycling project and the bins donated to our school have made such a big difference! Before there was so much waste everywhere, and it made our school look messy. Now, with the recycling bins, we know exactly where to put our paper, plastic and cans. It has made our school cleaner and more beautiful. In our Peace Club, we also learned how recycling helps the environment and it feels great to know we are doing something good for the planet. Seeing everyone use the bins and care about keeping the school clean makes me so proud to be part of this club."

**Thandi Mbaso,**  
Peace Club Member at Riverside  
Primary



## Peer Mediators Create an Art Therapy Peace Club at Kulani Secondary School

*"Being part of the Art Therapy Peace Club has been a healing process for me. It has helped me find closure and heal, rather than dwelling on my grief."*

Kulani Secondary School is situated in Langa, a predominantly Black community within the Cape Flats. The school faces several challenges, including gangsterism, a high dropout rate, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, and the presence of illegal and harmful objects. Both teachers and learners have expressed that they do not feel safe at school, and the issue of undisciplined learners has become a significant challenge.

In response to these concerns, Usher, a WPDY Youth Peacemaker, initiated a Peace Club aimed at equipping the school's Representative Council of Learners (RCL) with the skills necessary to become peer mediators. This initiative empowers them to take on leadership roles in promoting peace within the school community. The Peace Club's goal is to foster values of peace, promote gender equality, and support academic success among peers.

The idea of an Art Therapy Peace Club emerged from the learners themselves, who expressed a need for a safe space to address the stress and tensions they experience in their daily lives. By incorporating various art forms such as beading, knitting, crocheting, drawing, and painting, the club provided learners with a creative outlet to relieve stress and find emotional closure.

The success of this program has been evident, as it has helped learners cope with personal challenges while giving them a platform to express themselves freely and openly. The therapeutic nature of art has proven to be a powerful tool for promoting peace, self-expression, and resilience among the students.



*"I made this bracelet as a tribute to my beloved brother who passed away. It's a tangible expression of the love we shared. When I wear it, beautiful memories of him flood my mind. Being part of the Art Therapy Peace Club has been a healing process for me. I truly cherish being a member of this club. It has helped me find closure and heal, rather than dwelling on my grief."*

**Afikile Noholoz,**  
Peace Club Member at Kulani Secondary School



*"I am very grateful for such a positive and great opportunity for my learners because it has really helped them to cope with their anxiety. It has helped the learners with their academics because during the exam time they become so stressed. So, establishing the art peace club has really made a positive change and the teachers have witnessed an improvement in the learners and there's been less cases of absenteeism, carrying of weapons and even fights on the school ground."*

**Usher Mandindi,**  
WPDY Youth Peacemaker





## Cinema for Peace

# 746 Participants in Cinema for Peace

Cinema for Peace uses the power of film to educate and inspire young people about the values of peace and non-violence. Participants are exposed to compelling stories and after each screening, facilitated discussions allow participants to reflect on the lessons learned, share their perspectives and explore how these values can be applied in their own

lives and communities. By combining entertainment with education, Cinema for Peace creates a safe and engaging space for young people to develop critical thinking skills and take actionable steps toward building a more peaceful society. In 2024, 746 youths participated in Cinema for Peace.

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

**Mihlali Mayeza,**  
Student at Ikamvalethu  
Secondary School



"The Cinema for Peace was a great activity. I feel empowered after watching the movie because it has helped me to understand the importance of tolerance and forgiveness. The discussion allowed us to interact and share our views constructively. The discussions also highlighted that we all long for peace in our community. It encouraged me to be more tolerant in my daily life."

**Likhona Ntame,**  
a Langa Community Member







# Livelihood

The livelihood program operates on the principle that peace and development are deeply interconnected, particularly in fragile contexts where poverty and violence perpetuate one another. This program aims to break these cycles by equipping individuals with the tools and opportunities needed to improve their economic prospects. Through vocational training, startup grants, and business incubation services, the program empowers participants to raise their profile, improve their employability or launch their own enterprises. These initiatives not only transform the lives of individuals but also stimulate local economies, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities that benefit entire communities.

# Capacity-Building Courses

**1,135** Total trainees in vocational courses

**338**

**ICT  
trainees**

**499**

**Entrepreneurship  
trainees**

**162**

**Vulnerable  
Women trained  
in business**

**136**

**Financial  
Literacy trainees**

**1,365**

**CLC  
visitors**

Vocational training is crucial for individuals from disadvantaged areas, particularly in regions like Cape Town's Cape Flats, which have long been sidelined by appropriate services and opportunities. Challenges in the school system and insufficient resources to pursue formal education leave many young people without the skills needed for gainful employment creating a situation where many are

"Not in Employment, Education, or Training" (NEET). In the Cape Flats, where poverty, unemployment, and crime are prevalent, non-formal vocational education empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty and contribute to the long-term stability and growth of their communities by learning practical skills that are applicable to the job market.

## Information and Communication Technologies

Delivered at Basic and Intermediate levels, the ICT program equips individuals with the practical knowledge to navigate and leverage digital tools for personal and professional growth. By providing access to internet-enabled computers, online modules, and tailored resources at our Community Learning Center (CLC), the program is designed to meet the unique needs of underserved and marginalized communities. This initiative is enabling participants to engage with ICT, connect globally, and explore opportunities within their local economies.

The ICT program offers two levels of training: a Basic course for those with no prior computer experience and an Intermediate course to familiarise more advanced learners with online office tools.

In 2024, the program trained 338 participants, 275 in the Basic course and 63 in the Intermediate course. Women represented 82% of trainees, and the

program continues to attract an increasing number of participants over 36 years old, filling a gap left by other organizations with a 35 years age limit.

The impact of the training is transformative, especially for individuals with limited formal education or employment opportunities. Many participants experience increased confidence and pride in their accomplishments. Given the high unemployment rate in South Africa and the demand for computer skills in the job market, the program provides a critical stepping stone to employment. Some participants even report securing jobs shortly after completing the training, demonstrating its tangible benefits for individuals and their communities.







"Before attending the ICT course, I had absolutely no idea how to use a computer, and I have gained so much knowledge and having the best teacher who is so patient makes it very easy to understand. I have enjoyed each and every part of the computer lesson but my favourite part was formatting and using tables. I really enjoyed doing them. This training will help you get the jobs and even go back to school and continue with your studies."

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**Ntsapokazi Tikipeni,**  
ICT Trainee



"When I started attending the computer class, I had limited knowledge about computers but now I am confident. My knowledge is expanding day by day as we are being taught new things every day. The part I love the most is the teacher, she doesn't want to leave anyone behind. She gives each and every one attention and she doesn't embarrass anyone in class. I love that she is so gentle and understands that we are all different beings and tries to accommodate everyone.

The things she teaches in class are things that will be beneficial to you as well in terms of employability and efficiency in today's digital age. Many job positions require basic computer skills which increase your chances of employment."

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**Simthembele Ziphozihle,**  
ICT Trainee





## From Factory Packer to Supply Chain Administrator: Yonela's Journey of Determination and Growth

*"I am super proud of myself, because today I have full knowledge about using a computer."*



Yonela Sibhene, a young woman from Langa in the Cape Flats, joined our Basic Computer Training in July and achieved an outstanding 100% on her final test. In October, she enrolled in the Intermediate course to further improve her computer skills. At the time, she was working as a packer in a factory and was granted time off to attend the training.

During the course, she learned about an internal position being advertised within her company. The role of Supply Chain Administrator required computer skills, and Yonela, confident in her newly acquired knowledge, decided to apply.

One day, during a training session, she received a phone call informing her that she had gotten the job! Her fellow trainees and trainer erupted in cheers, and she beamed with pride.

"It was the first time for me to use a computer. I learned a lot from both courses, Basic and Intermediate. I am super proud of myself because today I have full knowledge about using a computer. I have confidence. I am very happy because it really helped me to go from a packer to a Supply Chain Administrator. From day one, I told myself that I won't be keeping these certificates under my mattress - I will use them to get a better job! Today I am happy and proud because of WPD!



## Business and Entrepreneurship

In regions where the effects of conflict and instability persevere, fostering entrepreneurship and providing vocational training becomes a catalyst for social transformation. Entrepreneurial skills empower individuals to build resilience, and break the cycle of poverty and instability. WPDI's training program is designed to equip participants with practical skills such as business planning, financial management, or marketing strategies. These skills are complemented by mentorship sessions that emphasize accountability, innovation, and self-sufficiency, preparing trainees to navigate challenges

and seize opportunities in the marketplace. By nurturing a culture of innovation and resilience among its participants, the program not only supports individual growth but also strengthens social cohesion, paving the way for sustainable development and lasting peace. The 499 trainees include unemployed youth, men, and women from various MURP areas of the Cape Flats, whose successes demonstrate the transformative impact of entrepreneurship in building thriving, self-reliant communities.



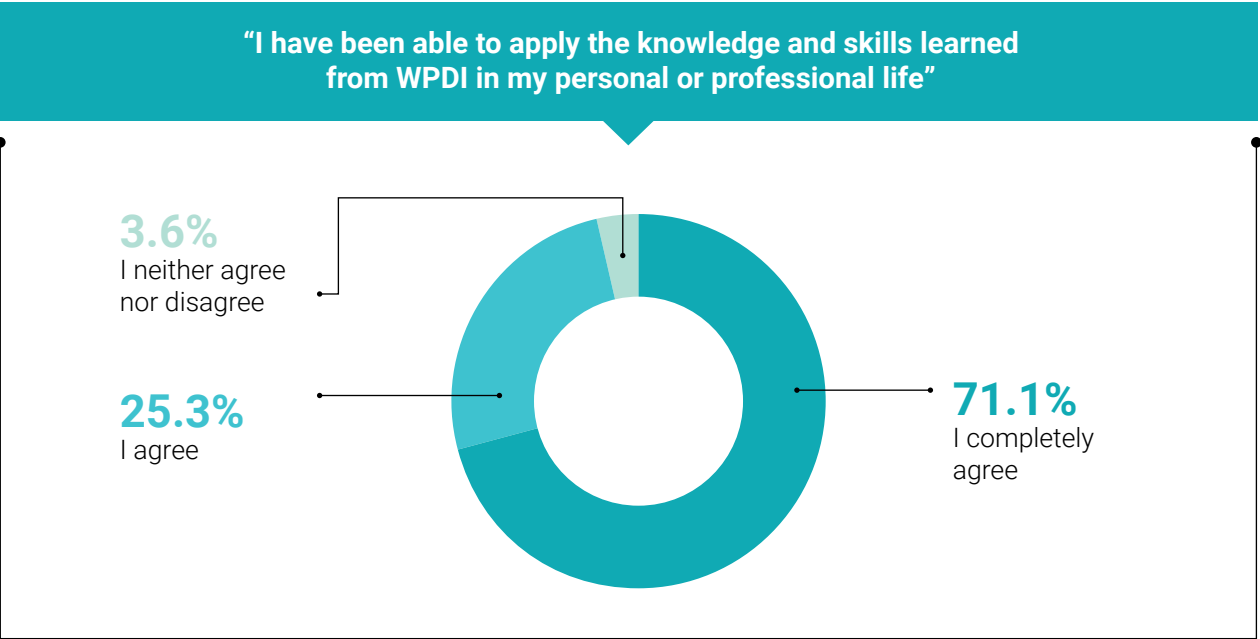
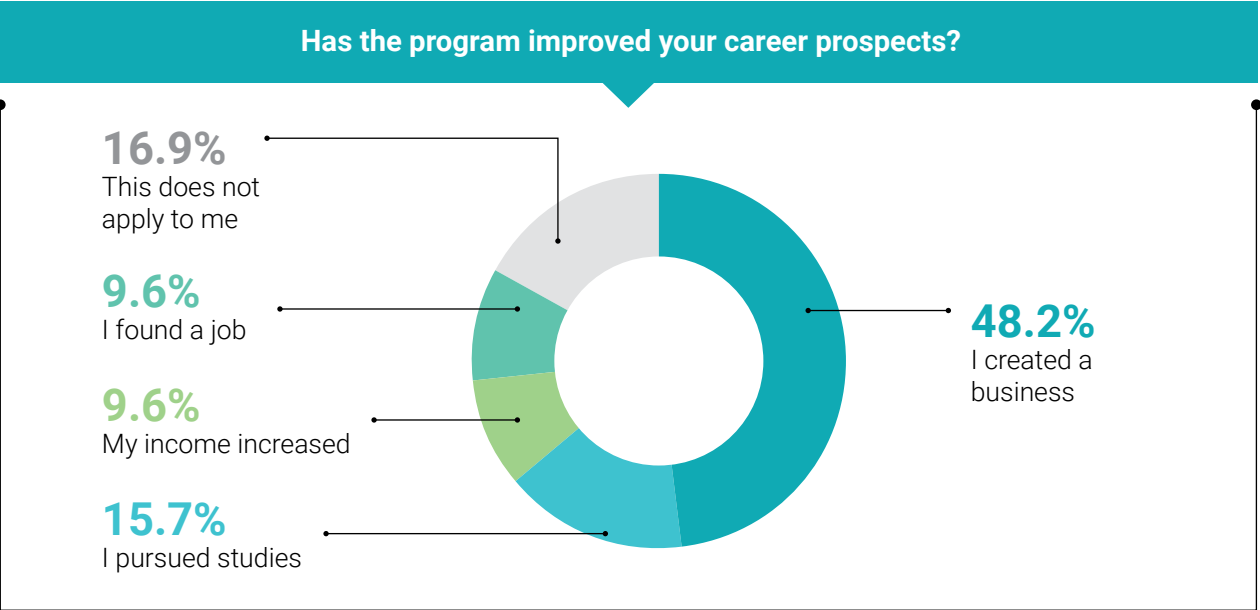
"The business training was exciting indeed. I had to leave school at the age of 15 years to get married, so I have been out of school for over 30 years. The business manual was very difficult for me to read at the beginning, however the trainer made sure that we all understood and we were not left-out. The training is designed in such a brilliant way, it starts with familiar things and then gradually dives into more complex topics. I gained knowledge, skills and self-confidence. I'm inspired to better myself and support women who went through similar problems. Thank you WPDI for all you do for women in Cape Flats, bringing hope that we thought was long gone."

**Ntombizanele Binase,**  
Business Trainee





Out of 83 individuals surveyed, the following responses were collected:



# Business Bootcamps

**2,416** beneficiaries of all businesses

**16**  
new  
businesses created  
in 2024

**114**  
businesses  
supported by WPD  
in total

**402**  
jobs  
created

**2,014**  
indirect beneficiaries  
of businesses  
(families)

After completing Basic and Intermediate Business training sessions, participants advance to intensive Business Bootcamps, which equip them with tools for translating their entrepreneurial ideas into actionable strategies. These bootcamps aim to provide hands-on guidance on developing effective business plans, including market analysis, financial forecasting, and operational planning. The sessions also include mentorship from experienced professionals, enabling participants to refine their proposals and

gain valuable insights into overcoming common challenges in business. This preparation culminates in Business Plan Competitions, where participants showcase their plans, demonstrating their potential to create impactful, sustainable enterprises.

By providing seed grants and mentoring to help businesses grow sustainably, 114 businesses have been developed throughout the years of implementing the program, creating 402 jobs and indirectly benefiting 2,014 people.



# The Women Livelihood Program

162

Vulnerable Women trained in business

1,842

total Vulnerable Women trained since 2022

In 2022, WPDl launched the Women Livelihood Program in partnership with the L'Oréal Fund for Women to address the unique challenges faced by underprivileged women in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative was created in response to an urgent need voiced by local stakeholders, as women in vulnerable communities faced heightened challenges such as increased gender-based violence and declining household incomes. The program focuses on empowering women by providing tailored training in Business and Entrepreneurship, equipping them with the skills needed to create sustainable livelihoods, support their families, and drive positive change within their

communities. This is a program that participants often describe as transformative, with many gaining the confidence and skills to pursue life-changing endeavors, from seeking employment to starting entrepreneurial ventures.

Presently, the Women Livelihood Program has become a key pillar of WPDl's initiatives in the Cape Flats, successfully training 1,842 women since 2022, of which 162 women were trained in 2024. These graduates' success was celebrated in a vibrant graduation ceremony, marking the beginning of new chapters in their lives as empowered entrepreneurs.



"I am the proud owner of Iconnect Internet Cafe, which I opened in March 2024. I am so blessed to be part of WPDl and to be one of the winners of the Women Livelihood Program. I applied for a job at Cape Town as I am a single parent and unemployed. Luckily, WPDl provided us with this free business management training. It has been an amazing journey from the beginning until now. This opportunity helped me a lot in so many ways, I'm growing and learning so much each day. It has helped me to build good relations with other businesses and I am positive that my business will expand, so much so that I will be able to open more branches. My motto is: "If you believe it, you can achieve it!"

**Porsche Appolis,**  
Women Livelihood Winner and  
Business Owner





# Backstopping Businesses through our Growth Incubator

The Monthly Growth Incubator Sessions have proven instrumental in supporting Business Plan Competition winners by providing them with essential resources to navigate the challenges of the business world. Designed as a year-long mentorship program, these sessions aim to enhance the development, sustainability, and long-term success of emerging businesses. Each session focuses on practical business management tools, providing participants with the skills needed to tackle both everyday and complex challenges encountered by startups. The interactive format, which includes opportunities for

in-depth Q&A and networking opportunities, fosters engagement and tailored support.

In 2024, WPDI continued to build on the program's success, supporting the creation of new businesses and continuing to support those launched in previous years. The winners have shown exceptional commitment, faithfully attending the monthly sessions and expressing deep gratitude for the guidance provided. This initiative not only strengthens their entrepreneurial capabilities but also significantly increases the likelihood of their ventures thriving in an often challenging economic environment.



## Building her Beads Business: Phelo's Empowering Journey

*"Other institutions don't give you a chance like WPDI does."*

### Phelo Starts Working in her Family Bead Business

My name is Phelo Sibeko. I'm 32 years old from Khayelitsha. I make jewellery using beads. My love for beads started when I was a little baby. My mother was a single parent and she had to provide for me and my family. With the high unemployment rate, she had to use what she had to make ends meet, so she started making beads and taught me how to make them too. She didn't make much money but we always had something to eat. After graduating from university, I realised that finding a job is very difficult so I also followed my mother's footsteps by making beaded jewellery.

### The Bead Business Faces Challenges

One of my clients told me about WPDI and how much it helps people, so she encouraged me to sign up for their free business training. I did and since then I never looked back. The biggest challenge was getting funding at other

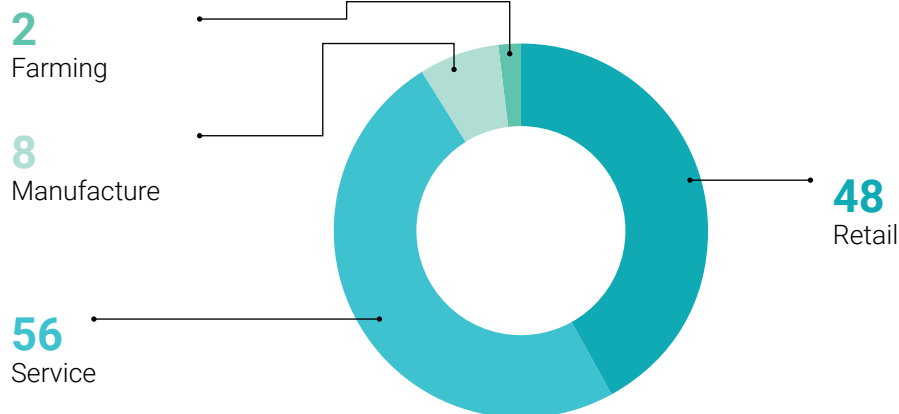
institutions to start my business because other institutions don't give you a chance like WPDI does. It took a lot of educating people about beads in order to get clients because many people see it as a luxury. However, thanks to the support and training I received from WPDI I learned to market my products well. Since WPDI started supporting my business in 2023, my business has grown greatly.

### Phelo Learns about how WPDI Can Help Her

WPDI has really helped me not only with funding but the mentoring and the monthly incubator sessions played a big role in my business success. I went through some traumatic experiences this year and, as always, WPDI was there. I spoke to one of their social workers and they were very helpful. The program WPDI is offering to our communities is extremely helpful and needed. In South Africa when you are 35 and above it's very difficult to get a job because you are considered old, but WPDI does not discriminate against women and their age.



## Types of the 114 active businesses in the Cape Flats in 2024



## From Family Tradition to Entrepreneurial Success: Lavona's Story

*"Operating a business in a gang-infested area where unemployment is high and moral low is not for the faint hearted."*



My name is Lavona Cookson. I am 49 years old and the owner of Cookson's House of Cakes. My love for baking was instilled in me at a very young age by my late mother, who was the community baker. People came from near and far for her baked goods.

In 2017, what was once a hobby became a survival skill when I became unemployed and had to support my family financially. In 2022, I decided to officially register my business, and Cookson's House of Cakes was born in Manenberg, Cape Town.

Operating a business in a gang-infested area, where unemployment is high and morale is low, is not for the faint-hearted. Through my brand, I aspire to bring hope and joy by honoring life's milestones and creating sweet memories for generations to come.

I first heard about the program through our church group chat. Attending the training helped me understand the dynamics of entrepreneurship, the importance of cost management, and—most importantly—overcome my fear of drafting a business plan, which is a crucial aspect of running a business. Although the program was quite basic, it helped me tremendously, as I was able to apply what I learned to my business and see real change.

The WPDl program is transforming communities, giving hope to aspiring entrepreneurs, and making dreams come true. I don't want it to stop. I am forever grateful for this opportunity—it has changed my life and the lives of those around me.





# Health and Wellbeing

**8,941** Total Health and Wellbeing beneficiaries

**1,096**

participants in  
Trauma Healing  
activities

**2,300**

students trained in  
Social-Emotional  
Learning

**514**

individuals receiving  
trauma healing  
counseling

**5,031**

participants in Sexual  
& Reproductive  
Health activities



# Trauma Healing and Awareness Raising

Launched in South Africa in 2023, the Trauma Healing program significantly expanded its reach in 2024 to address the psychosocial challenges faced by individuals in disadvantaged communities, particularly in areas like the Cape Flats. South Africa's socio-economic struggles, including high rates of poverty, inequality, and violence, have deeply impacted the mental health and wellbeing of its citizens.

The program's objectives are twofold: to raise awareness about mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding it, and to provide tailored support through counseling or referrals to appropriate care. Activities include awareness sessions in schools and communities, PTSD screenings, and therapeutic interventions. With an emphasis on strengths-based approaches, the program empowers individuals to regain resilience, achieve inner peace, and contribute to fostering harmony within their communities.

In 2024, WPDJ conducted a series of empowerment training sessions and community engagements across various regions of the Cape Flats, including Gugulethu, Mitchell's Plain, and Khayelitsha. These initiatives prioritized inclusivity, engaging individuals

from diverse genders, sexual orientations, and age groups ranging from 14 to 65 year olds. The holistic approach created safe spaces for dialogue, healing, and growth, equipping participants with practical skills to manage trauma, improve mental wellbeing, and support community cohesion.

In total, 1,096 individuals were reached through interactive workshops and group discussions. Topics included understanding trauma, coping strategies, resilience-building, and self-care.

Additionally, 2,300 students participated in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) training, and 41 trauma healing awareness campaigns were conducted. These events provided platforms for communities to share experiences, address challenges like PTSD and mental health stigma, and collectively find solutions.

Participants in these activities have reported increased confidence, enhanced coping strategies, and stronger community connections, along with overwhelmingly positive feedback underscoring the importance of continuing these efforts to promote healing and empowerment across marginalized communities.



"As a victim of abuse, I felt trapped and powerless. The counselling not only gave me the emotional support I needed but also practical advice on how to improve my situation. With their guidance, I've started a new job and found a safe place to live. I'm finally taking steps towards a brighter future."

**Thembeka,**  
Trainee at Gugulethu



"The 'River of Life' exercise allowed me to reflect on my journey and recognise the strength I've gained from overcoming challenges. I felt so vulnerable and still decided to go up front and share my story. I am not only proud of myself but also of all the other women in the room."

**Anonymous testimonial**  
from a WPDl Trainee



## Individual and Group Counselling Sessions

WPDl also provided tailored counseling services, reaching 514 people through individual sessions. These interventions addressed a range of challenges, including grief, trauma, substance abuse, and mental health issues. 16 group sessions were conducted to foster solidarity and shared healing on topics like coping with trauma, mental wellness, grief, bullying, substance abuse, poverty and anger management. One-on-one support was also available and allowed participants to address specific challenges and develop personalized coping strategies.

By addressing a wide range of challenges in both group and individual settings, WPDl provided comprehensive support that fostered healing, resilience, and empowerment. The impact of these interventions is evident in the improved mental health and wellbeing of the participants, underscoring the importance of continued investment in counselling services to support our communities.





"The counselling sessions helped me in ways I never thought possible. Losing my sister left me broken, and I didn't know how to cope. Through these sessions, I learned to process my grief and share my story with others who understood my pain. I've found strength and resilience, and for the first time in years, I feel hopeful about the future."

**Melissa Hanover Park**



"Joining the recovery group was a life-changing experience for me. I had tried to quit drinking so many times on my own, but it never worked. Being part of a group where people understood my struggles and held me accountable made all the difference. I've been sober for six months now, and I finally feel like I'm in control of my life again."

**Jake, Bonteheuwel**



## Finding Hope After Loss: A Story of Resilience and Healing

When Zandile (name changed for confidentiality) walked into the WPDl psychosocial wellbeing program, she was a woman consumed by grief and despair. Her husband, the sole breadwinner of their family, had been killed in a gang-related shooting in Manenberg. He was on his way to work when he was caught in the crossfire, a senseless act of violence that left her and her two young children shattered. For months, Zandile struggled to cope. The weight of her loss left her feeling hopeless and overwhelmed. Depression took hold, and the once vibrant woman found herself withdrawing from life, unable to imagine a future without her husband. With no source of income and mounting responsibilities, she felt paralysed, drowning in both grief and fear of the unknown.

Through WPDl's counselling sessions, Zandile began a journey of healing. In a safe, compassionate space, she was able to share her pain, confront her grief, and explore ways to rebuild her life. Her counsellor gently guided her

through the process of acceptance, helping her navigate the storm of emotions she faced daily. Week by week, Zandile began to find glimmers of hope. The program provided her with tools to manage her grief and practical strategies to reclaim her sense of purpose. She started to open up to the possibility of moving forward, not forgetting her husband, but honouring his memory by striving for a better future for herself and her children.

Today, Zandile is finding her strength again. She has started actively looking for work, determined to provide for her family despite the odds. While the pain of her loss remains, she now faces each day with a renewed sense of hope and resilience. Her story is a testament to the transformative power of support and empathy. WPDl's psychosocial wellbeing program not only helped Zandile through her darkest moments but also reminded her that even in the face of unimaginable loss, there is a way to heal, rebuild, and rediscover life's possibilities.

# Sexual and Reproductive Health Support

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) initiative was launched with the primary aim of empowering young girls in schools across the Cape Flats. This initiative focused on providing comprehensive education on SRHR, menstrual health, and menstrual hygiene. Through this project, we sought to address the critical issue of menstruation-related interruptions in schooling and restore the dignity of young girls by ensuring they have the necessary knowledge and resources to manage their menstrual health effectively.

In 2024, WPDI conducted empowerment training courses in 40 schools, reaching 5,031 young girls. These interactive sessions created safe spaces for girls to ask questions, share experiences, and learn essential skills. The initiative also distributed over 160,000 sanitary pads monthly to girls without access to menstrual hygiene products, enabling them to attend school without interruptions. Through this initiative, WPDI has helped to break down the barriers that often prevent girls from attending school during their menstrual cycles.



"High school is already hard, but not having pads made it worse. I used to stay home because I was scared other kids would laugh at me if I stained my uniform. Now, with the pads we get every month, I don't have to miss school anymore. The talks also showed me that there's nothing wrong with having my period. I feel normal and proud to be myself. Thank you so much for helping me!"

**Beverly,**  
Learner in Hanover Park



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

**Ziyanda,**  
Learner in Langa



## Restoring Dignity, One Pad at a Time

In 2024, WPDI embarked on a transformative journey to promote dignity and create opportunities for thousands of young girls across 40 schools in the Cape Flats. These girls, many from impoverished backgrounds, faced difficulties accessing basic menstrual hygiene products—a challenge that not only interrupted their education but also eroded their self-confidence and sense of self-worth. Menstruation is not a choice, yet for too long, it has been a source of shame, guilt, and missed opportunities for young girls.

Through its innovative empowerment trainings, WPDI created safe and supportive spaces where girls could openly ask questions, share their experiences, and learn essential skills to navigate their menstrual health with confidence. These sessions were more than just educational, they were a beacon of hope, breaking the silence and stigma that often surround menstruation.

A cornerstone of this initiative was the distribution of sanitary pads each month, ensuring that no girl had to miss school because of her period. It removed a significant barrier, allowing girls to focus on being just that—young girls, free to dream, learn, and grow without the burden of shame or the fear of being left behind. By addressing this fundamental need, WPDI did more than provide sanitary pads; we restored the dignity of these young girls and empowered them to reclaim their education and their futures. The impact of this initiative extends far beyond the classroom, breaking cycles of inequality and fostering a generation of confident, resilient, and hopeful young women.

This is the power of dignity in action, ensuring that every girl, regardless of her circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive.







# Peace Through Sports

**3,560** participants in all sportive activities

**20**

teams  
managed by WPDI

**240**

regular  
training participants

**3,320**

participants in  
competitions events



# Transforming Lives with NBA Africa

The Peace Through Sports program harnesses the power of sports to foster peace, inclusion, and youth empowerment in the Cape Flats. By combining peace education with athletic activities, the program promotes values such as teamwork, tolerance, and respect while encouraging healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, and personal growth. Within just 12 months, it has shown significant progress in cultivating attitudes and behaviors that support psychosocial wellbeing, soft skills, and community cohesion. The basketball initiative has proven to be a unifying force, helping to bridge divides and build a more inclusive community.

In 2024, the Peace Through Sports program trained 20 sports teams, 10 male and 10 female, and 240 team players and coaches. Additionally, over 3,320

individuals participated in WPDI-led sporting events across the Cape Flats.

What makes this program truly effective is its inclusion of capacity-building courses that complement the athletic focus. These offerings, such as business training, ICT skills, and trauma healing workshops, are provided free of charge, ensuring accessibility for all participants. This 360-degree approach not only strengthens physical and social development through sports but also empowers individuals with practical tools and knowledge for personal and professional growth. By addressing multiple dimensions of wellbeing and capacity, the program creates a comprehensive framework for building resilience, fostering inclusion, and empowering participants to contribute to a thriving and peaceful community.



## The Coaching Clinic

*"In my community, not many people were involved in basketball."*

A highlight of our Peace Through Sports initiative in 2024 was the basketball coaching clinic that we organized in August in collaboration with our partner NBA Africa. The event, which took place in the Cape Flats region, aimed to provide young people with an opportunity to discover and practice the sport of basketball, while also promoting peace and development through sports, and learn about values of peace, tolerance and cooperation.

The training sessions focused on advanced basketball techniques, giving the 12 participating coaches new tools to enhance their strategizing capacities. One coach, Igshaan Nelson, shared, "Today has helped us as coaches to learn helpful

techniques to demonstrate to the players, especially those who are learning the basics of basketball. It's important, even for us as coaches, to always find new tools and techniques to incorporate into our game plans and practices."

Coach Prince, another WPDI basketball coach, reflected on the event, saying, "In my community, not many people were involved in basketball. I encouraged young people to play, and their interest grew rapidly. I am so proud of the progress the players have made. At the NBA Junior tournament, two of our players excelled. We wish to thank WPDI and NBA Africa for giving our youth a platform to grow and improve their talents."

Other notable Peace Through Sports events in 2024 included a vibrant basketball competition in May, fostering unity and promoting values like teamwork and fair play. In August, WPDI joined an NBA Africa junior tournament where two WPDI athletes excelled, securing top positions in individual competitions. October saw WPDI host its own tournament in the Cape Flats, culminating in awards for players, coaches, and referees, while one WPDI female team showcased strong potential in a high school league. Finally, in December, WPDI participated in the NBA Africa Weekend, with junior players and coaches advancing their skills through clinics and competitions.

## Celebrating Youth Talent and Achievement at NBA Africa Junior Basketball Tournament

In August, WPDI was invited by NBA Africa to participate in a junior basketball tournament for players aged 14 to 16. Teams for both girls and boys competed, giving young players a chance to showcase their talents and connect with peers from other communities. WPDI proudly fielded

teams in all age groups, and two WPDI athletes were distinguished for their outstanding results. Asakhe Krakri, 16, won first place in the boys' "King of the Court" competition, while Thulisa Yoto, 14, secured third place in the girls' "Queen of the Court" competition.





"I thank WPDl and NBA Africa for the opportunity of the new Basketball Court and especially the vocational training from WPDl. I like Trauma and Healing training sessions most as it made me realise that I need to seek help as my household is all traumatised due to violence. In addition, I am also very grateful for the technical skills training."

**Thaabiet Petersen-Bridgetown,**  
Peace Through Sports Participant



"In my community, not many people were involved in basketball. I encouraged young people to play, and their interest grew rapidly. I am so proud of the progress the players have made. At the NBA Junior tournament, two of our players excelled. We wish to thank this program for giving our youth a platform to grow and improve their talents."

**Coach Prince,**  
WPDl Basketball Coach based in  
Langa



"The basketball court has had an immense impact on the young lives of the kids in the community, it's become a safe space for them to thrive. Having the Junior NBA clinic has helped both coaches and players to enhance their skills and learn new techniques, one never knows everything there is to know about a sport and it's important that these clinics happen as often as possible."

**Tayla Brink,**  
Female Coach in Bridgetown, Athlone







# Conclusion





WPDI achieved significant milestones across various pillars of our work in 2024. In the realm of peacebuilding, the training of prison wardens at Pollsmoor Prison stands out as a key success, demonstrating the potential of conflict resolution skills to foster a more peaceful and rehabilitative environment within the prison system, which is often deemed to be very difficult.

In the health and wellbeing sector, we also observed how our work on menstrual health proved to be particularly impactful. By providing comprehensive education on menstrual hygiene and distributing sanitary products, we empowered young girls to attend school consistently, thereby improving their educational outcomes. Additionally, our livelihood programs saw notable success with the establishment of new small businesses confirming the relevance of providing such opportunities for beneficiaries to help themselves and their families.

Our Peace Through Sports program has gained recognition, with individual players from both male and female basketball teams earning accolades and placing WPDI's efforts on the provincial map, establishing it as a force for positive change in the Western Cape.

At the core of these individual successes and all the rest of our work, lies an approach based on tailored, community-centric approaches, integrated support

and capacity building, strong partnerships and collaboration, and focus on sustainability and long-term impact, that will continue to cultivate in the coming months and years.

One of the key lessons learned in 2024 is the importance of tailoring our programs to the specific needs and realities of the communities we serve. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial in addressing the unique challenges faced by different groups. We also recognized the value of strong partnerships with local stakeholders, which enhance the reach and impact of our initiatives. Investing in young people through vocational training has proven to yield long-term benefits, as they often become role models and agents of change within their communities.

As learning goes, we also improved the capacity of our office for relevant action through the provision of training sessions on our new policies on child protection and PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment). As we make our office a safer and more enabling place, we trust that we are more ready than ever to deliver our mandate in the Cape Flats and beyond.







# Our Partners



**BNP PARIBAS**



**L'ORÉAL**  
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