



WPDI SOUTH SUDAN

2025 Annual Report

Table of Contents

Introduction	03
WPDI Attends the Paris Peace Forum	04
Key Achievements	05
Survey Results	06
Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders	08
Vectors of Change	09
Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots	10
Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity	12
Peacebuilding	13
Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community	14
Bringing Skills and Values for Peace into Schools	15
Training School Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education	17
Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace	18
Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace	20
Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice	22
Advocacy Campaigns in Schools and across the Community	23
Cinema for Peace	25
Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment	26
Capacity-Building Courses	27
Business and Entrepreneurship	29
Information and Communication Technologies	30
Arts and Crafts	31
Supporting Income-Generating Projects	33
Women's Livelihood Program	34
Health and Well-being	36
Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)	37
Sports	38
Peace Engagement Days	41
Conclusion	42
Partners	44

Introduction

The year 2025 marked a profound milestone in the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI)'s decade-long journey in South Sudan. At a time when conflicts are escalating across the globe, our work on the ground has evolved beyond responding to the immediate and devastating consequences of civil war. We are now actively contributing to a broader transformation: shaping a self-sustaining narrative of peace, identity, resilience, and institutional partnership. The achievements highlighted in this report are not isolated results; together, they represent a cohesive and forward-looking movement toward lasting peace. This future is being built on the healing of historical trauma and the restoration of the social bonds that have long sustained communities.

A powerful illustration of this work was WPDI's contribution to the inaugural Azande Cultural Festival in Western Equatoria State, which celebrated the reinstatement of the traditional King after 117 years. For generations, communities had been separated from an important part of their cultural heritage, particularly following the disruptions of the colonial era. The restoration of this historic institution represents more than a cultural milestone, it is a renewed affirmation of identity, belonging, and collective memory. By supporting the preservation and revival of cultural heritage, WPDI is helping communities address historical wounds and strengthen the foundations for peace and stability. Building a peaceful future also requires trusted institutions and sustained dialogue between grassroots communities and formal governance structures.

In 2025, WPDI's role as a critical institutional partner in bridging resource and capacity gaps was recognized by the Ministry of Public Service and

Human Resource Development in Western Equatoria State, as highlighted in this report. This recognition reflects the growing importance of partnerships that connect community-led initiatives with broader systems of governance. While working alongside government stakeholders to strengthen present-day stability, WPDI is also investing in the leaders of tomorrow. Across South Sudan, educators are emerging as powerful drivers of peacebuilding, with teachers increasingly taking ownership of the peace message and integrating it into their classrooms.

Their testimonies reveal a growing, self-sustaining movement in which schools are becoming spaces for dialogue, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution across generations. For WPDI, 2025 was therefore a year of meaningful progress: helping communities heal past fractures, strengthening pathways for effective governance, and empowering future generations with the tools to build peace.

The recognition received from communities and national stakeholders affirmed the value and relevance of this work. This impact was further acknowledged internationally when WPDI South Sudan was invited in November to showcase its grassroots peacebuilding methodology at the 8th Paris Peace Forum, one of the world's leading platforms for dialogue on global peace and governance challenges. This invitation demonstrated that the approaches developed in the Equatorias are not only transforming local communities but are also being recognized as innovative and adaptable models for addressing complex crises worldwide. This report presents the milestones, lessons, and partnerships that continue to shape this model offering a roadmap for sustaining and expanding peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan.



Shifting Global Frameworks at the 8th Paris Peace Forum

WPDI's selection to host an exhibition booth at the 8th Paris Peace Forum, following a previous invitation to the 4th edition in 2021, underscores our institutional recognition as a key player on the global peacebuilding stage. In an era of escalating global conflict, the Forum provided a high-level platform to showcase innovative, grassroots solutions that bridge the gap between civil society actions and international policy commitments.

The WPDI booth focused heavily on the Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) in South Sudan. South Sudanese Youth Peacemaker Nandega Magdalena Lokoro provided crucial grassroots context, demonstrating how localized trust and dialogue transform conflict zones from the bottom up. Complementing this local perspective, South Sudan Country Manager Dagu David engaged international stakeholders on the strategic necessity of establishing structural dialogue between civil society and governments to turn top-down peace commitments into reality.



Addressing structural vulnerabilities, Executive Director Caroline Descombris joined a critical panel alongside the Association of Charity Lotteries in Europe (ACLEU), including vital WPDI partners the People's Postcode Lottery (UK) and the Swedish Postcode Lottery Foundation. She addressed a systemic crisis: civil society organizations are under unprecedented pressure, facing a skyrocketing demand for localized education, mental health support, and social cohesion at the exact moment sustainable, flexible funding streams are shrinking. By elevating these dynamics, WPDI reinforced that sustaining peace requires a dual approach: immediate grassroots empowerment backed by resilient, long-term international funding mechanisms.



Key Achievements



PEACEBUILDING: 34,363 participants

11,347

Community Learning Center (CLC) visitors

160

Youth peacemakers

10,406

Individuals reached by youth peacemakers

Peacebuilding in Schools

13

Schools hosting WPDl programs

202

Teachers and school administrative staff trained

1,211

Students trained in conflict resolution education

5,546

Indirect beneficiaries of the program

6,959

Total participants in school-based peacebuilding

Peacebuilding in the Community

16

Community dialogues held

629

Local leaders trained

2,818

Participants in community dialogues

3,447

Total participants in community-level peacebuilding

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

1,437

Conflict resolution education trainees

2,940

Participants in cinema for peace

8,074

Participants in advocacy campaigns

12,451

Total participants in peacebuilding activities at the CLC



LIVELIHOOD: 9,847 participants

Capacity-Building

180

Financial Literacy trainees

56

Arts and Crafts trainees

374

Vulnerable women trained in business

1,220

Business and entrepreneurship trainees

1,609

ICT trainees

3,740

Total trainees in vocational courses

Businesses

99

Businesses created in 2025

353

Businesses supported by WPDl in total

154

Businesses launched through VSLA support

1,147

Jobs created

4,960

Indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)

6,107

Beneficiaries of all businesses



SPORTS: 10,325 participants

6

Female teams managed by WPDl

16

Male teams managed by WPDl

325

Regular training participants

10,000

Participants in competition events



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 100 participants

100

Sexual and reproductive health individual beneficiaries

54,636

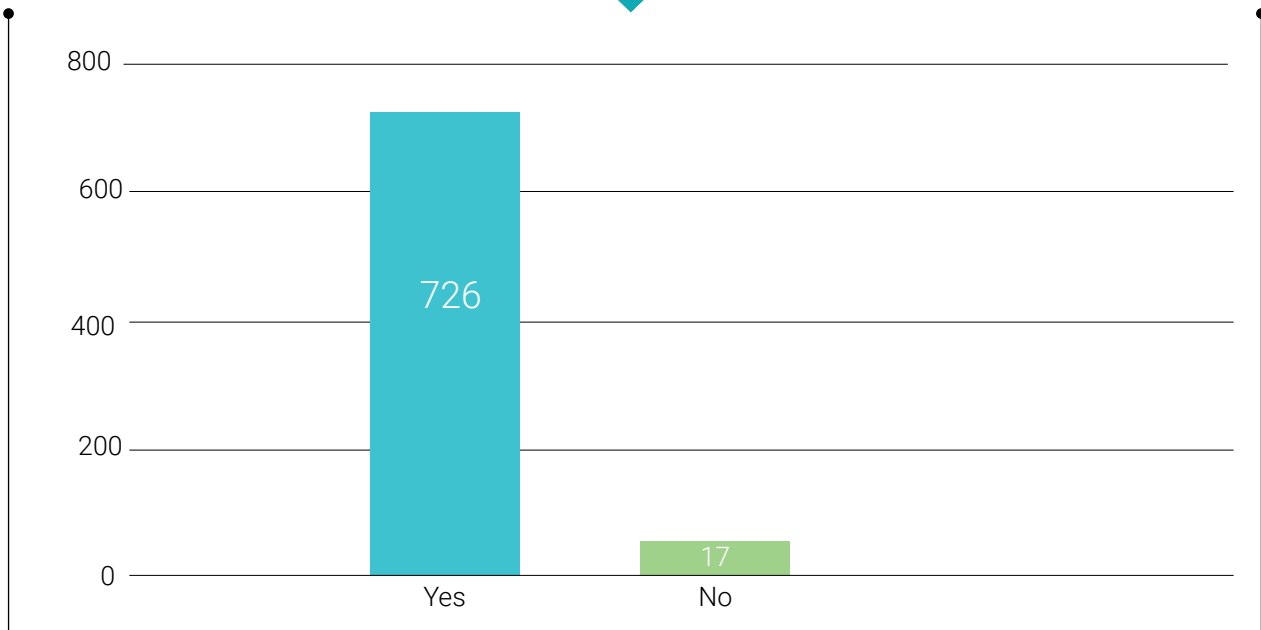
Grand total of people reached through WPDl's activities in the region, both directly and indirectly, in 2025



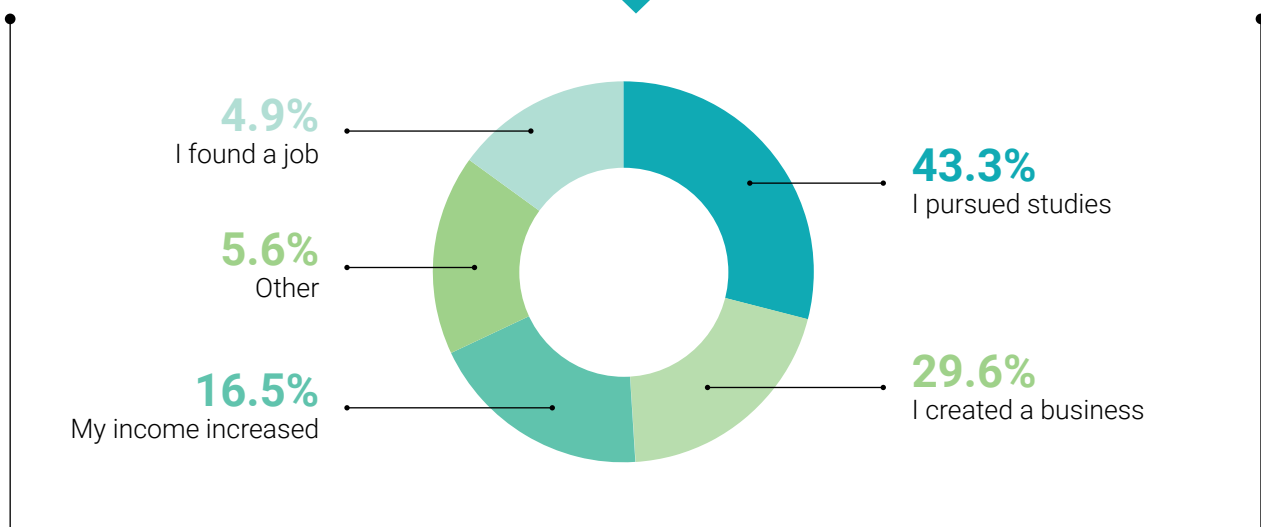
Survey Results

Every year, WPDJ conducts surveys in an effort to better understand the impact of our activities. More charts showcasing the results of these surveys can be found under each section of the report.

“Have you been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDJ in your personal or professional life?” (responses from 743 beneficiaries)



“How has the program improved your career prospects?” (responses from 587 beneficiaries)



Our Background

The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) was founded by social activist and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation Forest Whitaker, with a belief that young people and women are not simply affected by conflict, they are powerful agents of change. Through its programs, WPDI works to equip communities with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to build peace, strengthen resilience, and create sustainable opportunities for themselves. Although WPDI operates internationally, with programs across Africa, Europe, and North America, South Sudan remains at the heart of its work. WPDI has been working in South Sudan since the country's early years of independence, witnessing firsthand the challenges brought by conflict and instability. Over the past decade, the organization has built strong relationships and long-term structures within communities, particularly in the Equatorias and other affected regions. Our goal is to support communities in South Sudan as they rebuild, develop resilience, and create pathways toward lasting peace and economic opportunity. Through Community Learning Centers, conflict resolution education, and support for small business development, WPDI helps individuals and communities gain the practical skills and confidence needed to become active participants in their own development.

Our Mission

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

Our Strategic Framework



Feedback from Local & National Partners

"We, as the government, are immensely grateful for the support of the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative in Western Equatoria State (WES). The facilities they provide are incredibly helpful, not only for the youth but also for our government operations. We have been able to utilize their resources, such as internet access and library services to conduct our research effectively. As the government, we strive to deliver all the necessary services to our citizens, but currently lack the capacity to meet every need. WPDI has been instrumental in bringing some of the gaps, and for that, we extend our heartfelt thanks."

Wilson Danie, Director of Labor, Ministry of Public Service and Human Resource Development, Western Equatoria State



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

Oyito Baptist Habihoi Soforonio, Mayor of Torit, Eastern Equatoria State





Vectors of Change

CLC Visitors

811
CES Visitors

2,774
EES Visitors

7,692
WES Visitors

11,347
Total Community
Learning Center Visitors

Youth Peacemakers

92
CES Youth
Peacemakers

22
EES Youth
Peacemakers

46
WES Youth
Peacemakers

160
Total Youth
Peacemakers

To achieve a significant impact at the community level, we implement our initiatives through mechanisms referred to as “vectors of change.” These structures facilitate our engagement with target populations effectively. We operate with two primary vectors: cohorts of young leaders known as Youth Peacemakers and our Community Learning Centers.

The Peacemakers function as conduits within their respective communities, focusing on enhancing capacity for peacebuilding and mitigating conflict.

Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

In Eastern, Central, and Western Equatoria States, WPDJ equips and mobilizes Youth Peacemakers to advance community-based initiatives. The formation of these groups begins with a comprehensive one-year training program that equips participants with skills in Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and Business and Entrepreneurship.

Following their training, our 160 Youth Peacemakers play a vital role in implementing community activities that promote accountability, nonviolence, and tolerance. Throughout 2025, they actively fostered peace and reconciliation by facilitating community dialogues, mediation efforts, and reconciliation events, strengthening social cohesion and mutual understanding. Working in schools on behalf of WPDJ, they also helped establish Peace Clubs. In addition, they organized advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of key issues affecting their communities. Collectively, these efforts represent a significant contribution to WPDJ’s mission in South Sudan, accounting for approximately 20% of the organization’s overall impact in the country.



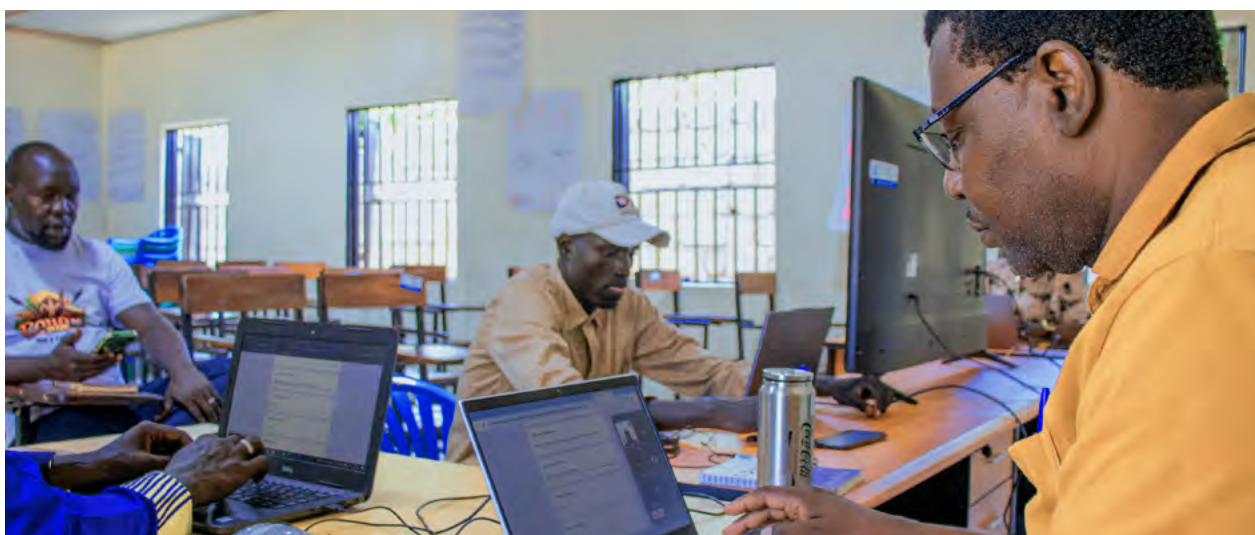
"Before joining WPDI, my future felt uncertain amid the turmoil of the civil war. In 2018, everything changed when I had the opportunity to train as a peacemaker through WPDI's YPN program. With dedication, I completed the extensive training and began facilitating conflict resolution education, community dialogues, and advocacy campaigns. My work has impacted countless lives, promoting peace and security while improving my own livelihood. WPDI's support has enabled me to provide for my family and even travel abroad—opportunities I never imagined possible. I am deeply grateful for the transformation WPDI has brought to my life."

Dusuman Joseph, Youth Peacemaker



"I am honored to serve as a Youth Peacemaker with WPDI. Over the past five years, I have trained individuals in conflict resolution, equipping them with the skills to address disputes constructively. As a facilitator in the Trauma Healing program, I have led workshops on mediation, negotiation, and dialogue, witnessing firsthand how education empowers communities to foster peace. The resilience and dedication of those we serve continue to inspire me. I am deeply grateful to WPDI for this opportunity and remain committed to advancing peace and conflict resolution."

Alier Elijah, Youth Peacemaker



Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

WPDI operates a network of eight Community Learning Centers (CLCs) strategically located across the Equatoria region, covering Eastern Equatoria State (EES), Central Equatoria State (CES), and Western Equatoria State (WES). In EES, five CLCs are established in Lafon, Torit, Magwi (Nimule), Ikwoto, and Budi counties. CES hosts one CLC in Juba County, while WES has two CLCs located in Maridi and Yambio counties.

In 2025, the CLCs welcomed more than 11,000 visitors and continued to serve as vibrant community hubs, offering a diverse range of learning opportunities in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Business and Entrepreneurship, and Arts and Crafts. The centers provide accessible spaces for community members to build practical skills, expand their knowledge, and pursue personal and professional development.



Participants, including aspiring entrepreneurs, peacebuilding advocates, students, and job seekers, continue to recognize CLCs as valuable resources for addressing skills gaps and strengthening their capacity to contribute to their communities. Beyond training activities, the CLCs serve as platforms for community engagement by hosting advocacy campaigns, sports activities, and other events designed to raise awareness on critical social issues. Advocacy campaigns organized through the CLCs help foster dialogue and collaboration among community members and key stakeholders, including parents, teachers, Ministry of Education representatives, community leaders, and civil society organizations. These initiatives address a range of issues, including human rights promotion, HIV/AIDS prevention, climate change mitigation, and the prevention of early and forced marriage, contributing to greater awareness and community-driven action.





Peacebuilding

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

Peacebuilding in Schools

13

Schools hosting
WPDI programs

202

Teachers and school
administrative
staff trained

1,211

Students trained in
conflict resolution
education

5,546

Indirect
beneficiaries
of the program

6,959

Total participants
in school-based
peacebuilding

Peacebuilding in the Community

16

Community
dialogues held

629

Local leaders
trained

2,818

Participants in
community dialogues

3,447

Total participants
in community-level
peacebuilding

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

1,437

Conflict resolution
education trainees

2,940

Participants in
cinema for peace

8,074

Participants in
advocacy campaigns

12,451

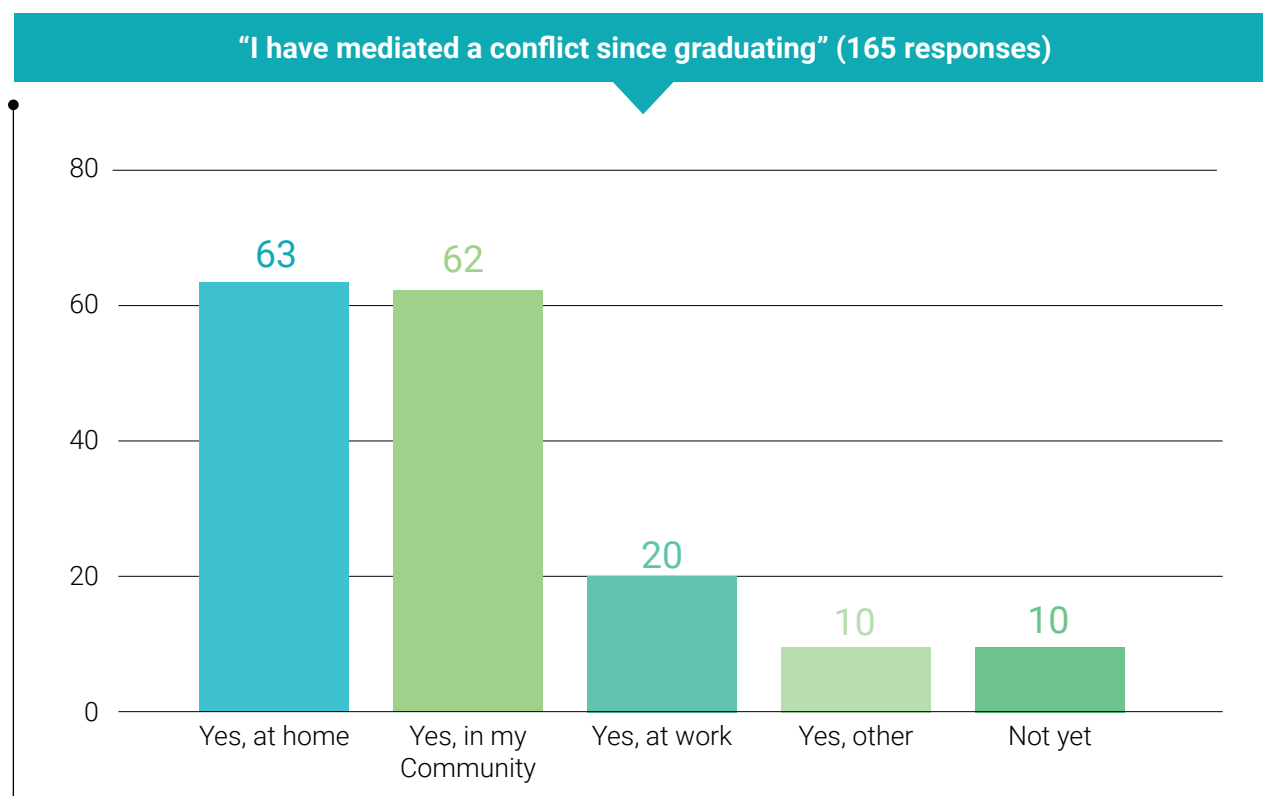
Total participants in
peacebuilding activities
at the CLC

Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community

At the Community Learning Centers (CLCs), WPDJ delivers Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) training to youth, community leaders, and members of the general public. The objective of these sessions is to strengthen participants' capacity in mediation, negotiation, and conflict analysis, while promoting the values of peace and social cohesion. In 2025, 1,437 beneficiaries were trained in conflict mediation at one of our CLCs. This year, WPDJ expanded the scope of the training to reach more targeted groups. CRE was delivered not only to youth, women, and community members, but also to crop farmers and cattle herders, who frequently face conflict over land use, grazing, and farm destruction.

In Central Equatoria State (CES), 244 farmers and herders were trained, contributing to more constructive dialogue and engagement between these groups. CRE training was also integrated into livelihood programming. In Goroyo 1 and 2, 40 women enrolled in Business and Entrepreneurship training received additional instruction in conflict resolution. Strengthening these skills enhances their leadership capacity, enabling them to manage disputes, maintain business relationships, and make informed decisions. The integration of peacebuilding into entrepreneurship training also contributes to increased confidence and resilience among participants.

As demonstrated by the responses to our post-training survey, feedback from participants indicates that CRE skills are highly valued in both professional and academic settings. The training equips individuals with practical tools for managing conflict while supporting broader personal and professional development.



Bringing Skills and Values for Peace In Schools

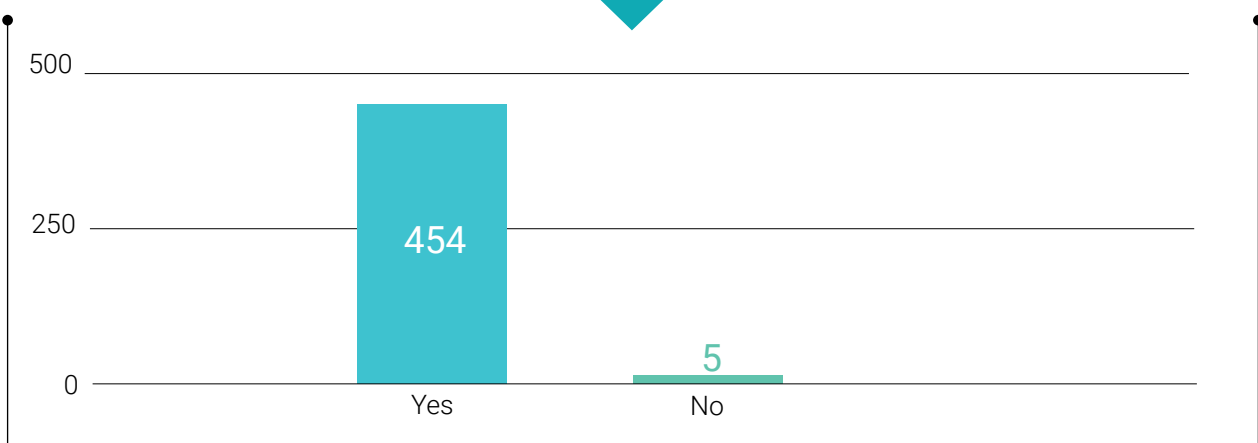
Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) in schools is one of the core activities implemented by WPDJ across its areas of intervention. The program aims to equip pupils and students with the knowledge and skills needed to promote positive social behaviors, prevent conflict, and foster social cohesion.

The program was implemented in 13 schools in Eastern and Western Equatoria, reaching 1,211 students, both from primary and secondary schools. CRE training focuses on developing essential life skills, including communication, mediation, and respect for diversity, contributing to the promotion of non-violence within schools and surrounding communities.

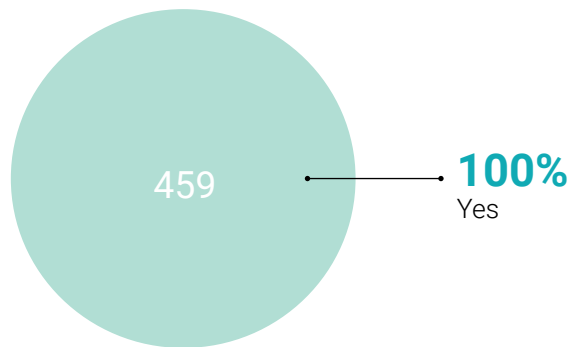
The curriculum is structured into 14 modules delivered over a six-month period. Through this approach, students are encouraged to develop non-violent attitudes, strengthen interpersonal skills, and adopt inclusive perspectives that support peaceful coexistence. The program also contributes to improved academic performance, increased self-confidence, and stronger engagement among participants. After the training, WPDJ shared its post-training surveys with graduate students and school staff. The positive results show that direct positive impact is attributed to our program, whether it is on the individual students themselves or on the school atmosphere.



Is there less fighting among students who attend this program? (459 responses)



Does the program build your self-confidence? (459 responses)



From Fear to Hope: How Peace Education Is Changing Young Lives

For many young people in South Sudan, conflict is not just something they learn about in history books, it is part of their lived experience.

"I grew up in a community where conflict was something we heard about, saw, and sometimes even feared, but it was also something we grew up with," says Achiro Pauline, a student at Kings College Secondary School. "Many of us have lost relatives and friends to violence. Some of my classmates have been displaced more than once."

Growing up surrounded by conflict can shape the way young people respond to challenges. For many, anger becomes a way to survive before they ever learn the tools to build peace. But when peace education was introduced in Achiro's school, she began to see a different future.

"We started learning how to solve disagreements without fighting. We learned about respect, listening, and understanding different tribes, traditions, and communities," she explains. "For the first time, we embraced unity instead of focusing on our differences." Through peace education, Achiro and her classmates discovered that peace is not only about ending violence; it is also about everyday choices: how students treat one another, how teachers and learners communicate, and how communities respect people from different ethnicities, languages, and backgrounds. "It helped us understand that we all have the same dreams: to study, to work toward a better future, to live safely, and to build a better country."

For Achiro, peace education has also highlighted the important role of girls in creating lasting peace. "As a girl, I learned that peace also means giving equal opportunities to girls in school," she says. "Educating girls brings peace to families and future generations."

Across South Sudan, many girls continue to face barriers such as early marriage and being prevented from continuing their education. Achiro believes that supporting girls' education is essential to strengthening communities.

"When girls learn, communities grow stronger. A peaceful nation starts in the classroom, and girls should be part of that story."

Today, Achiro sees peace education as an investment in the next generation of leaders. "I strongly believe that peace education should be in every school. It will help young people become leaders who solve problems, instead of leaders who create them." For Achiro and many other students, the classroom has become a place where a different future can begin, one built on respect, inclusion, and hope.

"We are the future of South Sudan, and peace education is the foundation we need."

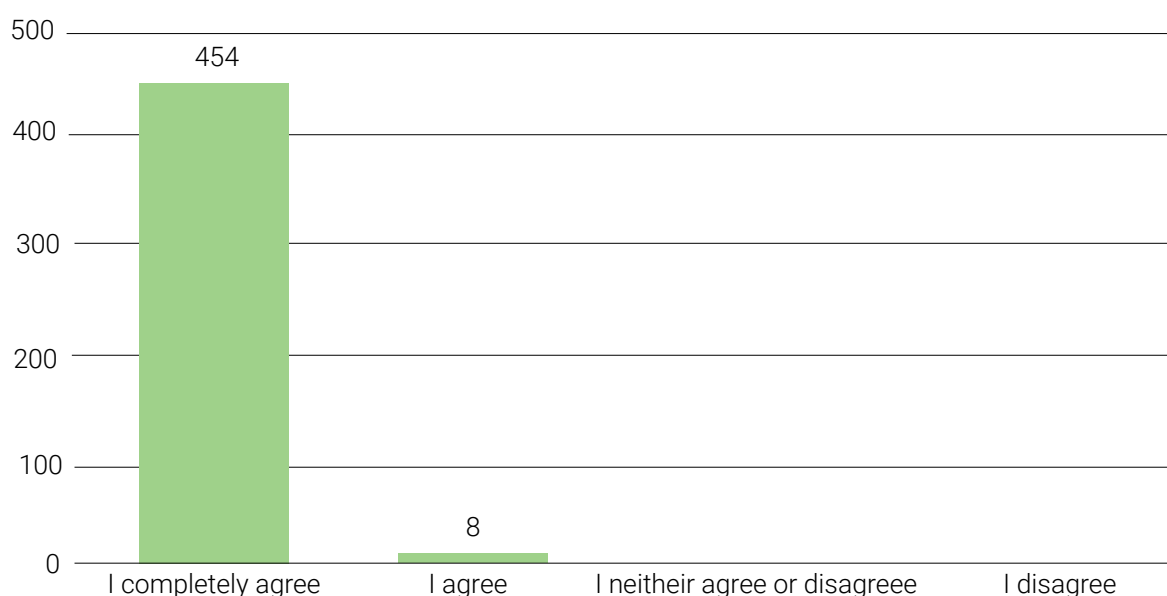
Training School Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

The CRE training also extends to teachers in the schools with which we partner. This approach reflects WPDl's broader strategy of equipping local actors with the tools needed to sustain peacebuilding efforts within their communities. In 2025, WPDl South Sudan trained 202 teachers in conflict mediation.

Through specialized training sessions, selected teachers are equipped with knowledge and practical skills in peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict resolution. All schools participating in the CRE program benefit from this engagement, strengthening the integration of conflict resolution principles within the classroom.

By embedding these skills into daily teaching practices, educators contribute to fostering a culture of peace, improving conflict mitigation, and reinforcing positive behavior among students. This approach supports long-term impact by ensuring that peace education continues beyond the duration of WPDl's direct interventions.

"WPDl's program is effectively teaching and promoting peaceful attitudes, self-discipline, non-violence, and other civic mindsets"



"I have learned so much. Before the training, I thought peace was just that absence of war, however, peace goes beyond just this, it captures aspects from within one's self. So, as I leave the training venue, I will begin to sow seeds of peace and nurture them jealously. I appreciate this initiative by WPDl, it surely is an interesting program geared towards bringing lasting peace into the war-ravaged South Sudan."

Nora Silman,
Volunteer Teacher, Green Valley Secondary School, Yambio



"I wish to convey my sincere appreciation to WPDl for the invaluable skills and knowledge acquired during the five days training in Conflict Resolution Education. As I return to my educational institution and community, I am dedicated to forming a peace club aimed at fostering a culture of peace."

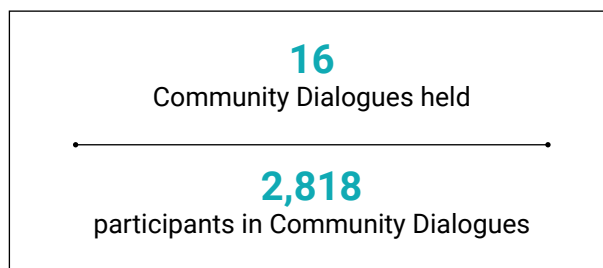
Gamboripai Celine Christopher,
Teacher, Western Equatoria State



Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

The goal of these discussions is to remain closely attuned to local realities while ensuring that every voice is heard. They are designed to create space for genuine understanding. For this reason, Community Dialogues are primarily led by local peacemakers, whose deep knowledge of their communities enables them to build trust more effectively than external actors. With the skills and tools provided by WPDI, Youth Peacemakers play a central role in mediating conflicts and addressing longstanding tensions. A key objective of these dialogues is to generate a lasting ripple effect across communities.

Throughout 2025, WPDI conducted a series of 16 Community Dialogues in partnership with key stakeholders, including state and county governments, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Civil Affairs Division, and the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO).



In Central Equatoria State (CES), consultative dialogues were held in Yei, Kajo-Keji, Lainya, and Morobo counties, focusing on recurring tensions between crop farmers and cattle herders.

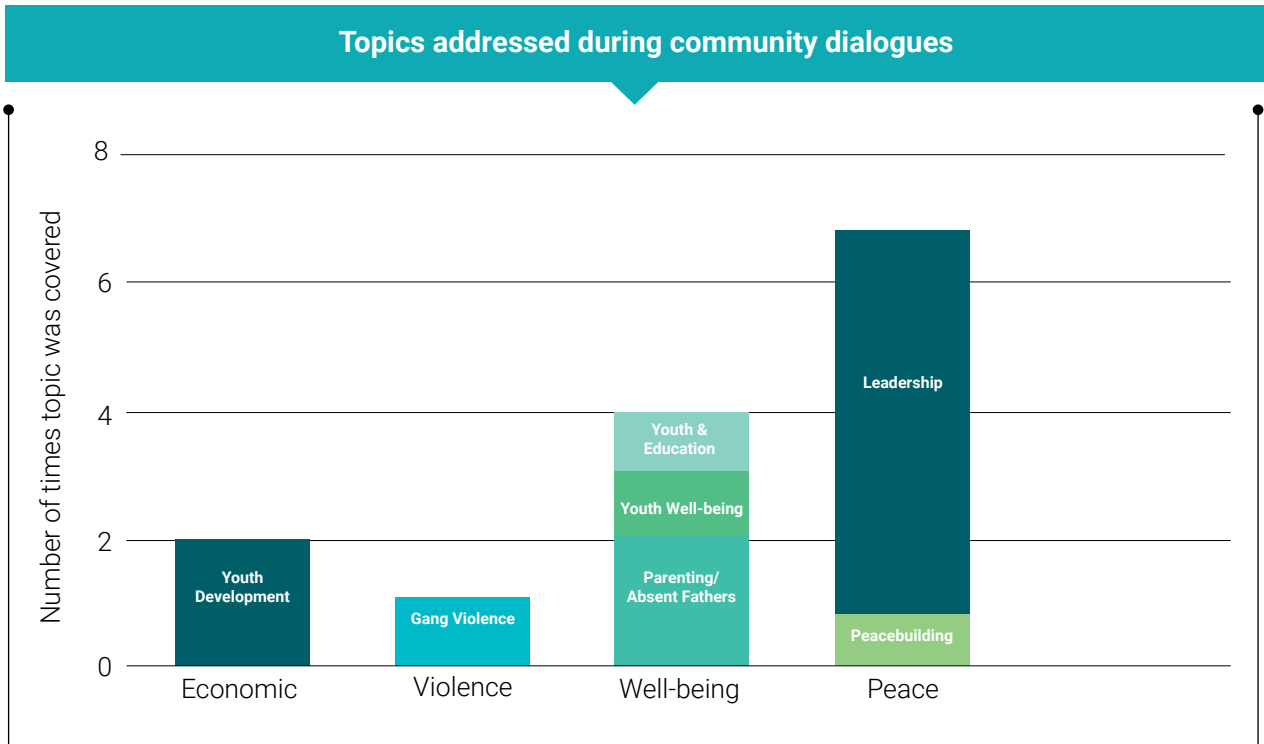
- In Kajo-Keji, a dialogue titled “Identifying Challenges and Solutions: A Collaborative Approach to Resolving Conflict Between Farmers and Cattle Herders” brought together farmers and nomadic pastoralists (including the Falata from Chad, Banyankole from Uganda, and herders from Bor, South Sudan) fostering open communication and strengthening relationships.
- In Lainya, discussions centered on reconciliation among community members, including crop farmers and cattle herders such as Mundari herders from Tali and those from Bor. Participants openly shared grievances and agreed on practical steps to improve coexistence.
- In Yei, dialogues focused on developing locally driven solutions to cattle migration, reducing seasonal cycles of violence, and identifying agreed migration routes and grazing areas, including the Mugwo–Pakula and Kupeera routes.
- A follow-up dialogue in Morobo enabled stakeholders to review the implementation of earlier resolutions, reinforcing accountability and continuity in peacebuilding efforts.
- Additional dialogues in Kuda (Dolo Payam) brought together cattle herders from Terekeka County and farmers from Juba County under the theme “Promoting Peaceful Coexistence Between Herders and Farmers.” These discussions helped de-escalate tensions, with participants agreeing to forgive past grievances and commit to peaceful coexistence.

In Eastern Equatoria State (EES), dialogues were conducted in Bur Payam (Torit County) and Lafon County under the theme “Action for Peace, Unity and Sustainable Development.” These sessions addressed persistent tensions, competition over natural resources, and gaps in coordination between local governance structures and communities, with the aim of strengthening social cohesion and preventing conflict.

In Western Equatoria State (WES), WPDI supported two community dialogues in collaboration with the Azande Kingdom. The second brought together diverse ethnic groups across the Kingdom’s areas of jurisdiction, fostering dialogue and promoting peaceful coexistence.

By providing inclusive platforms for engagement, WPDI helps build trust between communities and leaders, encourages open communication and cooperation, and supports the early resolution of conflicts before they escalate. 2,818 participants attended these dialogues, increasing community engagement particularly in decision making processes.

As shown below, recurring themes such as leadership for peace and economic opportunities for youths dominated preoccupations this year.



“I thank WPDl and the State Ministry of Peacebuilding for taking their time to facilitate and support the government in the conflict resolution process, as well as highlighting the role of payam administrators, chiefs, women, and youth within the community to build and sustain peace in the area.”

Christopher Andrew, County Commissioner of Torit County



“You have planted the seeds of peace that will nurture and produce fruitful change for our people. This dialogue is crucial, especially in the light of the ongoing cattle-related conflicts and border issues between South Sudan and Uganda. The resolutions of this dialogue will empower us, as a constructive dialogue has been held.”

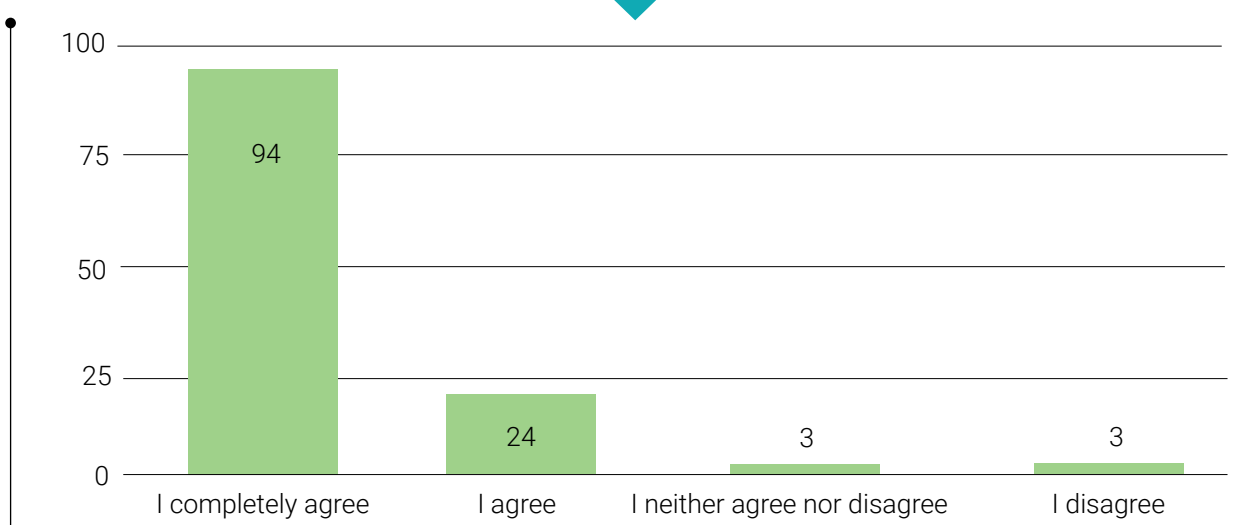
Evans Pere, Director of Peacebuilding, Kajo-Keji County



Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace

As part of its peacebuilding efforts, WPDl delivers training for community leaders to strengthen local capacity in conflict resolution, governance, and social cohesion. The training equips participants with practical skills and knowledge across a wide range of thematic areas, including human rights, gender mainstreaming, conflict and power dynamics, servant leadership, advocacy, mental health awareness, and comprehensive sexuality education. Leaders are introduced to a rights-based approach, enabling them to better understand and promote fundamental rights within their communities. These skills enable leaders to address emerging conflicts early and effectively, creating a positive ripple effect that enhances social cohesion and contributes to long-term peace and resilience in their communities.

WPDI is making a lasting positive impact in my community



Strengthening Local Leadership for Peace and Good Governance in Terekeka

In Terekeka County, strong and accountable local leadership is essential for building peaceful and resilient communities. To support this effort, WPDI, in collaboration with the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Local Government and Law Enforcement, conducted a four-day workshop for the Terekeka County Legislative Council, bringing together 35 participants, including council members, county executive officials, and representatives from local government and law enforcement institutions.

The training strengthened participants' understanding of conflict resolution, servant leadership, human rights, and the role of legislative councils in promoting accountability, representation, and development. Through sessions on conflict analysis, power dynamics, peacebuilding, and the Local Government Act of 2009, participants gained practical skills to address challenges and contribute to peace and stability in their communities.

Beyond building knowledge, the workshop encouraged dialogue and collaboration among local leaders, helping strengthen their ability to work together in addressing community needs and promoting good governance. Reflecting on the impact of the training, Hon. Joseph Elia, Chairperson of the Terekeka County Legislative Council, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to strengthen the capacity of local leaders. He noted that the workshop helped councilors and executive members better understand their responsibilities and key principles of governance, saying: "We appreciate WPDI for organizing this workshop. Councilors and executive members of Terekeka have now understood their different roles and key concepts in good governance, peacebuilding, the Local Government Act 2009, human rights, and conflict resolution." He added that he hoped similar trainings could be extended to other counties to help more leaders benefit from the experience.

For Emmanuel Remot, Acting Executive Director of Terekeka County, the training highlighted the importance of turning laws and policies into meaningful action. Recognizing the role of leaders in creating lasting change, he emphasized: "Having laws is not enough; we must enforce and implement them effectively. I commend WPDI for their dedication and encourage continued support." He also called for continued efforts to spread messages of peace, unity, and development across the county, stating, "Let us disseminate messages of peace, unity, and development to build a stronger Terekeka. WPDI's support is vital."

By equipping local leaders with the skills and knowledge to promote inclusive governance and resolve conflicts, the workshop contributed to laying the foundation for lasting peace, collaboration, and sustainable development in Terekeka County and beyond.



"As women, we have borne the brunt of these conflicts; displacement, loss of loved ones, and destruction of our homes. This dialogue has given us hope, a chance to speak out and seek forgiveness. It is time to rebuild trust, respect, and peace among our communities. We are committed to working together, restoring our land, and ensuring a peaceful future for our children. I thank WPDI for giving us this platform to voice our pain and our hopes for lasting peace."

Mama Roda, Central Equatoria State



"This training has been so essential for my line of duty as a chief. I now have emotional intelligence and skills in managing conflict together with my team, the board members."

Ben Sidoru Someru, Block Chief, Torit, Eastern Equatoria State



Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

Advocacy campaigns are implemented through a two-pronged approach: at Community Learning Centers (CLCs) and in schools, enabling both community-level and student-led engagement.

“The ‘Back-To-School’ campaign organized by WPDI with support from Zain South Sudan, comes at a particularly crucial time. Many individuals in our community are currently away from school due to various reasons and challenges, most of which are involuntary. These circumstances have unfortunately led to the interruption in education. However, with the encouragement and resources provided through this initiative, I would like to gently urge everyone to consider returning back to school and complete their studies, as education remains a vital path to personal and communal advancement, despite the obstacles we face.”

Alice Gisma, Student, Yambio, (WES)



Advocacy campaigns in schools and across the community

Advocacy campaigns are a core component of peacebuilding and conflict resolution and the activities have been conducted at the CLCs where CRE is being implemented. The advocacy campaigns are usually attended by stakeholders from the government, Parents-teachers' Associations (PTA), students, key community leaders, and members of the general public.

In Eastern Equatoria State (EES) for example, five advocacy campaigns were conducted at Community Learning Centers (CLCs). The campaigns were held under the theme “United for Peace: Strengthening Social Cohesion in Communities.” These initiatives addressed key issues affecting local communities, including harmful cultural norms related to girls' education, the promotion of positive masculinity, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), gender equality, youth unemployment, climate change, early and forced marriages, and teenage pregnancies. The campaigns also raised awareness about limited access to health services in remote areas such as Iluguh, Murarw, and Infnyok. While in WES advocacy campaigns focused on inter-cultural acceptance and school attendance. Campaigns are also led by WPDI's Peace Club members in schools, who engage fellow students, teachers, parents, and community members to share messages of hope, peace, and social responsibility.

The involvement of local government officials in these campaigns has contributed to concrete outcomes, including policy engagement and improvements in learning conditions. These efforts demonstrate the role of youth-led advocacy in driving change within schools and communities.



Inaugural Cultural Festival in Western Equatoria State

WPDI partnered with the Azande Kingdom to support its inaugural cultural festival in Western Equatoria State, using the event as a platform to promote peace, unity, and social cohesion in a region marked by ethnic diversity and historical challenges. By engaging communities through cultural celebrations, WPDI fosters dialogue, mutual respect, and opportunities for collaboration across different tribes.

The Azande Kingdom, a historic institution that predates colonial rule, was officially restored in February 2022, 117 years after King Gbudue was killed by British colonialists in 1905. His great-grandson, Atoroba Peni Rikito Gbudue, was installed as the new King on Gbudue Day. Tadeo Mario Sasa, the Kingdom's Prime Minister, emphasized the inclusive nature of the restoration. "This kingdom belongs to all the 64 tribes of South Sudan. It stands for unity, peace, and cultural pride for every community," Sasa said, framing the festival as a celebration for all tribes in the state and across the nation.

Held under the theme "Celebrating Our Unity Through Cultural Diversity," the two-day festival at Yambio Freedom Square brought together hundreds of people from communities across Western Equatoria to showcase traditional music, dance, and crafts. WPDI's support helped ensure the event emphasized dialogue, collaboration, and the shared values that underpin lasting peace in South Sudan.

In his opening remarks, Western Equatoria's Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Charles Gamboripai Gideon, endorsed the festival as a vital tool for social cohesion. "This initiative brings our people together to celebrate the diversity that makes us strong," he said, urging the kingdom and its partners to hold such events regularly to relieve community stress and reinforce harmony.

Mande Daniel, WPDI's Program Coordinator, underscored the importance of unity and the dangers of ethnic division, drawing lessons from the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. "We are all South Sudanese. Let us avoid tribalism and promote peace and togetherness," he said. "WPDI will continue supporting initiatives that unite our people."



Cinema for Peace

Cinema for Peace is one of the activities implemented by WPDJ to promote social cohesion and community engagement. The initiative serves as a platform for raising awareness on social, political, and humanitarian issues while supporting participants' psychosocial and mental well-being.

Implemented across Community Learning Centers (CLCs), schools, and selected communities, the program uses film screenings to engage diverse audiences and encourage intercultural exchange.

Each screening is followed by facilitated discussions with youth and community leaders, providing space for participants to reflect on the film's themes, share perspectives, and connect the lessons to their own experiences. These discussions foster empathy, promote mutual understanding, and encourage participants to identify constructive ways to address challenges within their communities. This year, 2,940 people participated in these screenings and the lively conversations that followed.

"I am 28 years old and a mother of four children. I recently participated in the Cinema for Peace program, where we watched films on poverty, child marriage, gender-based violence, and sexual harassment. The discussions that followed opened my eyes to the challenges in our community and how we can work together to address them. I also learned important lessons about positive parenting. Before the program, I often released my frustrations on my children, especially my girls. But through what I learned and shared with others; I realized the impact of my behavior and made a decision to change. Today, my daughters and I live in greater peace, and our relationship has improved because of the lessons I gained from the Cinema for Peace screening."

Juru Florence, Participant, Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State (CES)





Livelihood

A key aspect of WPDI's work in South Sudan is improving economic conditions for individuals and communities. In 2025, the livelihood program continued to expand opportunities, with a strong focus on women and youth. Through targeted training, participants gained skills in business management, entrepreneurship, and functional literacy. Following the training, participants are equipped to design and implement community needs-based income-generating projects (IGPs), contributing to improved livelihoods and access to basic services at the local level.

To support business development, WPDI organizes Business Plan Competitions to identify promising ideas. Selected participants receive technical guidance and financial support to help transform their projects into sustainable enterprises.

An additional strategy includes the establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and the provision of revolving funds, particularly for women's groups. These initiatives prioritize vulnerable women, who are first trained in business skills, VSLA formation, and financial management before receiving seed funding to scale their income-generating activities.

This approach reduces financial barriers that often prevent women from starting or expanding businesses, enabling them to generate sustainable income. As women gain financial independence, their influence within households and communities grows. By combining training with access to capital, WPDI ensures that knowledge is translated into practical application, supporting long-term economic empowerment and resilience.

Capacity-Building

180
Financial
Literacy
trainees

56
Arts and Crafts
trainees

374
Vulnerable
women trained
in business

1,220
Business and
entrepreneurship
trainees

1,609
ICT
trainees

3,740
Total trainees
in vocational
courses

Businesses

99
Businesses
created in
2025

353
Businesses
supported by
WPDI in total

154
Businesses
launched through
VSLA support

1,147
Jobs
created

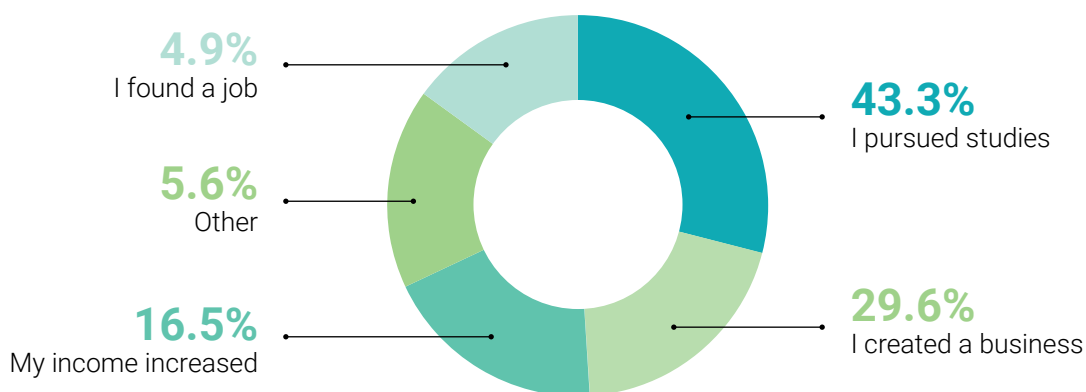
4,960
Indirect beneficiaries
of businesses
(families)

6,107
Beneficiaries
of all
businesses

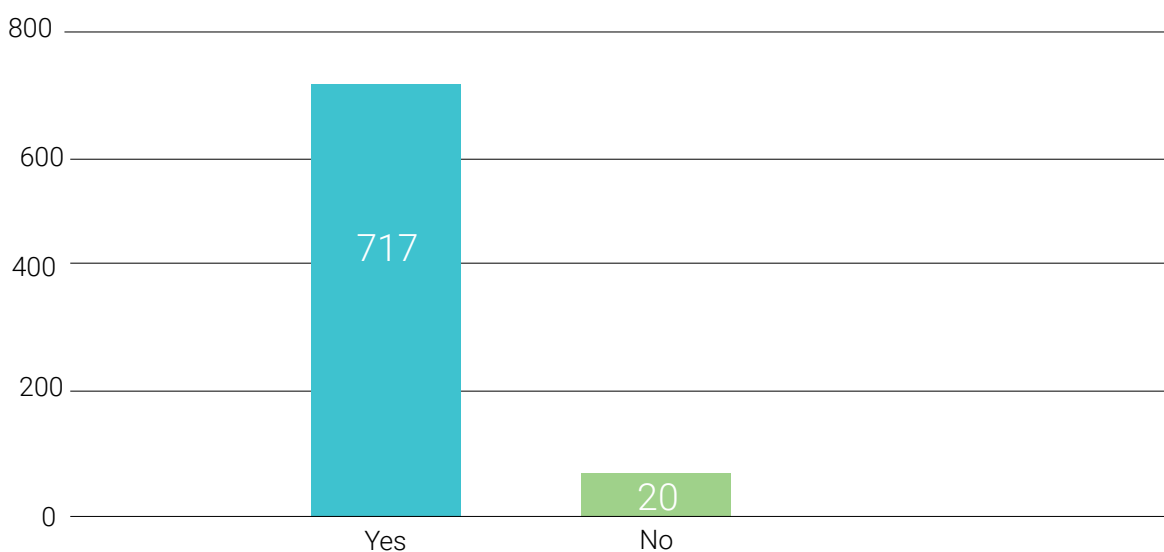
Capacity-Building Courses

WPDI offers comprehensive capacity-building programs designed to enhance participants' employability and entrepreneurial potential. In 2025, 3,740 individuals were trained in capacity-building courses and 743 of them responded to our survey to measure the impact of the training. We see that a vast majority of respondents were in long-term unemployment before the training and upon graduation they attest to tangible impact on their economic prospects.

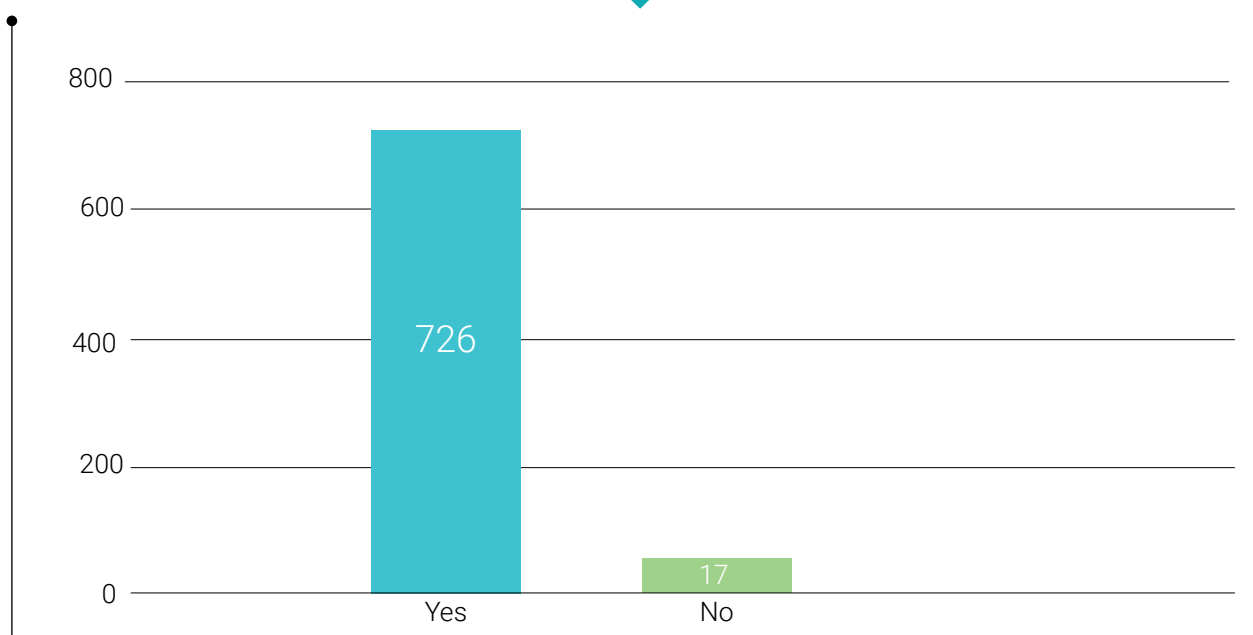
**"How has the program improved your career prospects?"
(responses from 587 beneficiaries)**



Were you unemployed at the start of this program? (737 responses)



"Have you been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDl in your personal or professional life?" (743 responses)



Business and Entrepreneurship

WPDI delivers Business and Entrepreneurship training programs designed to equip participants with the skills needed to start and manage small, medium, and large enterprises.

Participants complete a three-month training program focused on business management and entrepreneurship, led by WPDI trainers. Upon completion, graduates are eligible to participate in Business Plan Competitions, where they submit proposals evaluated by a jury composed of WPDI experts, local community representatives, and government officials, including members of the National Chamber of Commerce. Selected participants receive access to WPDI funding and mentorship to help launch and sustain their businesses.

In 2025, WPDI trained 1,220 participants. Thus empowering youth, women, and men with the skills needed to achieve self-reliance and contribute to sustainable development within their communities. The training was delivered at community training centers and made accessible to participants from surrounding bomas and payams. The program also extended to refugees in Gorrom Refugee Camp in Juba, CES, in collaboration with the Commission for Refugee Affairs (CRA), following coordinated engagement efforts. Of the trainees, 301 also received specific training related to green skills, CV writing and how to prepare for interviews. As needed, a Functional Adult Literacy module is made available for those needing additional support reading and writing before engaging in other capacity-building activities.

“The business course has been instrumental in helping me generate innovative business ideas, which is crucial as I aspire to launch my own venture. I’ve come to realize that, before diving into the world of business, it is essential to thoroughly assess my strengths and weaknesses. By leveraging my strengths, I can enhance my business performance while actively working to address my weaknesses, paving the way for sustainable growth and success.”

Tomor Samson Samuel, Arts and Crafts Trainee, Juba CLC, Central Equatoria State (CES)





How Modong Rose Is Building a Better Future for Her Family

Modong Rose, a 33-year-old mother of five from Lire Payam, Mere Boma, in Kajo-Keji County, Central Equatoria State, has transformed her livelihood through determination, resilience, and entrepreneurship. After losing her husband at a young age, she became the sole provider for her family. "Life changed suddenly because he was the sole provider for the family," she shared.

While living as a refugee in the West Nile region of Uganda, Modong learned tailoring skills that would later become the foundation of her business. "The practical skills encouraged me to start a small business when I returned home to South Sudan," she explained.

Upon returning to South Sudan, Modong enrolled in a three-month Business and Entrepreneurship training program delivered by WPDI. The training helped her strengthen both her technical abilities and business management skills. She started her tailoring business by renting a sewing machine for 20,000 SSP per month while saving money to purchase her own equipment. "Since my knowledge in business had expanded from the training conducted by WPDI and with the little savings I had, I managed to buy my own sewing machine," she said.

Her journey continued when she was selected to participate in WPDI's Business Bootcamp, where she emerged as one of the winners and received a \$1,000 grant. The support allowed her to establish her own tailoring center. Today, Modong owns five sewing machines and trains six young women in tailoring skills. Each trainee contributes 120,000 SSP per month toward maintenance costs, and the center is equipped with essential tools and materials, including African print fabrics (Kitenge).

The growth of her business has significantly improved her family's quality of life. "My children no longer miss school because of school fees, we have better food at home, and I am planning to build my own house when the dry season comes," she shared.

Beyond supporting her own family, Modong's business is creating opportunities for others in her community. Her tailoring center provides clothing and repair services locally, reducing the need for residents to travel long distances for these services. Through her work, she is also helping young women gain valuable skills and build their own livelihoods.

"I am proud that I am now helping myself, my family, and other young women in Kajo-Keji to learn a skill that can benefit them and change their lives," she said.

"I am the team leader for Goroyo 2 group. I am so delighted to have gained skills in handling conflicts and deeper understanding of conflict dynamics. As a group leader, we have always experienced a series of internal conflicts arising from different needs and interests. With approaches such as problems-solving, appeasement and compromise we learned from the conflict resolution trainer, I am confident we shall move forward with less disagreement."

Lavina Kiden Business Trainee



Arts and Crafts

WPDI delivers an Arts and Crafts training program at the Juba Community Learning Center (CLC), designed to nurture the talents of youth and community members interested in pursuing creative skills. This year, the training was attended by 56 individuals.

The program aims to strengthen the capacity of young men and women by providing practical knowledge and skills that support self-employment and enhance overall employability. The training follows a six-month cycle, during which participants build proficiency in areas such as painting, pencil drawing, sculpting, knitting, and other creative techniques.

With a specialized and hands-on approach, the program equips participants with a diverse skill set while also fostering personal development. Beyond technical skills, trainees use art as a tool for expression, contributing to conflict resolution and promoting peace within their communities.

"This arts and crafts training has empowered me to express myself creatively and positively. I can now design posters, paint, and reuse materials creatively, which has helped me turn negative waste into beautiful artwork. Learning techniques like molding with newspapers and wires has enabled me to support myself through art. Despite material shortages, this training has inspired me to continue creating and solving conflicts through art. I am proud to be part of this initiative and look forward to more opportunities."

Tomor Samson Samuel, Arts and Crafts Trainee, Juba CLC, Central Equatoria State (CES)



"Completing the Arts and Crafts training has been a transformative experience. I now understand human proportions, color mixing, sculpture, and multimedia crafts; skills I never thought I could learn. These abilities will support my livelihood and community projects. The training has also helped me mediate conflicts through art, fostering peace and understanding. I thank WPDI for this valuable opportunity and hope more resources are provided to expand the program."

Santino, Arts and Crafts Trainee, Juba CLC, Central Equatoria State (CES)



Information and Communication Technologies

WPDI delivers ICT training at Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to help bridge the digital divide and expand access to technology in underserved areas.

The three-month ICT training program is a core component, designed to equip participants with essential skills across Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. The curriculum begins with computer fundamentals, operating systems, and core applications, and progresses to internet use, email communication, document creation, and data management. At the Advanced level, participants are introduced to internet safety, basic computer maintenance, and collaboration tools such as Google Drive. This year, 1,609 participants attended this training across the CLCs in South Sudan.

“Thanks to WPDI, I have gained essential computer application skills that have significantly enhanced my academic journey. These skills have allowed me to type my coursework at university and conduct thorough research. Moreover, I secured a position with the South Sudan Examination Council, where I am responsible for typing, sorting, and analyzing the South Sudan School Certificate Examinations. This opportunity has not only enabled me to pay for my university fees but also empowered me to support my family financially. Despite the high costs associated with enrolling in ICT programs at commercial centers, WPDI has made it possible for individuals like me to access quality ICT training at no cost. I strongly urge WPDI to continue this invaluable initiative, expand training opportunities to other counties, and introduce more specialized courses in the ICT field, particularly in Photoshop and graphic design. Additionally, shifting the operating system training from Linux to Windows would better equip us to thrive in the competitive job market. Thank you, WPDI, for making a profound difference in my life.”

Paulino Piol Garang, ICT Graduate, Juba, Central Equatoria State (CES)

“Starting with no prior knowledge of computers, the ICT training was a life-changing experience for me. I learned basic typing, designing, and data analysis with Excel, and gained essential internet skills to stay updated with global news. This training has laid a strong foundation for employment opportunities in today’s digital world. I highly recommend it to older adults like myself and youth seeking to improve their skills. Thanks to this program, I feel more confident and prepared for the future.”

Christine Acha Albino, ICT Trainee, Juba CLC, Central Equatoria State (CES)



The WPDl & Zain South Sudan “Generation Youth” Initiative



Across South Sudan's Equatoria region, young people and communities are finding new pathways toward economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion through a strategic partnership between the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDl) and Zain South Sudan.

Launched under the joint program “Enhancing Corporate Sustainability Strategies in South Sudan,” the initiative is creating an integrated model that connects climate action, digital inclusion, and youth employability. By combining corporate sustainability efforts with community-based peacebuilding, the partnership is helping young people build skills, launch businesses, and contribute to more resilient communities across Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria.

The program reaches communities in Juba, including the Protection of Civilians site, Budi, Nimule, Maridi, and Yambio, where it supports young people and women through four interconnected areas of action.

For university graduates, the initiative provides practical support to transition into the workforce. Through employability training, participants strengthen their CV writing, professional communication, and interview skills, improving their readiness for formal employment opportunities. At the same time, community outreach and counseling activities help school dropouts explore pathways back into education.

The program is also nurturing a new generation of environmental leaders. Fifty youth and women received training in environmental conservation and green business practices, equipping them with knowledge to address climate challenges while exploring sustainable livelihoods. Inspired by this training, 25 school-based environmental clubs were established, creating community gardens and leading “green cover” campaigns through the distribution and planting of fruit tree seedlings. For aspiring entrepreneurs, the initiative provides opportunities to turn ideas into viable businesses. Through local Business Plan Competitions, young entrepreneurs developed eco-friendly business concepts, with the 25 strongest ideas receiving seed funding and ongoing mentorship from WPDl. This support is helping participants move from ambition to action, creating income opportunities while promoting environmentally responsible enterprises. Digital inclusion has also been central to the program's impact. Sixty women received advanced ICT literacy training and were provided with SIM cards, data bundles, and portable solar panels to help them stay connected, particularly in areas with limited access to technology. In addition, local trainers received sign language training to promote greater inclusion of youth with hearing impairments in education, employment, and economic opportunities.

Together, WPDl and Zain South Sudan are demonstrating how sustainable development can be built from the ground up. By investing in skills, entrepreneurship, environmental stewardship, and inclusion, the partnership is helping young people become drivers of change within their communities. The initiative reflects a shared vision: that when young people have the tools, knowledge, and opportunities to succeed, they can strengthen not only their own futures but also the resilience and stability of the communities around them.

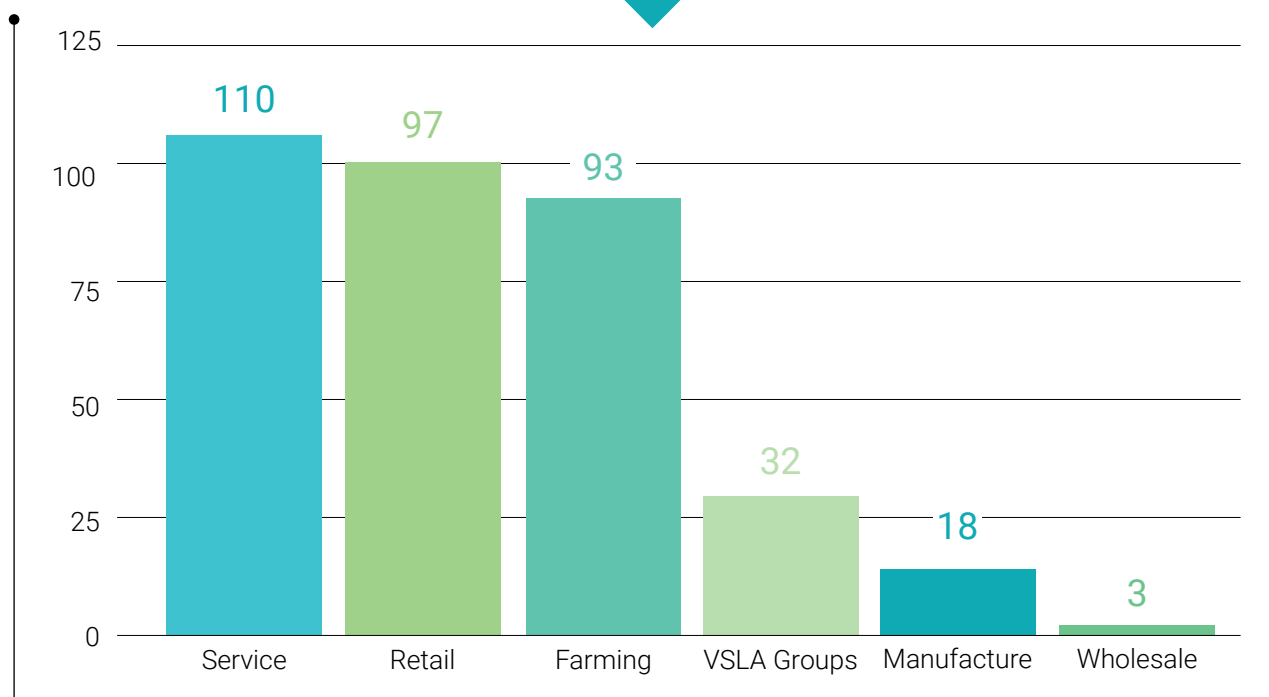
Supporting Income-Generating Projects

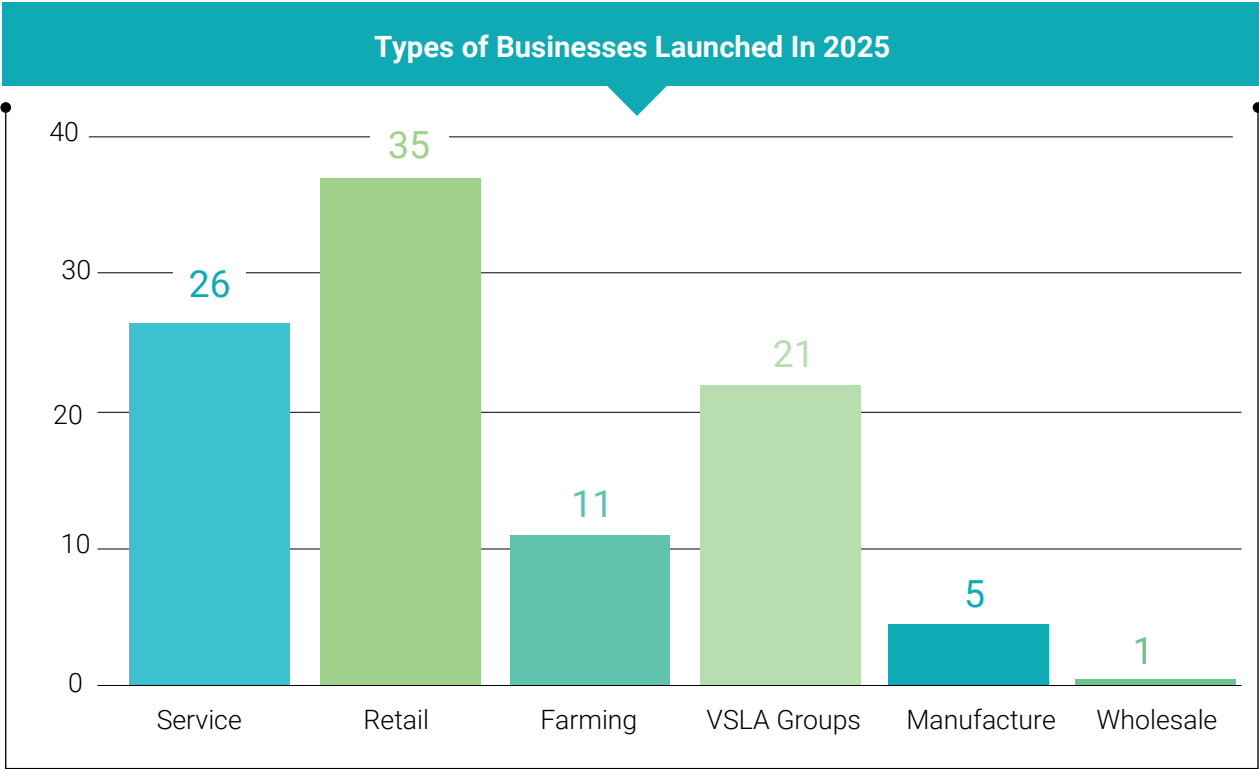
Graduates of the business and entrepreneurship training can apply for the Business Boot Camp, an intensive ideation program leading to a Business Plan Competition, where selected projects receive grants to launch their initiatives. The program equips participants with practical knowledge to create sustainable initiatives through the formulation of business startups or the improvement of existing enterprises.

Through Business Plan Competitions, WPDl identifies and supports innovative entrepreneurs, equipping them with the resources and mentorship needed to successfully establish businesses that drive economic resilience in their communities. Upon winning the competition, the successful participants receive grants that will be distributed in tranches upon verification of pertinent use.

The grant amounts awarded to each winner are based on their ranking in the competition. These grants serve as startup capital to help them launch the business ideas they presented. Throughout the year, WPDl supported 99 Businesses in South Sudan. In WES, 14 businesses have been supported while in EES, 7 business ideas were supported. Central Equatoria has the greatest number of businesses supporting 78 businesses of which VSLAs who have, in turn supported the creation of new businesses. Indeed, through 21 VSLA groups, 154 businesses have been launched or expanded. The business ideas span various sectors including food and beverage, beauty clinics and personal care, or agriculture just to list a few.

Categories of the 353 Active Businesses Launched Since 2017



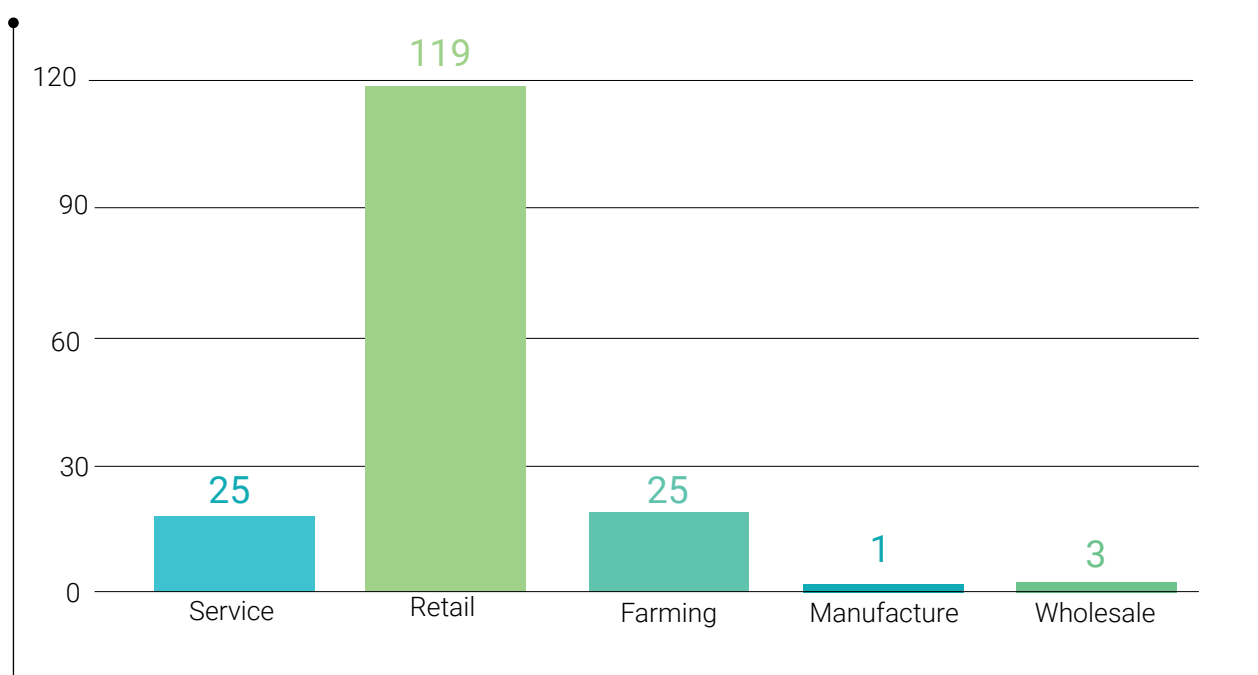


The Women's Livelihood Program

Under this project and especially in the last year of its implementation, the WPDI's Business Bootcamp program emphasized focus on women entrepreneurs as an additional element to plug in the gap that was existing who, as a result, have rolled out a mixture of individual and group businesses through a creative VSLA (Village Saving and Loans Association) model. To ensure that the project reached out to women who are most in need, WPDI worked closely with Boma chiefs and payam leaders (sheik hella) in the targeted areas. The Boma chiefs and Payam Leaders helped in identifying the most vulnerable women (women living in poverty, widows, survivors of GBV, single mothers and women with chronic illnesses facing challenges to meet their basic needs for treatment) living in their communities. Furthermore, it was indeed important to select women who are passionate about entrepreneurship and with a proven interest for business endeavors to ensure they would engage actively with the training.



Types of the 154 Businesses Created in 2025 Through VSLA



New Market Stalls, New Opportunities: Empowering Women Traders in Torit

In Torit, the women supported under this program used to be traders who would sell vegetables on the bare ground, exposing their produce to dust, contamination, and health risks. For many, like Mary Luka, trading under such conditions was not only difficult but also undermined their ability to earn a stable income and support their families.

This situation began to change with the construction of new market stalls by WPD, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Built in late 2025 and handed over to local authorities and the Torit Women Cooperative Group, the facility provides a clean, safe, and organized space for small-scale traders.

The new infrastructure is expected to benefit at least 245 traders, most of them women, who rely on daily market activity as their primary source of income. By moving traders off the ground and into structured stalls, the project reduces health risks, improves the quality of goods sold, and enhances the overall market environment.

Beyond improved working conditions, the market represents a pathway toward greater economic resilience and self-reliance. As highlighted during the handover, the initiative aims to empower women to strengthen their livelihoods, better support their households, and reduce dependence on external assistance. More broadly, the intervention contributes to revitalizing local markets and strengthening community economies in a context of economic hardship and declining aid. It also restores dignity to women traders by providing them with a secure and recognized space to conduct their businesses. As such, the new market stalls are not only physical structures but also symbols of opportunity, resilience, and hope for the community.



Health and Well-being

100

Sexual and Reproductive
Health individual beneficiaries

Recognizing the stigma that contributes to misinformation, negative patterns of behavior and ostracisation, WPDl provides health and well-being support in its countries of operation. Our sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education equips individuals with essential knowledge to make informed decisions about their well-being, particularly in areas with limited healthcare access. By reducing misinformation and promoting understanding, we strengthen community cohesion and resilience.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

WPDl, in partnership with UNESCO, implemented a training program on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for teachers from the National Teachers' Training Institute (NTTI) and religious leaders from various denominations, including the Maridi Islamic Council in Maridi County, Western Equatoria State (WES).

The training was led by Dr. Lydia Ngira from the University of Juba and Ibrahim Eitom from the Central Equatoria Islamic Council. Key topics included Gender-Based Violence (GBV), trauma recovery, and mental health.

In WES and across South Sudan, adolescents and youth make up a large share of the population, yet many lack access to accurate information about their bodies, reproductive health, and sexuality. This gap increases the risk of teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, and other unsafe practices.

In response, WPDl focused on training religious leaders, teachers, and teacher trainees who regularly engage with young people. As trusted role models, they are well positioned to share essential knowledge on puberty, relationships, consent, reproductive health, and disease prevention, helping youth make informed decisions and build healthier futures.





Sports

6

female teams
managed by WPD

16

male teams
managed by WPD

325

regular training
participants

10,000

participants in
competition events

Peace Through Sports

WPDI's Peace Through Sports program harnesses the unifying power of sports to bridge cultural, religious, and national divides. By engaging young people in values-infused athletics, the program instills attitudes of teamwork, mutual respect, and fair play while providing a constructive outlet for trauma recovery. A key aspect of the program also lies in its capacity for reaching out to large audiences on the occasion of games and competitions. Teams established and supported under this program practice regularly and also engage in workshops that focus on values like peace and tolerance, as well as capacity-building courses to increase employability.

Sports play a powerful role in shaping the lives of young people in South Sudan, particularly as many continue to face challenges related to conflict, poverty, displacement, trauma, and limited opportunities.

Through sports, youth are provided with a positive space to learn, grow, and rebuild hope for the future. Participation helps develop essential life skills such as discipline, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving. These skills extend beyond the field, supporting success in school, community life, and future employment. Regular physical activity also improves health and well-being, reduces engagement in risky behaviors, and strengthens resilience.

As a unifying force, sports bring people together, fostering peace and promoting peaceful coexistence across communities.





WPDI Trains 32 Coaches in Torit for a FIFA Certification

WPDI, in collaboration with the South Sudan Football Association (SSFA), delivered a 12-day D-License coaching course in Torit, Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan, as part of the Peace Through Sports program. The initiative reflects WPDI's commitment to using sports as a powerful tool for peacebuilding while strengthening football development and expanding opportunities for young people across the country.

Designed to enhance the technical capacity of coaches and program participants, the comprehensive training included 80 hours of theoretical and practical instruction, followed by written and practical examinations. The course equipped participants with the knowledge and skills required to develop young athletes, promote teamwork, encourage fair play, and use football as a platform for positive social change.

The D-License certification qualifies coaches to train teams from under-6 to under-19 age groups, providing them with the expertise needed to nurture emerging talent and create inclusive, supportive sporting environments. Certified coaches also become members of the SSFA coaching committee, enabling them to contribute to grassroots football development throughout South Sudan and pursue further professional growth within the coaching field. The curriculum covered a broad range of technical, tactical, and leadership topics, including football history, coaching methodologies, player development, team strategies, and fundamental skills. Participants received training in areas such as dribbling, playing from the back, agility, flexibility, and age-appropriate training approaches for youth players. The course also incorporated specialized modules on girls' empowerment through football, basic motor skills development, warm-up techniques, sports medicine, injury prevention, nutrition, and doping awareness.

Recognizing the role of coaches as community leaders, the program integrated conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches to help participants foster unity, collaboration, and teamwork among players. Additional sessions focused on administrative and organizational skills, including logbook development, portfolio preparation, record-keeping, assignment presentations, and understanding the laws of the game. By supporting 32 coaches in obtaining D-License certification, WPDI is strengthening the foundation of grassroots football while advancing peacebuilding and youth empowerment efforts in South Sudan. Through this initiative, coaches are equipped not only to develop sporting talent but also to promote values of inclusion, respect, and cooperation within their communities.

As these newly certified coaches begin applying their skills, they are positioned to make lasting contributions to football development, community cohesion, and opportunities for young people across South Sudan and beyond.

Peace Engagement Days

The Peace Engagement Days, organized under the Peace Through Sports Program, bring together diverse community members to promote peace, unity, and reconciliation through sports and dialogue. These events feature sporting activities, traditional dances, prize presentations, and discussions on key social issues such as gender-based violence and conflict resolution. This year, over 10,000 community members participated in our sporting events. They were part of a larger 'Back-to-School' event WPDl organized in March and April.

"This tournament has created love and unity in our lives as players and within our families, particularly for those of us who face educational challenges. We have made friends and coexisted beyond our tribal divides as a result of the peace tournament. My message to the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative is to continue supporting girls' teams in South Sudan."

Asanty Chan Luis, Male WPDl Football Player



"This tournament has allowed us to connect with players from different teams, promoting peaceful coexistence. These activities empower us as young women and challenge misconceptions about our roles in sports. I appeal to WPDl to continue supporting girls' teams and providing opportunities for us to thrive."

Nejua James, Female WPDl Football Player





Conclusion

The progress detailed throughout this 2025 report demonstrates that while the macro-drivers of vulnerability and regional refugee crises in South Sudan remain immense, our interventions provide a scalable model for structural resilience. The year's data yields critical strategic insights: localized human capital and institutional partnerships are the ultimate counterweights to systemic instability. This cannot be understated in a period when global budgets for humanitarian, peace, and development action have become scarcer and harder to access, creating bottlenecks that WPDl experiences every day as we strive to fund our programs on the ground.

Nevertheless, we continue to make the most of every dollar brought by our partners. First, our four program pillars have successfully transitioned from isolated interventions into system-level infrastructure. By embedding peace education into 140 schools and backing it with a mobilized network of 284 Lead Youth Peacemakers and 1,099 local Peacemakers, we have institutionalized conflict resolution within the country's educational framework.

Second, 2025 proved that digital access dramatically accelerates grassroots development. Through our transformative partnership with SES and Intelsat, we deployed high-speed, satellite-powered internet across our Community Learning Centers (CLCs). Welcoming 34,107 visitors this year, these centers evolved into critical civic and economic lifelines—a breakthrough recognized globally when the initiative won the prestigious “Changing Lives” Award at the 2025 AfricaTech Festival.

Crucially, our livelihood and economic empowerment programs have provided the financial backbone necessary to sustain these social gains. By aggressively disseminating vocational and business

skills, and backing them with robust Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), WPDl has directly fostered resilience into South Sudan's local economic systems. These VSLAs and small businesses do not just support individual households; they build localized financial safety nets that shield entire communities from external shocks, turning economic self-reliance into a buffer against conflict.

Finally, our operational strategy proved that true transformation requires decentralization and public-private synergy. The Generation Youth initiative, launched in tandem with Zain South Sudan, helped to equip young people directly in fragile border corridors, including Torit, Magwi (Nimule), Yambio, and Maridi. By coupling market-ready employability skills with youth-led climate action like tree-planting, we have anchored peace in economic self-reliance.

Moving forward, the true impact of this work is reflected in the overwhelming validation from the people we serve: an absolute, massive proportion of our trainees actively report putting their newly acquired skills to use every day, and enthusiastically recommend WPDl programs to those around them. This deep organic endorsement underscores the ultimate power of our integrated model. By empowering individuals to directly address the specific challenges they identify in their own environments, we ensure that peace is not an imported concept, but a locally owned reality.

Achieving this would be impossible without the tireless dedication of our staff on the ground and the unwavering trust of our partners, whose shared commitment allows us to turn these gains into the enduring pillars upon which the future of South Sudan is being built.



Our Partners



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC**

**SKINNY
DIPPED**



**UNITED NATIONS
MULTI-PARTNER
TRUST FUND**

Reconciliation Stabilization Resilience



**Bezos Family
Foundation**



**Gemini
Africa**



WPDI Juba Community Learning Center,
Kuggi Quarter Council (KQC)
Juba Na Bari Boma, Luri Payam
Juba, South Sudan

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

info@wpdi.org
www.wpdi.org

