

WPDI ANNUAL REPORT

- 2020 -

SOUTH SUDAN



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

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INTRODUCTION

For South Sudan, 2020 was undoubtedly a year of heightened challenges, as the risks created by the COVID-19 pandemic and a particularly devastating rainy season compounded the insecurity that continues to be a concern in many parts of the nation. While the country was relatively spared from a strictly sanitary perspective, the measures required to counter the pandemic had a drastic impact on the political and economic prospects of the country. In this context, WPDI was forced to scale down its planned activities, notably the vocational trainings we conduct under normal pretenses at our network of eight Community Learning Centers.

Despite these challenges, WPDI could not remain inactive. During the pandemic's early months, it became quickly clear to us that, while populations in major towns were receiving information about the virus, this was not the case for residents of remote areas. Moreover, we were alerted on the fact that misinformation, specifically attributing the spread of the virus to certain groups, was spreading rapidly, and thereby fueling pre-existing tensions within and among various communities. With this the case, we decided to strategically reorient our model to address these unforeseen challenges, with our three cohorts of Youth Peacemakers respectively located in the Equatorias Region's three states in the lead. In an unprecedented effort, we were able to mobilize and equip our youths – more than **600** of them – with the tools and resources they needed to inform local people on the ground about the virus. In total, they reached more than **197,000** people directly. Additionally, they participated in **48** talk shows on local radio stations, which brought COVID-related information to an estimated **140,000** additional people.

After the pandemic's early months, our youths were able to engage in several notable peacebuilding activities as well. They have conducted a number of community dialogues to mediate conflicts or to inform, at the request of WPDI's partner, UNESCO, local communities about the changes that the Revitalized-Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARSS) is expected to bring. We are also satisfied to report that, despite COVID-incurred delays, we were able to recruit 320 young people from across Central Equatoria State to join our grassroots peace force, which will increase our capacity for action in this area for the coming years. We have also been able to continue expanding our roster of businesses in incubation from **13** to **40**, a clear sign of the interest generated by entrepreneurship among the youths of South Sudan. In sum, despite the challenges encountered in 2020, WPDI is pleased to report about the bottomless energy of youth and how it can be tapped even in the most vulnerable locations.

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ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

**226,550 people were directly impacted by
WPDI in South Sudan in 2020**



26,746 people visited
one of WPDI's **8**
Community Learning
Centers in South Sudan

- **750** people enrolled
in courses, including
ones in Conflict
Resolution Education,
Information &
Communications
Technology,
and Business &
Entrepreneurship
offered at our **8**
Community Learning
Centers



539 highly trained youth
peacemakers have been
deployed across the
entire Equatorias region



197,036 people have
been directly impacted
by WPDI's youth-led
COVID-19 informational
campaign



2,243 people attended
film screenings at WPDI's
network of Community
Learning Centers in
the Equatorias region



525 people participated
in **12** WPDI-led
Community Dialogues



40 small businesses are
currently supported
by WPDI throughout the
Equatorias region

SURVEY RESULTS

85% of our former trainees reported experiencing positive career changes six months after completing a vocational training with us

99% reported that they would or did recommend our courses to others

323 former vocational trainees reported experiencing a positive career outcome after completing the course, including starting a business (17%) finding a job (27%) increasing their income (8%) or pursuing studies (32%)

129 former CRE trainees (88%) reported that their training made them "very confident" in their ability to reconcile conflicts

YOUTHS MOBILIZING TO HELP COMMUNITIES STAY SAFE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



In an effort to stem rising COVID-19 infections, in March, the Government of South Sudan put into place measures to stem the spread of the virus, which included the closure of all schools and universities, the suspension of all sporting, religious, political, and cultural events, and limitations on travel. While this impacted WPDI's regular activities, we were quickly able to shift our efforts towards helping vulnerable communities stay safe in the face of the pandemic.

With our **67** Youth Peacemakers and the **539** local youths that they trained in 2019-20 in the lead, WPDI designed and implemented a COVID-19 awareness-raising campaign across the Equatorias Region. As the region is mostly rural and contains many small, hard-to-reach villages that otherwise could not be reached by more traditional means, the campaign focused on door-to-door interactions, the youths participating in radio talk shows to amplify important messages, the distribution of hygienic goods like handwashing stations, soap, facemasks, and hand sanitizer, and reaching people through social media as well as over the phone.

197,036 people across the Equatorias Region have been directly impacted by WPDI's youth-led COVID-19 informational campaign.

Through the door-to-door component of the campaign, the youths have been able to educate people about the virus and preventative measures they can take to help curb the spread of COVID-19. They have taught people how to wash their hands effectively, how to practice safe physical distancing, and how to identify symptoms of the virus. Since March of 2020, they have distributed **3,737** informational factsheets, **3,400** reusable facemasks, **1,110** handwashing stations, and thousands of bars of soap to hundreds of communities. Combined, these activities have directly reached **197,036** people.

The youths have also participated in **48** radio talk shows, webinars, and social media outreach over the past year as well. Across these mediums, they have helped to dispel rumors about the virus and have answered countless questions from listeners. Hundreds of thousands of people have tuned in to listen to the Youth Peacemakers, and with many villages located in remote areas, these activities have had an enormous contribution towards making the campaign a success.

“

I learned from WPDJ that we could stop the spread of the coronavirus if we adhere to good practices such as regular handwashing with soap, avoiding handshakes, and not going to crowded areas. My family and my neighbors shall remain safe because those practices are now part of our nature.

— Jackson, a man living in Baiparu, Yambio County



“

I learned about the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the door-to-door campaign conducted by WPDJ. I have subsequently told my family, friends, relatives, and neighbors about this disease.

— James, a youth living in Luri, Juba County



“

WPDJ came to my house with life-saving information. My family was ignoring the dangers of coronavirus because we thought the disease was only for foreigners. But now we know that the virus can infect anyone. We wash our hands frequently and my entire family is now staying home.

— Joyce, a young woman living in Kugi, Juba County





With the COVID-19 pandemic as a backdrop, WPDJ made the decision to strategically refocus our cohort of **67** Youth Peacemakers in the Equatorias Region's three states to address the most pressing issue facing their communities in 2020 – the spread of the virus. With their already well-established presence in many local communities, the Youth Peacemakers were able to quickly have a substantial impact, directly reaching hundreds of thousands of people and helping slow the spread of COVID-19 in South Sudan.

They were able to do so, in large part, thanks to the grassroots peace force of young people that they have been training. These local youths – **539** of them in total – have been trained in topics like Conflict Resolution Education and Business & Entrepreneurship, providing them with the tools and skills needed to help them become agents of peace and transformative change in their communities. In addition to gaining new skills, the local youths help amplify the work of our Youth Peacemakers, expanding the impact they have throughout the region.

While under more normal pretenses this grassroots peace force engages in activities including promoting local entrepreneurship, teaching Conflict Resolution Education principles to others, and Community Dialogues, in the past year, they have showed just how impactful well-trained youths can be in promoting positive change in their communities. In the coming year, WPDJ will provide them with further training to help them hone their skills – and expand them – even further.



FOSTERING PEACE & MEDIATING CONFLICTS THROUGH COMMUNITY DIALOGUES



WPDI's Community Dialogues program aims to provide communities with a platform to reconcile and mediate existing conflicts as well as discuss topics of prominent concern. These dialogues tend to be led by our Youth Peacemakers, who are then, in turn, able to strengthen their impact and presence within their communities. This further reinforces local ownership and involvement in our programs on the ground and their empowering effect.

Despite the fact that planned Community Dialogues were partially interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, WPDI's Youth Peacemakers were able to conduct a total of five Community Dialogues, bringing together **214** participants. The dialogues helped resolve a range of preexisting conflicts, including topics such as land disputes, cattle raiding, and gender-based violence.

214 community members participated in five
WPDI Youth Peacemakers-led Community Dialogues in 2020.

Conducting Peace Dialogues



As South Sudan's civil conflict only came to an end three years ago now, many South Sudanese citizens have a strong desire to help their communities become more peaceful places. To empower them with the tools they need to do so, WPDJ partnered with UNESCO to conduct Peace Dialogues in **seven** of the country's states, including Western Bahr el Ghazal state, Lakes state, Unity state, Jonglei state, Eastern Equatoria state, Central Equatoria state, and Western Equatoria state.

These Peace Dialogues aimed to bring together journalists, military and political leaders, local chiefs, religious figures, women, and youth groups to help them learn how to identify conflicts and their sources, develop active communication skills, and strengthen their conflict resolution and mediation abilities. Over the course of two months, the dialogues were widely successful, bringing together **311** participants.

311 community members participated in Peace Dialogues organized by WPDJ with UNESCO in seven of South Sudan's states.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION & SKILLS THROUGH A NETWORK OF COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS



WPDI believes that, in order to foster long-lasting peace and create an environment conducive to sustainable development, communities must be able to access information and knowledge. Unfortunately, in many developing countries, people tend to lack access to these, as well as educational, vocational, and other opportunities more widely. This often exacerbates socioeconomic and other challenges.

26,746 people utilized WPDI's eight Community Learning Centers in 2020.

Therefore, expanding access to opportunities that help people gain knowledge and skills are foundational to transformative change and at the core of WPDI's mandate. That is the purpose of our network of eight Community Learning Centers, located across South Sudan's Equatorias Region. Each center is in an easily accessible place where people can use Internet-connected computers, a free library, or even take free vocational training courses in topics like Conflict Resolution Education, Information & Communications Technology, Business & Entrepreneurship, and Arts & Crafts.

Under more normal circumstances, our network of Community Learning Centers also hosts public events under other programs, such as Community Dialogues, Peace Through Sports, or Cinema for Peace, among others. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, WPDI had to put in place very strict safety and sanitary measures, which included the closure of many of our centers for substantial portions of last year. Despite that, each of our centers remains a vibrant community hub and had a significant number of visitors in 2020.





As South Sudan has known conflict for almost **40** of the past **60** years, fostering values and attitudes conducive to building long lasting peace is a paramount issue. WPDI's Conflict Resolution Education course aims to do exactly that by empowering trainees with the tools and skills they need to become resilient in the face of conflict as well as active agents for peace in their communities.

355 people registered for WPDI's
Conflict Resolution Education courses in 2020.

The training in Conflict Resolution Education that I received has helped me resolve conflicts at my school. As the Head Teacher at Gudele West Primary School, parents and community members have seen a change in how I handle issues. I feel like I have become a role model to other teachers at schools in Juba. Thank you.

– Michael, a former CRE course trainee



According to the World Bank, less than eight percent of South Sudan's population uses the Internet on a regular basis. Yet, in the 21st century, Information & Communications Technology skills have become indispensable in professional, cultural, and personal development.

As the world's youngest country, South Sudan has substantial workforce development and digital infrastructure challenges to address. WPDI's Information & Communications Technology course – one of the most popular of all the courses we offer at our network of Community Learning Centers – aims to help trainees develop the skills they need to become both avid users of the Internet as well as competitive modern workers.

**409 people enrolled in WPDI's
Information & Communications Technology courses in 2020.**

The knowledge and skills that I have gained from WPDI's ICT training helped me open a computer center in Juba that will allow me to generate income for me and my family. I have even been able to employ other youths at the center.

– Andrea,
a former ICT course trainee

I am so happy to have completed the ICT training at WPDI's Lafon CLC. At first, I didn't know anything about computers, but after the training, I can now type my work, communicate over social media, use email, and even research on the Internet. Because of my skills and WPDI's certificate, I was able to get a job with Save the Children South Sudan.

– Jackline,
a former ICT course trainee



WPD and our partners know that peacebuilding activities must be paired with economic development, as providing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully operate a small business is one of the most empowering skills a person can acquire. With South Sudan only having a 60% labor force participation rate, there are hundreds of thousands of youths, women, and men in need of jobs to improve not only their livelihoods, but those of their communities.

139 trainees enrolled in our Business & Entrepreneurship courses in 2020.

The Business & Entrepreneurship course that we offer at our network of Community Learning Centers seeks to help trainees develop the skills necessary to do just that. As such, it is a very popular course at all of our centers, and successfully completing the course is also a prerequisite for entering into our Business Plan Competitions.



The Arts & Crafts course offered at our Community Learning Centers aims to help participants enrich their cultural experiences while harnessing their talents to hone vocational skills. Many former trainees have graduated to start their own small businesses, improving their livelihoods and those of their families.

While our Arts & Crafts courses were not conducted under normal pretenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, former trainees created thousands of reusable cloth masks, art pieces, and helped raise awareness about the virus and safety measures.





As a popular form of media, cinema can portray values that connect people across ethnic, national, and religious lines, among others. WPDI's Cinema for Peace program aims to serve as a platform for communities to interact, learn about peace-related issues, and share ideas. We do so by screening films that are educational in nature and then conduct focused group discussions afterwards.

2,243 people attended WPDI-held film screenings in 2020.

Under normal pretenses, WPDI holds film screenings at our Community Learning Centers, with events attended by as many as thousands of people at a time. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we both limited the number of film screenings we conducted as well as capped attendance, in observation of strict safety protocols.

SPURRING ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH THE BUSINESS BOOTCAMP INITIATIVE



WPDl understands that building successful, long lasting peace in South Sudan rests hand-in-hand with the promotion of sustainable development. That is why we have, in the past year, redoubled our efforts to expand our Business Bootcamp initiative, which supports the creation of small enterprises by young people and other vulnerable citizens.

The Business Bootcamp program serves as an incubation platform that, at its core, aims to promote local entrepreneurship. To ensure that youths and others have the skills necessary to operate a business, we select projects designed by trainees who have successfully completed at least the intermediate level of our Business & Entrepreneurship course. Then the selected projects are developed into small businesses overseen by local committees composed of representatives from WPDl, its partners from the private sector, and other non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and local and national stakeholders. The committee's role is to provide our entrepreneurs with both tangible resources, such as grants and/or loans, and intangible resources, such as backstopping support, advice, and specialized training tailored to the needs of the entrepreneurs in question and the specific stage of their businesses' development.



Business Plan Competitions in Juba & Maridi



In June, when the Government of South Sudan lifted the country's national lockdown, WPDl and its partners, Gemini Enterprises Africa and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, hosted three Business Plan Competitions. Two competitions were held in Juba and the third in Maridi.

The three competitions received a total of **28** business proposal applications from former WPDl trainees. Each was submitted to an expert review committee, and **15** proposals – five from each competition – were ultimately advanced to a review stage that took place later in June. After a close, detailed review of each of the proposals, three winners were announced from each competition: three from our cohort of Youth Peacemakers in Juba and six from former Business & Entrepreneurship course trainees in Juba and Maridi.

Since they won their respective Business Plan Competitions, each business has worked closely with WPDl and its partners to ensure that they have sound business plans and are prepared for operations. We will continue to monitor them to ensure their success and impact.

An Update on WPDl-Supported Small Businesses

WPDl currently supports **40** small businesses in the Equatorias region, benefitting 386 youths. All are designed to improve the livelihoods of the youths involved as well as create employment and sustainable development opportunities for their surrounding communities.

Business Name	Beneficiaries	Location	Area of Business
Joint Youth Bee Keeping and Honey Production	10	Yei County	Bee keeping and honey production
Lainya Classic Hotel	16	Lainya	Accommodation and restaurant
Shalom Pigs Firm	11	Juba	Farming
Youth Agribusiness Development Cooperative	14	Yei County	Farming
Terekeka ICT Cooperative Society	20	Terekeka	Training cooperative
Tali Fresh	20	Terekeka	Farming
Best Friends Harvest Cooperative	10	Liria	Farming
Maize Milling Tal Company	5	Juba	Milling
Blessed Poultry Farm	10	Yei County	Farming
Blessed Friends Cooperative Society	10	Juba	Brick making
Maria Bookshop	1	Yei County	Stationary store
Future Quality Bricks	1	Juba	Bricking making
Diplomatic Salon	2	Juba	Salon services
Kaluma Baby Shop	1	Juba	Baby store
Fidelity Printer	1	Juba	Printing services
Pascal Food Store	1	Juba	Convenience store
Ezo Vocational Training Center	10	Ezo Payam	Training center focusing on carpentry and tailoring
Kozi Honey Supplies	6	Maridi County	Honey production
Bangolo Bee Keeling Business	10	Mundiri West County	Honey production
United Youth Pineapple Production	16	Yombia	Pineapple processing
Youth Foundation for Progress	14	Kpangima Payam	Milling
Gangura Agribusiness Youth Association	10	Yambio	Farming



Business Name	Beneficiaries	Location	Area of Business
Greater Mvolo Youth for Peaec and Grinding Mills Enterprise	21	Mvolo Payam	Milling
Mundri East Peacemaker Agrobusiness Enterprise	12	Lozoh Payam	Farming
Duma Youth Farm	12	Nagero Payam	Farming
Ibba Youth Agrobusiness	15	Maikakara Payam	Farming
Michael Kubako Poultry	1	Yambio County	Farming
SaSa Well Known Restaurant	1	Yambio County	Restaurant
Mamu Vegetable Production	1	Yambio County	Farming
Geima Vegetable Growers	1	Maridi County	Farming
Emrom and Brother Enterprise	1	Maridi County	Convenience store
Elia Dangube and Sons Grain Store	1	Maridi County	Selling grains and produce
Torit Vegetable Growers	1	Torit County	Farming
Brotherhood Carpentry	2	Torit County	Carpentry services
Torit Juice Production	1	Torit County	Juice making
Torit Youth Peacemaker Network Farmers	8	Torit County	Farming
Pageri Youth Peacemaker Network Farmers	4	Nimule Payam	Farming
Lofan Youth Peacemaker Network	8	Lofan Payam	Selling grains and produce
Magwi Youth Peacemaker Network	7	Oboo Payam	Farming



CONCLUSION



While 2020 proved to be a year of multiple challenges for WPD and South Sudan, we were still able to directly impact **226,500** people in the Equatorias Region and another estimated **140,000** through local radio. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our Youth Peacemakers were able to rise to the occasion to help their communities, reaching more than **197,000** of their community members alone through the COVID-19 informational campaign we mobilized them for.

This not only highlights the capacity of these youths to address such an unprecedented crisis; it is also a demonstration that young people must be mobilized to address challenges that their communities face. This is the heart of our mandate, the value of which is increasingly recognized by our partners and other stakeholders. This will be critical in 2021 as we continue to mobilize more youths and other vulnerable people in the service of building peace and sustainable development in South Sudan.

OUR PARTNERS



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



GEMINI ENTERPRISES AFRICA
S.A.R.L.





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