

WPDI ANNUAL REPORT

- 2020 -

ACHOLI SUB-REGION
UGANDA



WHITAKER
PEACE & DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As with the rest of the world, 2020 was a year filled with uncertainty and challenges for the population of the Acholi Sub-Region and for our team as well. Even as Uganda remained relatively spared by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of sanitary impact, the population has suffered from the measures required to prevent the virus from spreading across the country. WPDl was critically affected since most of our programs came to a halt, notably trainings and activities at our Community Learning Center (CLC) in Gulu as well as our regular Conflict Resolution Education programs in schools. But we could not remain idle for long.

Very early into the crisis, our Youth Peacemakers informed us that, in many of their communities, people lacked information about the virus and its modes of dissemination, on measures for preventing its spread, or information about how to treat infected people. Moreover, they noted that falsehoods were spreading rapidly. In response, they asked us how they could help their communities cope with the pandemic. The campaign we designed featured an informational component, with factsheets based on UN-verified information that our Youth Peacemakers distributed directly in their communities. We also prompted our volunteers from our Arts & Craft programs to create masks, soap, sanitizer, and other materials that were distributed for free, along with tippy-taps and other equipment. This effort reached over **75,000** people directly, not to mention the audiences of numerous radio talk shows to which our peacemakers were invited to speak.

Working under COVID-19 constraints, we also innovated in our regular program areas, most notably the Business Bootcamp. Through this program, which aims to incubate small businesses, we were able to introduce two promising novelties. Firstly, we mobilized our **29** youth leaders to train and support another **225** youths to develop **15** cooperative small businesses across the sub-region's **15** counties. Secondly, we created a specialized livelihood program for vulnerable women in the Gulu area, helping very promising groups of highly motivated individuals gain skills and resources to develop cooperative businesses, which will be launched next year. The Youth Peacemakers were also mobilized to train the **50** women participants, providing further proof that they have become key assets in their communities. Delegating new responsibilities to these youths represents another key step in the development of our programs. Their increased autonomy has a dual benefit for WPDl, since it represents a deepening of our mandate to empower youths while also allowing us to expand programs at a reduced cost – a gain in efficiency that will translate into increased benefits for our target communities.

To some extent, the COVID-19 crisis has been revelatory. It pushed us to reinvent ourselves and consider our strengths and weaknesses and allowed us to take advantage of our resources, namely the young women and men that we have been training and supporting as part of our programs. Vindicating the trust that we have placed in them, they demonstrated that they were an irreplaceable asset for their communities.

ACHIEVEMENTS



84,448 people were directly impacted by WPDI's activities in the Acholi Sub-Region.



78,465 people across the sub-region were reached by WPDI's COVID-19 informational campaign.



2,878 people utilized services at the WPDI Community Learning Center in Gulu.



458 community members enrolled in WPDI's vocational training courses at the WPDI Community Learning Center.

- **50** in Conflict Resolution Education
- **161** in Information & Communications Technology
- **127** in Business & Entrepreneurship
- **120** in Arts & Crafts



1,797 people participated in Community Dialogues led by WPDI Youth Peacemakers.



995 community leaders were trained by WPDI in Conflict Resolution Education.



225 local youths and **50** vulnerable women were trained in Business & Entrepreneurship through WPDI's Business Bootcamp platform.

EMPOWERING YOUTHS AS PARTNERS IN PEACEBUILDING AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To ensure that our cohort of **29** Youth Peacemakers are equipped with the up-to-date knowledge and skills that they need to be able to foster peace and promote sustainable development in their communities, WPDI conducts training workshops for them on a regular basis. In 2020, we provided the entire cohort with a training designed to strengthen their skills in Business & Entrepreneurship so that they could, in turn, train the **277** local youths they have recruited to take part in a grassroots 'peace force' in the same topic. Over a week-long period in February, the Youth Peacemakers honed their knowledge, which shall also prove relevant for the success of the small businesses they themselves run in the sub-region.



During the year, the cohort also engaged in other training activities that aimed to help them promote peace. They conducted **8** trainings in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Education to **995** community leaders, led Community Dialogues, and mobilized themselves and others to engage in an educational campaign to help their communities learn how to keep themselves safe from the COVID-19 pandemic, all the while proving the validity of WPDI's youth-focused model and approach.

29 Youth Peacemakers and 277 local youths have been trained by WPDI and are working to bring peace and sustainable development to communities in the Acholi Sub-Region.



COVID-19 has severely impacted regular activities for everyone throughout the Acholi Sub-Region in 2020 – for young people especially. Early in the pandemic, the Government of Uganda shut primary and secondary schools, universities, and even the country's borders in order to curb the spread of the pandemic. WPDY had to close our Community Learning Center in Gulu and suspend vocational trainings as well as other in-person activities.

However, we were able to quickly adapt to the new status quo. With our **29** Youth Peacemakers - many of whom have joined the district's official COVID-19 task force - and the other local youths that they have trained in the lead, we designed an informational campaign to educate communities throughout the sub-region about the pandemic. To do so, we partnered with organizations like UNESCO and the World Health Organization to help equip the youths with verified information to share with others. They also participated in radio talk shows and created as well as distributed sanitary items like face masks, soap, sanitizer, and handwashing stations to promote good hygiene. During the year, they:

- **Passed out 1,515 informational factsheets;**
- **Created and distributed 7,660 face masks, 70 liters of sanitizer, and 30 boxes of soap to vulnerable members of the public; and**
- **Built and placed 284 handwashing stations in public spaces throughout the Gulu District.**



Additionally, with primary and secondary schools closed throughout Uganda for most of the year, the Youth Peacemakers decided to tutor **5,200** at-risk students and provide them with materials to help continue their educations. Through their vital work, the youths were able to directly reach **78,465** people in their communities.

“

I would like to thank WPDI's Youth Peacemakers for distributing hygienic equipment in the community. Their actions have saved a lot of lives, as many people were not well informed about this pandemic.

– Aketch, a Local Councilor in Lagoro Sub-County

“

The handwashing station and soap that WPDI provided has been used by hundreds of people in the community. The Youth Peacemakers have helped the community come together.

– Benson, a Police Officer in Awach Town Council



Community Dialogues play an important role in fostering peace and reconciliation in communities that have been impacted by long-term conflict and violence, such as the Acholi Sub-Region, which is still recovering from the aftermath of a long civil war. By holding dialogues in an open and transparent way, our Youth Peacemakers are able to improve conditions, foster peace, and reinforce their roles in their communities, increasing their standing and creating important partnerships with local stakeholders.

In 2020, our cohort of **29** Youth Peacemakers organized and conducted **8** Community Dialogues in the Pader, Kitgum, Amuru, and Gulu districts. In total, **1,797** people attended these dialogues, and the Youth Peacemakers were able to resolve issues including land conflicts, gender-based violence incidents, and cases of domestic violence. In one such dialogue, conducted in November, Charles, a WPD Youth Peacemaker, brought together **127** community members in Pader to resolve a land conflict between two families. Over the course of a day, he brought the two conflicting families together and helped them realize that it was in their best interests - as well as in those of others in their village - to peacefully resolve their dispute and move forward with their lives. Together, they demarcated the disputed land boundary and now live side-by-side in peace.

While in Pader the Community Dialogue was organized by Charles, in other cases, local communities have requested that our Youth Peacemakers intervene, adding strength to their legitimacy and the peacemaking process. This bodes well to the larger impact our cohort of Youth Peacemakers will continue to have in their communities.

“

Thanks to WPD's Youth Peacemakers, my community was able to come together and resolve a land dispute that had gone on for years. They worked hard, and now the families are at peace.

– William, a District Commissioner in Kitgum

“

I want to thank WPD for intervening in the community and educating people about the COVID-19 pandemic. We all need to stay safe, and they influenced and helped bring change to mentalities in the community.

– Charles, a local official in the Awere Sub-County

DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS THROUGH WPDI'S COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER IN GULU



WPDI strongly believes that education is key to creating long-lasting peace and sustainable development in any community, as articulated by the Sustainable Development Goals. In the Acholi Sub-Region, many communities are just starting to recover from a decades-long conflict between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army. For that reason, activities that foster peace and promote sustainable development are core to the sub-region's future prosperity.

WPDI's Community Learning Center, located in Gulu, helps advance the sub-region toward these goals by providing tools like Internet access, library services, and free vocational courses in topics including Conflict Resolution Education, Information & Communications Technology, Business & Entrepreneurship, and Arts & Crafts to members of the community. While our normal in-person activities were halted for a few months during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to adapt the center and conduct other activities there. Those included the production of face masks and other sanitary supplies. When the center officially reopened in the summer, we once again opened up in-person activities like standalone trainings, which were conducted under very strict COVID-19 safety guidelines.

2,878 people utilized services at the
WPDI Community Learning Center in Gulu.

SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 176 former trainees who responded to post-course surveys six months after taking one of our vocational courses

9%
found a
new job

27%
created a
business

14%
increased
their income

30%
chose to pursue
further studies



The Conflict Resolution Education course offered at the WPDI Community Learning Center in Gulu is designed to disseminate values of peace and reconciliation by empowering trainees with the skills they need to teach others about peacebuilding, human rights, and how to mediate conflicts that they encounter.

In 2020, 50 people successfully completed WPDI's vocational course in Conflict Resolution Education at the Gulu Community Learning Center.



This training helped me understand how to promote peace around me. I know that peace starts with me, and I want to teach other students about how they can impact their communities.

– Betty, a student at Gulu University and former Conflict Resolution Education trainee



In the 21st century, having skills in Information & Communications Technology is of the utmost importance in professional, cultural, and personal life. However, in most fragile and vulnerable communities, access to technology and knowledge can be scarce, if not completely unavailable. Too often, young people in those communities are deprived of skills that are increasingly required both at home and in the workplace. WPDI's vocational training course in Information & Communications Technology is designed with that in mind.

**In 2020, 161 people successfully completed
WPDI's vocational course in Information & Communications Technology
at the Gulu Community Learning Center.**



My training with WPDI changed my life. After taking the ICT course and gaining new digital skills, I was able to apply to the job of Inspector of Schools in the Nwoya District. I got the position thanks to my certificate!

*– Harriet, a former
WPDI Information & Communications Technology course trainee*



Providing people with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully operate a small business is in itself a valuable source of empowerment. This is the aim of our Business & Entrepreneurship training program we offer at our Gulu Community Learning Center, and the course is among the more popular ones that we offer. Completing the intermediate level of the course is also a prerequisite for entering into one of WPDI's Business Plan Competitions.

In 2020, 127 people successfully completed WPDI's vocational course in Business & Entrepreneurship at the Gulu Community Learning Center.



This training was wonderful. I gained new skills that will help me start a business and reduce poverty in my community. I want to help others unleash great opportunity!

*– Francis, a former
Business & Entrepreneurship course trainee*



WPDI's Arts & Crafts vocational course helps trainees gain the knowledge and skills they need to supplement their income or start a business. It also aims to provide them with a platform through which to reconnect with their cultures by learning how to design and produce crafts that respect the history and traditions of their communities. To help mobilize to educate others about the COVID-19 pandemic, many trainees took part in creating murals as well as producing reusable face masks for community members – over **7,600** of them in 2020.

Many former Arts & Crafts course trainees have gone on to start their own small businesses and other projects, improving both their livelihoods and their economic situations.

In 2020, 120 people successfully completed WPDI's vocational course in Arts & Crafts at the Gulu Community Learning Center.



In WPDI's Arts & Crafts course, I learned how to make liquid soap and have made some of my own. I have also produced liquid soap to supply to others in my community.

– Franka, a former Arts & Crafts course trainee

THE BUSINESS BOOTCAMP



WPDI's Business Bootcamp program is a business incubation platform that aims to promote local entrepreneurship throughout the sub-region. To ensure that participants have the skills needed to successfully operate a business, we select projects designed by trainees who have completed at least the intermediate level of the Business & Entrepreneurship course that we offer at our Community Learning Center in Gulu.

After going through a rigorous review process, selected projects are supported as they develop into flourishing business, overseen by a committee composed of representatives from WPDI, WPDI's partners, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and local and national stakeholders. The committee's role is to provide local entrepreneurs with both tangible resources, such as grants and/or loans, and intangible resources, including advice, support, and specialized training tailored to the needs of the respective entrepreneurs and their businesses.

Beyond supporting the launch of the businesses, WPDI's role is to ensure the monitoring of the projects for at least a one-year period, which includes reviewing financial records as well as conducting on-site visits.

Throughout the Acholi Sub-Region, WPDI and its partners are currently supporting:

- 15 small businesses launched by our Youth Peacemakers in 2020;
- 7 businesses launched by Youth Peacemakers belonging to earlier cohorts; and
- 12 small businesses launched by local youths who have completed our Business & Entrepreneurship training course and who have won our Business Plan Competitions.

The 34 total businesses supported by WPDI in the Acholi Sub-Region currently employ 173 people, benefit 767 household individuals, and generate combined revenues of \$15,612.



In 2020, thanks to support from the Swedish Postcode Foundation, and despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, WPDl was able to conduct a Business Plan Competition at our Community Learning Center in Gulu. The competition's main goal was to identify **6** promising business proposals to be supported by WPDl and our partners but also to be educational, as many people in the sub-region have never had an opportunity to have a potential business plan be vetted by a review committee.

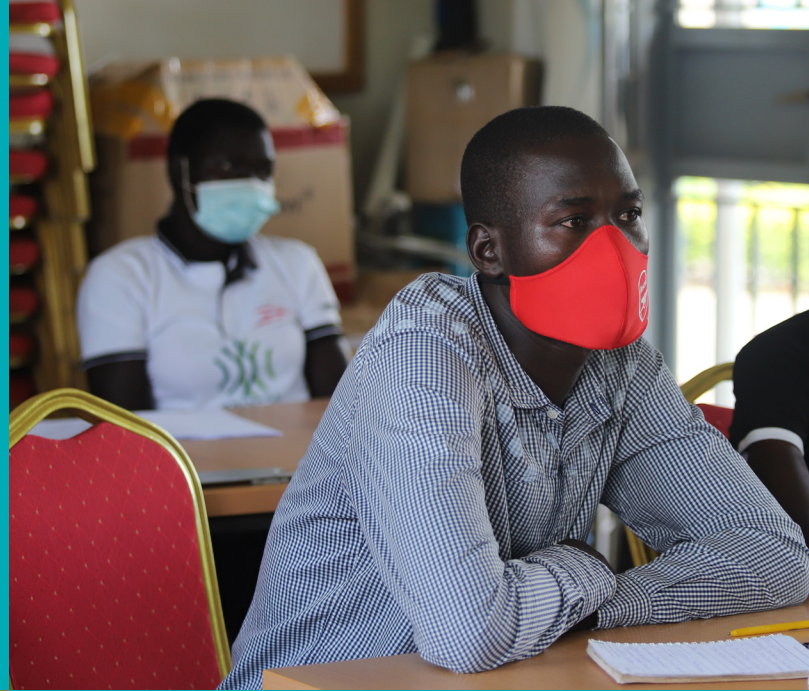
In this regard, we sought for the competition process itself to be beneficial not only for the **6** winning candidates but for all the participants. With **14** groups comprising of **87** youths total ultimately presenting proposals to the review committee, the competition was well-attended. The **6** winning businesses are as follows.

Business Name	Description
Smile Piggery Farm	A pork farm and products business
Waneno Anyim Agro Ventures	A poultry farming business
Pur Ber Youth Farmers Group	A pork farm and products business
OLSG Odii Leny Super Grinders	A retail business specializing in selling peanut products
In Rich Mushroom Business	A mushroom farm
Kavycot Poultry Farming	A poultry farming business

“

We are so humbled by the support and commitment from WPDJ in terms of training and conducting the Business Plan Competition. Thank you for providing my group with skills and financial support for our business.

– Emmanuel, a member of Waneno Anyim Agro Ventures



“

This competition was the most memorable training I have ever attended in my life. Everything was perfect and the competition exceeded my expectations. I now know how to develop a competitive business plan, and I know that transforming my community can start with me.

– Emmy, a Business & Entrepreneurship course trainee and competition participant



“

Having an opportunity to receive feedback on my business plan was a big opportunity for me. I learned so much from the committee and I am grateful for being able to compete in the competition. I will continue to work on my plans and implement the feedback.

– Scovia, a Business & Entrepreneurship course trainee and competition participant



WPDY Youth Peacemakers Train 225 Local Youths in Business & Entrepreneurship



To date, the Business Bootcamp has mostly been based out of our Community Learning Center in Gulu. This will evolve in 2021 as we start supporting the launch of businesses in counties across the sub-region more widely. Building on the expertise and experience of our Youth Peacemakers, we have decided to grant them new responsibilities to help them promote entrepreneurship in their home counties.

In preparation for this new initiative, in September, WPDY Youth Peacemakers participated in a special workshop to strengthen their skills and prepare them to train an additional **225** local youths in Business & Entrepreneurship. The workshop's purpose was to ensure that the youths are not merely knowledgeable but can also pass what they have learned with us on to other youths, starting with **225** additional youths from the sub-region's **15** counties.

With their training now complete, the **29** Youth Peacemakers have already started to intensively train the **225** local youths, which they will do over a six-month period. Then, they will divide into groups of **17** and prepare to launch income-generating projects in each of the sub-region's **15** counties. With these positive prospects ahead, we are very excited to have these dedicated young women and men as our partners on the ground to foster lasting peace and sustainable development in Northern Uganda.

“

The training changed my life, especially in the area of communication skills, which has improved my relationships with customers. I used to lose money because I kept forgetting the customers who purchased products on credit, but after my training in records management, I now know how to keep records of business transactions.

– Joseph, a local youth in Kilak North County and a Business & Entrepreneurship trainee



The 225 local youths trained by WPDI's Youth Peacemakers will launch 15 small businesses in the sub-region's 15 counties in 2021.

“

With the knowledge I've received from my training, I know how to maintain good customer relationships, how to manage cash, how to raise money, and how to set up a business. I am sure this will benefit me in the near future. I aspire to be the best woman entrepreneur in the entire Pabbo Sub-County!

– Betty, a local youth in Pabbo Sub-County and Business & Entrepreneurship trainee

“

I am glad to have attended this training. I have been able to generate a business idea for a bakery and I even managed to initiate my enterprise. I could only do this thanks to my training and the communications and interpersonal skills I have gained.

– Beatrice, a local youth in Kilak North County and a Business & Entrepreneurship trainee

WPDI Trains Vulnerable Women in Gulu to Become Entrepreneurs



In an effort to expand the Business Bootcamp program in the Acholi Sub-Region, WPDI launched a livelihood program to benefit vulnerable women in the Gulu area. To do so, we worked in partnership with Gulu's local government through its Senior Community Development Office. By helping women engage in income generating activities, WPDI aimed to supplement the government's efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to the eradication of poverty, women's empowerment, and economic development.

WPDI recruited **50** vulnerable women, most of them widows, single mothers, and women with disabilities. This process was conducted in consultation with leaders from the localities from where the beneficiaries were selected. After the selection process was complete, WPDI Youth Peacemakers provided the cohort with 72 hours of training, three hours per week from October to December. The **50** women first took courses at a beginner level, which included topics such as poverty awareness, personal awareness, business idea generation, and screening followed by courses at an intermediate level, including marketing, market research, communication, customer care management, negotiation, and record keeping.

After completing the course, the trainees were taken through an assessment session to evaluate their skills and readiness. The women in each group made presentations on how to generate business ideas, conduct market research, ensure good record keeping in their businesses, manage their finances, and maintain the needs of their future customers. This arrangement provided an opportunity for the trainees to articulate what they learned, and they showed enthusiasm at the prospect of running their own businesses. This will be the purpose of the next phase, for which the groups started to work by preparing business plans to be submitted in the first semester of 2021.

Developing Applicable Skills: The Market Assessment

Conducting a thorough market assessment is one of the most critical phases in the development of a business idea. With this in mind, in November and early December, the Youth Peacemakers and WPDI business trainers took the cohort of **50** women to the Cerelenu Market, located in Gulu along the Gulu-Kampala Highway. The trainees were educated about the importance of marketing, including conducting market research, practiced how to acquire customers for their products and services, designed strategies for sustaining long-term relationships, and learned how to implement effective communications while running a business. They also carried out market research to identify the factors driving the prices and cost of items and services within the market and the sources of supply as well as government regulations pertaining to business operations.

The women subsequently presented their findings to a group of trainers who offered technical guidance to support business idea generation. Some of the findings included how different items were in high demand but with low supply and, as such, represented opportunities for business solutions. The exercise was also designed to help the trainees identify good market locations and how to develop customer relations, which often involves familiarizing oneself with the purchase power of the customer, designing profitable processes to sell goods and services, managing business risks appropriately, handling affordable promotional methods for their products, and also identifying the strengths and weaknesses of competitors to maximize their own strengths.

“

The training was excellent and helped prepare us women to face all sorts of business challenges. In the past, I had a business for many years and didn't make much progress. But I've learned where the problems were, and I was greatly impacted from learning about the creativity and innovation of entrepreneurs. I am confident I can grow my business now and put what I learned into practice.

– Winnie, a Business & Entrepreneurship trainee from Gulu

“

Before the training, I lacked many business and entrepreneurship skills. I thought to start a business, I needed a lot of capital. But I now know that I can start a business with even a little capital. I also learned about the importance of carrying out a market assessment, how to conduct customer care, promote my business, and keep records, all of which will help me and my family.

– Mary, a Business & Entrepreneurship trainee from Gulu

CONCLUSION



COVID-19 unquestionably created a series of unforeseen challenges in the implementation of our normal activities at the WPD Community Learning Center, in schools, and in different communities. Many of them were delayed or discontinued, as was the case for our in-school activities. However, we nevertheless succeeded in maintaining our role as facilitators of positive transformation. In reorienting their regular activities, our youths were able to apply their skills and their training in a new context. By the end of 2020, we were able to directly reach **84,448** people, which exceeds the initial target of **75,405** that we had set for the year.

With the Acholi Sub-Region progressively moving back to a safer and more stable sanitary situation, 2021 will allow us to improve our capacity to serve our target communities through our Youth Peacemakers and Community Learning Center. The cohort of Youth Peacemakers will organize a new series of Community Dialogues to strengthen conditions for peace, even in remote areas. We will mobilize them to expand our Conflict Resolution Education program in schools. In **30** schools, they will train pupils and students with whom they will, in turn, run local advocacy campaigns on issues pertaining to peace and sustainable development, with the hope of reaching over **30,000** people. We are also nurturing high hopes also that our Business Bootcamp program will continue to evolve in a positive and inclusive direction as our Youth Peacemakers train people directly in remote areas and help them develop businesses in counties across the Acholi Sub-Region.

Finally, we will additionally work to create more radio content in response to pressing requests from representatives of local communities, who are becoming even more aware of our activities and wish to know more about them – a sign that building lasting peace is truly within reach.

OUR PARTNERS





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