



# WPDI UGANDA

## Acholi Sub-Region

### 2025 Annual Report

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# Introduction

The Acholi Sub-Region (ASR) of Northern Uganda continues to experience the lasting effects of prolonged conflict, most notably the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency from 1986 to 2008. The conflict displaced nearly two million people, primarily from the Acholi community, into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, and caused widespread atrocities, including mass child abductions. It also severely disrupted local economies, social cohesion, and traditional governance structures.

Despite the end of large-scale hostilities in 2006, the legacy of the conflict persists. Communities continue to face entrenched poverty, unresolved trauma, weakened customary leadership, and fragile systems for land governance, justice, and dispute resolution. Ongoing challenges, including socio-economic instability, competition over natural resources, and recurring land conflicts, continue to affect peace and security across the region.

In this context, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) implements a holistic, community-driven approach to peacebuilding and development. Through education, dialogue, and advocacy, WPDI addresses both immediate conflict dynamics and

their underlying structural drivers. Its programs integrate Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) into schools, strengthen community dialogue, and promote cross-border cooperation, while also advancing livelihood opportunities to reduce economic vulnerability and support long-term stability.

Since establishing its presence in Acholi in 2012, WPDI has remained committed to grassroots, community-led solutions. In 2025, the organization engaged 27 Youth Peacemakers and 178 young people in community engagement and livelihood programs. The Gulu Community Learning Center hosted 1,645 participants for cultural events and awareness-raising activities, while 145 community leaders were trained in dialogue, mediation, and peacebuilding.

Conflict resolution initiatives reached 1,212 learners and 78 teachers across 10 schools. Economic empowerment efforts supported 145 incubated businesses, benefiting 1,280 individuals. In parallel, Sports for Development programs engaged 1,868 participants, and Health and Well-being initiatives reached 2,860 individuals, contributing to stronger, more resilient communities.



# 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



# Key Achievements



**PEACEBUILDING: 10,020 participants**

**1,645**  
Community Learning Center (CLC) visitors

**205**  
Youth peacemakers

**6,592**  
Individuals reached by youth peacemakers

## Peacebuilding in Schools

**10**  
Schools hosting WPDI programs

**675**  
Advocacy campaign participants in schools

**1,212**  
Learners trained in conflict resolution education

**78**  
Teachers and school administrative staff trained

**2,096**  
Indirect beneficiaries of the program

**4,061**  
Total participants in school-based peacebuilding

## Peacebuilding in the Community

**11**  
Community dialogues held

**145**  
Local leaders trained

**2,386**  
Participants in community dialogues

**2,531**  
Total participants in community-level peacebuilding

## Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

**56**  
Participants in cinema for peace

**241**  
Conflict resolution education trainees

**1,281**  
Participants in advocacy campaigns

**1,578**  
Total participants in peacebuilding activities at the CLC



**LIVELIHOOD: 2,450 participants**

## Capacity-Building

**44**  
Financial Literacy trainees

**210**  
Vulnerable women trained in business

**219**  
Arts and Crafts trainees

**328**  
Business and entrepreneurship trainees

**360**  
ICT trainees

**1,161**  
Total trainees in vocational courses

## Businesses

**23**  
Businesses created in 2025

**145**  
Businesses supported by WPDI in total

**305**  
Jobs created

**984**  
Indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)

**1,289**  
Beneficiaries of all businesses



**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 3,062 participants**

**220**  
Sexual and reproductive health individual beneficiaries

**292**  
Trauma healing individual beneficiaries

**355**  
Students trained in social and emotional learning

**1,003**  
Trauma healing event participants

**1,192**  
Sexual and reproductive health event participants



**SPORTS: 1,868 participants**

**7**  
Female teams managed by WPDI

**9**  
Male teams managed by WPDI

**267**  
Regular training participants

**1,601**  
Participants in competition events

**17,357**

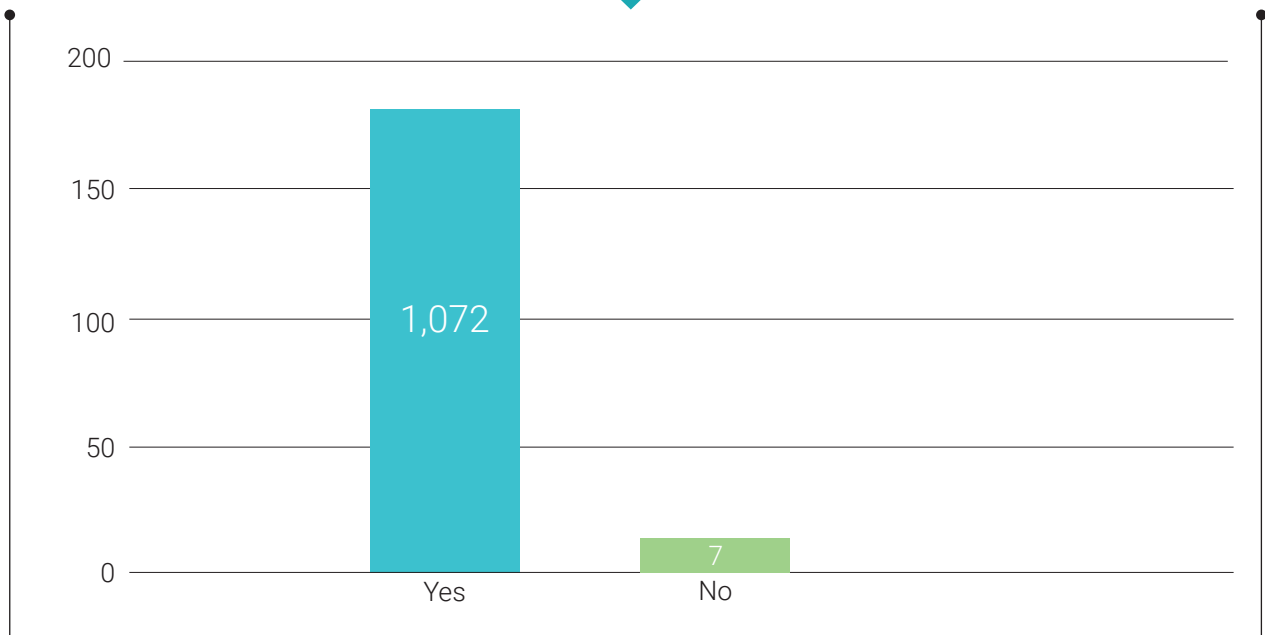
Grand total of people reached through WPDI's activities in the region, both directly and indirectly, in 2025



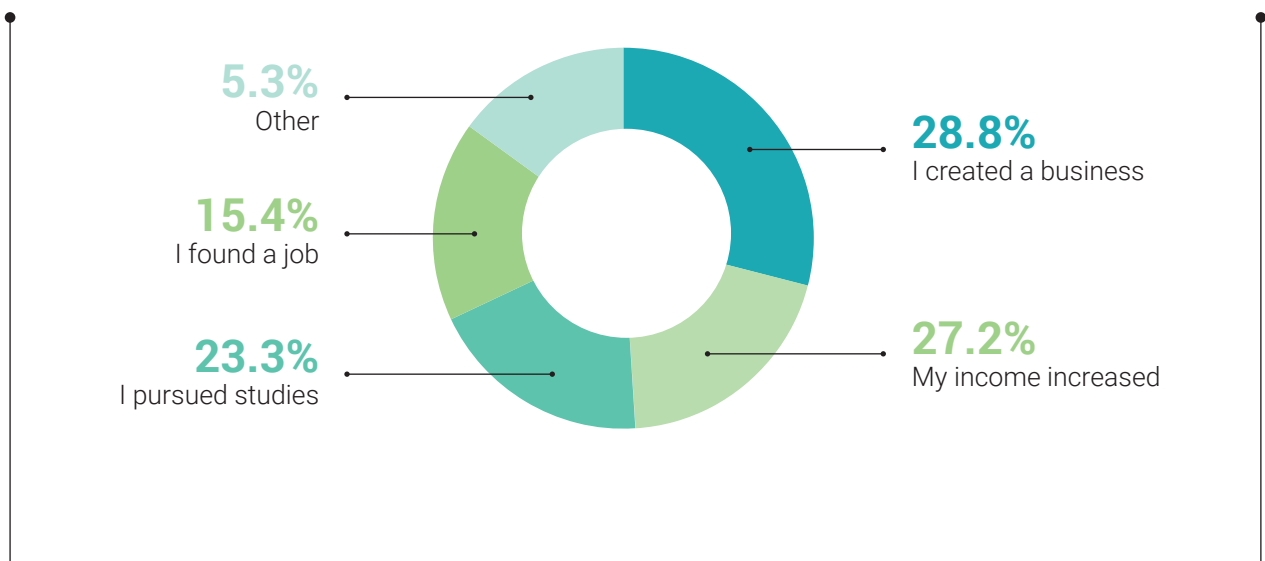
# Survey Results

Every year, WPDI conducts surveys in an effort to better understand the impact of our activities. This year, WPDI collected over 1,000 responses. 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 WPDI in your personal or professional life?” (responses from 1,079 beneficiaries)



## “How has the program improved your career prospects?” (responses from 751 beneficiaries)



# Feedback from Local & National Partners



*"I would like to commend the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for their outstanding work it has done in our district since its inception. The organization has had a profound impact on leadership transformation, with over 200 leaders trained to date. This year alone, the programs in Owoo and Palaro sub-counties have made a significant difference. In Palaro in particular, where conflict had reached its peak, the situation has greatly improved, with many disputes now resolved. This remarkable progress, supported by positive reports from local leaders, prompted us to recognize organization by granting the necessary permits."*

**Opiyo Christopher Ateker, Chairman of LC5, Gulu District**



*"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to WPDI for this wonderful opportunity. This has been one of the best leadership training I have ever attended. The content is exceptionally powerful, delivering an impact on the cultural and religious leaders participating. I pledge my full support to this organization for the outstanding work it is doing on the ground across the entire Acholi sub-region."*

**Sheikh Musa Kelil, Religious Leader**





WHITAKER  
PEACE DEVELOPMENT  
INITIATIVE

threatening and intimidating  
party so they give up  
of rejection of the  
of the other party  
very high demand  
ng away from



# Vectors of Change

To foster meaningful and lasting change, WPDI collaborates with local communities through key vectors of change, namely locally rooted assets through which we implement key aspects of our programs: Youth Peacemakers, young leaders dedicated to promoting peace and conflict resolution, and Community Learning Centers (CLCs), which offer training, access to technology, and vital resources to support community development. Together, these vectors ensure that change is driven from within communities, making resilience durable, locally owned, and capable of multiplying impact over time.



# Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

These young leaders played a crucial role in advancing WPDI's programs within their communities, taking on a wide range of responsibilities. Their work included mobilizing communities, delivering peacebuilding and business training, conducting advocacy campaigns, facilitating dialogues on pressing social issues, and providing psychosocial support to those in need. Additionally, they conducted Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) training sessions in primary and secondary schools across the region, complementing these efforts with advocacy campaigns focused on children's well-being and education. They also facilitated training sessions for community leaders and organized dialogues to address conflicts affecting local communities.



“For several years, I have been passionately involved in promoting peace and reconciliation in our communities, which have endured the scars of past conflicts. As a Youth Peacemaker, I have focused on peacebuilding programs. I train community leaders, including local elders, religious leaders, women’s groups, and youth representatives, on essential peacebuilding skills. These trainings cover conflict resolution, nonviolent communication, trauma healing, and fostering dialogue across dividing lines. My work is driven by a deep belief that sustainable peace begins with empowered youth and community leaders who lead by example. I am committed to continuing this journey to build a more harmonious and resilient Kitgum for future generations.”

**Anyono Rosleyn, Kitgum District**



“Beyond the training, I actively follow up with the leaders I have trained to ensure they apply these skills in their daily lives and communities. This ongoing support helps maintain momentum and addresses any challenges they face in implementing peace initiatives. I have personally conducted many mediations to resolve disputes at the grassroots level, ranging from land conflicts and family disagreements to inter-community tensions. Through facilitated dialogues, I bring conflicting parties together to listen to one another, understand each other’s perspectives, and find fair solutions. These efforts have prevented the escalation of violence in many cases and rebuilt trust among neighbors. In addition to mediation and dialogue, I engage in a wide range of peace work, including community awareness on peaceful coexistence, organizing peace forums and events, and collaborating with local organizations to support vulnerable groups affected by past conflicts.”

**Asayo Martha, Lamwo District**



# Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

At the Community Learning Center (CLC), technology and vocational training play a crucial role in empowering individuals with new skills. Information and Communication Techno (ICT) courses provide essential digital literacy skills. Additionally, participants take part in Arts and Crafts workshops, while others engage in Business and Entrepreneurship training programs, equipping them with the knowledge to enhance their economic stability.

The CLC also offers a range of certified courses in Conflict Resolution, Human Rights, Trauma Healing, and Peace Through Sports. It serves as a venue for advocacy campaigns, providing meeting spaces and hosting indoor screenings for Cinema for Peace. The center's impact extends beyond WPDI programs, as external partners such as the Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board and the God Hershel Organization (GHO) use its training facilities for specialized programs, further strengthening its role as a community resource for learning and development

## WPDI Partnership with UVTAB

The Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) is a national government body responsible for assessing and certifying competencies gained through both formal and informal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Established in 2025 through the merger of the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) and the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) under the TVET Act, UVTAB conducts nationwide assessments, awards certificates and diplomas, and ensures that training programs align with labor market demands to enhance employability and drive socio-economic progress.

As part of a collaborative effort, a UVTAB team was hosted at WPDI's Community Learning Center (CLC) in Gulu City. Using the training hall and laptops provided by WPDI, they trained and empowered teachers from across the Acholi Sub-region, with Gulu serving as the key regional hub.

By providing a well-equipped space with computers and internet access, WPDI contributed to local skills development, and reaffirmed WPDI's commitment to community empowerment, enabling technical institutions like UVTAB to expand their programs and reach.





# Peacebuilding

WPDI's peacebuilding initiatives center on grassroots empowerment, understanding that lasting peace begins within communities. By collaborating with local leaders, youth, and educators, WPDI nurtures a culture of dialogue, mediation, and cooperation. Through training in conflict resolution and peace advocacy, individuals gain the skills needed to manage disputes constructively. By actively engaging with communities, WPDI helps bridge divides, transforming conflicts into opportunities for mutual understanding.

## Peacebuilding in Schools

**10**  
schools  
hosting WPDI  
programs

**1,212**  
learners trained in  
Conflict Resolution  
Education

**78**  
teachers and  
school staff trained

**2,096**  
indirect  
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**4,061**  
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## Peacebuilding in the Community

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Community Dialogues

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## Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

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Conflict Resolution  
Education trainees

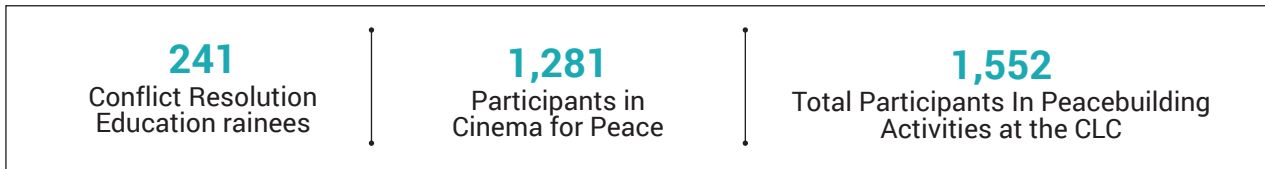
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**1,578**  
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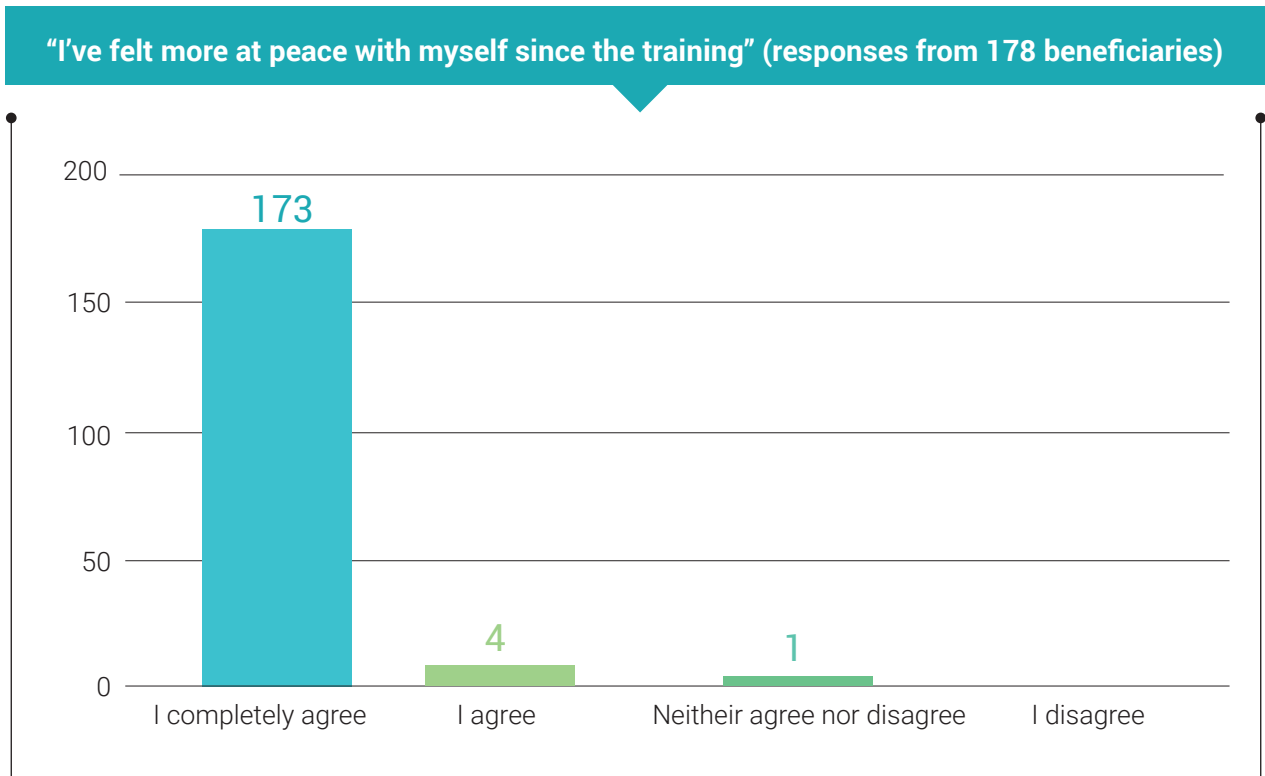
# Conflict Resolution Education at the Community Learning Center

The Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) training remains one of WPDI’s most valued programs. Designed to address the region’s unique challenges, particularly insecurity caused by frequent cattle raids, the course equips participants with the knowledge and tools needed to effectively de-escalate conflicts. Delivered by WPDI’s expert Trainers and Youth Peacemakers, the program takes place both at the Community Learning Center and within the broader community, ensuring accessibility and practical impact.

In 2025, the WPDI Gulu CLC successfully mobilized and enrolled 241 participants, including Gulu University students, local youth, civil servants, and political leaders from Gulu City and surrounding districts. The Conflict Resolution Education and Human Rights program ran on a quarterly schedule, with each cohort completing an intensive three-month training cycle. Over the year, three separate cohorts participated, and every trainee successfully completed the program, earning certificates of completion.



Every year, WPDI shares post-training questionnaires to capture feedback on the training and its impact. This year, 178 provided positive responses indicating that they felt more at peace since the training.



## Changing Perspectives to Protect Girls' Education in Atyang Sub-County

Between June 12–13, 2025, WPDI conducted an advocacy campaign in Atyang Sub-County to address high teenage pregnancy rates and school dropout levels. The campaign engaged parents, teachers, and community leaders to strengthen policies and raise awareness about the importance of girls' education. Through workshops and community dialogues, participants gained knowledge about the underlying challenges affecting children's education and the critical role of strong support systems in keeping girls in school.

"Before attending the WPDI advocacy campaigns, I viewed teenage pregnancies simply as a moral issue. Today, I understand the deeper challenges affecting our children and the critical role that education and strong support systems play in their lives. This awareness has transformed how I support my own children, and I now actively encourage other parents in my community to engage in their children's education and well-being. The campaign has truly changed my perspective and strengthened my commitment to building a better future for our youth."

**Okumu Ronald, Atyang Community, Omoro District**



"The conflict resolution skills I gained during the three-month training have transformed the way I handle challenges in my life. I am now able to resolve my own conflicts and mediate disputes among my friends calmly and respectfully. This training has made me feel more responsible, confident, and motivated to promote a peaceful and inclusive environment wherever I go."

**Aber Angel Jovia, Trainee, Community Learning Center, Gulu**



"The training has profoundly empowered me with the knowledge and skills I need to make a real difference in people's lives. Shortly after completing the course, I successfully mediated a conflict between my friend and her husband, restoring harmony in their relationship."

**Juliet Amindre, Trainee, Community Learning Center, Gulu**



## Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

The youth of the communities where WPDI is active are often faced with a wide array of challenges for which they lack opportunities for information and exchange, including limited social inclusion, restricted access to decision-making, and barriers to enjoy their basic Human Rights. To address these issues, WPDI organises advocacy campaigns to inspire, empower, and equip young people to become advocates for peace and Human Rights. These initiatives are usually held in the context of cultural events and national and international observances, particularly UN Days, to ensure that the campaigns are fully integrated to the life of the community,

which facilitates their local appropriation. They are delivered by our network of peacemakers, supported by students when the campaign is in school, and by local youths when the campaign is delivered in or around the CLC. In 2025, WPDI conducted advocacy campaign meetings in Uganda's Kitgum, Lamwo, Omoro, and Gulu districts, gathering 1,281 participants. Led by its Peacemakers in collaboration with local government officials, these campaigns empowered communities to collectively identify and address education challenges.



"I struggled to understand the real causes of school dropouts and the many factors affecting education in our community before attending the WPDI advocacy campaign. The campaign opened my eyes and equipped me with the knowledge I needed. Today, I actively advocate for learners, raise awareness among community members, and work closely with parents to create a supportive environment that keeps children in school. This experience has empowered me to contribute meaningfully to improving education in our area."

*Okwonga Santo, Lumule Community, Kitgum District*



## Cinema for Peace

The Cinema for Peace program engages communities through film screenings that sparked discussions on key social issues, promoted peace, and encouraged reflection on cultural and societal values. By showcasing carefully selected films, the program raised awareness on topics such as conflict resolution, unity, and social justice while providing a platform for meaningful dialogue. Each screening is followed by a discussion session, where this year's 56 participants collectively reflected on the film's messages and explored ways to apply these lessons in their own lives and communities.

"The movie I watched during the Cinema for Peace holiday program helped me understand what it means to believe in yourself and stand up for your community. I learned that even young people can make a big difference when they work with others and don't give up. It reminded me that leadership starts with courage and a willingness to do what is right."



*Susan Akello, Participant, Cinema for Peace Holiday Program*



# Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

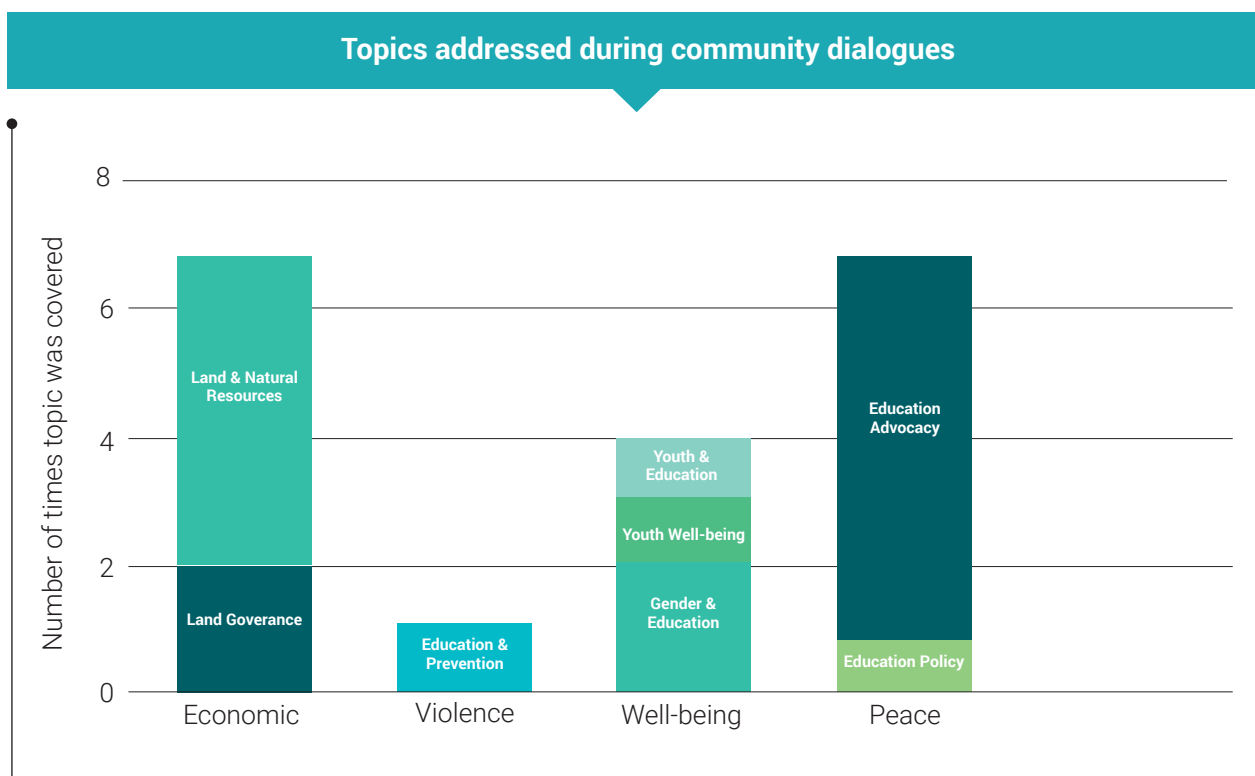
Each dialogue brings together 50 to 200 participants, with a strong emphasis on inclusive representation. Participants typically include clan leaders, religious leaders, Local Council representatives (LC1 and LC2), police officers, particularly those responsible for gender and child protection, teachers, health workers, and other respected community members. Facilitated by trained community moderators, including WPMI Peacemakers, sessions run for two to three hours and center on open-floor discussions, allowing participants to share lived experiences, raise questions, and collectively identify solutions. This participatory approach ensures discussions are community-driven rather than externally imposed.



Each dialogue concludes with public action pledges, where individuals, clans, schools, and local leaders commit to addressing identified challenges. In 2025, community dialogues in the Acholi sub-region addressed persistent and emerging challenges affecting peace and development. Key issues included land dispute resolution, with discussions supporting mediation, clarifying customary and statutory land governance, and referring unresolved cases to relevant authorities. Dialogues also addressed gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, and child labor, highlighting underlying drivers such as economic hardship, weak enforcement of laws, and harmful social norms, while promoting referral pathways and community accountability. Environmental protection and natural resource management were also discussed, with a focus on deforestation and sustainable practices to support livelihoods and conservation.



Themes from the dialogues were aggregated to identify community priorities and areas where WPDI was most frequently called upon to mediate. Findings show that education was among the prominent concern raised.



## Community Dialogue Averts Escalating Land Conflict in Mede, Palaro Sub-County

In May 2025, WPDI facilitated a community dialogue in Mede, Palaro Sub-County, following a rapidly escalating land boundary dispute between Balaalo cattle keepers and host Acholi communities. Prior to the dialogue, tensions had reached a critical and violent level. Huts were burned, cattle were killed, and four members from different clans were arrested, heightening fear and mistrust across the community.

The conflict posed a serious risk of wider violence. Many community members feared the situation could mirror the 2009 Lukwo–Palaro clan war or escalate further into a broader Acholi–Balaalo ethnic confrontation. With grievances hardening and violence already underway, the dialogue was convened as an urgent intervention to de-escalate tensions and restore channels for peaceful conflict resolution. Through facilitated discussions among community leaders, cattle keepers, local councils, and traditional authorities, key resolutions were reached. Cattle keepers with valid legal agreements are committed to fencing rented land to prevent animals from straying into crop gardens. All parties agreed that intimidation and violence would not be tolerated, and that future disputes would be addressed through local councils and chiefs, with police involvement where necessary to enforce the law. Additionally, the dialogue led to the unconditional release of the four individuals arrested during the conflict.

What makes this community dialogue stand out is its timing and impact. Convened after violence had already occurred, the dialogue successfully pulled the community back from the brink of further bloodshed. By creating space for dialogue, accountability, and negotiated solutions, WPDI helped prevent a potentially large-scale ethnic conflict and re-established mechanisms for peaceful coexistence and dispute resolution in Mede.



“Gender-based violence is suffocating our homes. During the dialogue, women opened up about husbands beating them over land disputes or money needed for school fees. One woman shared how her husband broke her arm simply because she refused to sell their plot. Poverty and alcohol only make it worse. We need men to join these conversations, it cannot be women alone. Thank you, WPDI, for taking this issue seriously. The community must be empowered to fight GBV together as a team.

**Arach Agness, Kitgum**



## Community Leaders Training

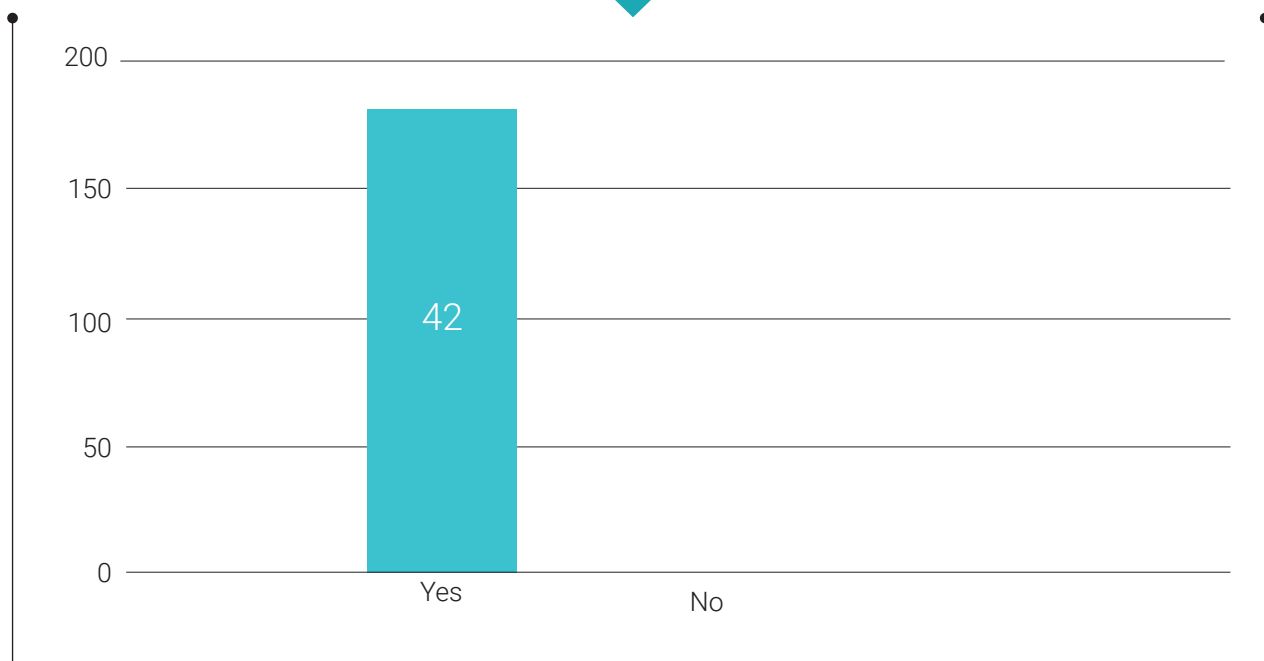
WPDI conducts community leader training as a strategic follow-up to major dialogue sessions. The training is demand-driven, initiated by local leaders including clan chiefs, sub-county officials, and religious figures. Leaders submit formal requests highlighting early-warning signs of conflict, such as boundary disputes, cattle trespass, or threats of violence. WPDI staff and trained Peacemakers then conduct a rapid needs assessment with key stakeholders to design a tailored, practical training.

By empowering community leaders, WPDI is not only addressing immediate conflicts but also fostering a long-term culture of peace and constructive dialogue.

**145** community leaders trained

145 leaders participated in WPDI training, of those 42 responded to our survey and 100% said that these mediation skills were applicable to their work.

### “Are these mediation skills applicable in the context of your work?”





“The peacebuilding sessions were truly a blessing. We explored how war trauma continues to drive land conflicts and gender-based violence in Kitgum. I especially appreciated the part where we collectively mapped the root causes, poverty, unresolved anger, and the loss of cultural traditions, and then worked together to design practical solutions. I plan to bring these insights back to my church, where I’ll use them to mediate disputes and teach forgiveness, so that our young people do not repeat the mistakes of the past.”

**Cosmas Okidi, Deputy RDC, Gulu District**

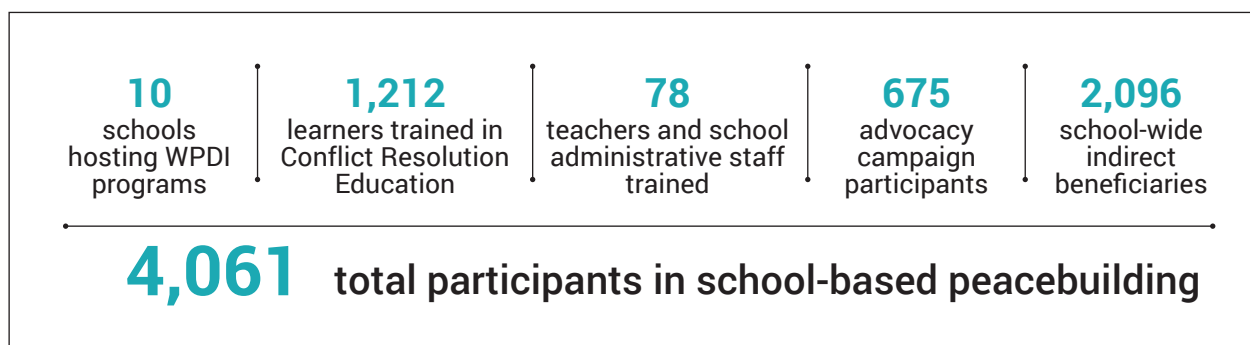


“This training equipped me with real tools to address GBV cases in my village. On the second day, we practised mediating a common situation: a husband trying to sell family land without his wife’s consent, insisting that women have no say. I learned how to ask calm, reflective questions that help people think instead of just arguing. It still feels difficult, many men don’t easily listen to women leaders, but I now feel much stronger and more confident. Thank you, WPDI, for empowering me as a person with a disability and enabling me to reach and support so many others in my community.”

**Atimango Susan, Representative of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Palaro Sub-County**



# Bringing Skills and Values for Peace In Schools



## Conflict Resolution Education for Students

The core belief of WPDI is that peace is always more than the absence of conflict. Genuine peace stems from what UNESCO has termed a culture of peace and nonviolence, that is a set of values, attitudes and behaviors conducive to the practice of tolerance and dialogue. To this effect, education is the most effective conduit that can be employed, hence the Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program that WPDI has been implementing in schools of the Acholi Sub-Region for the past decade. By integrating peace education into school curricula, we are not only teaching students about peace but also empowering them to actively foster it in their immediate environment. In other words, since everyone has a stake in peace, everyone should have the capacity to protect and promote it: peace is a skill, a civic skill.

In 2025, WPDI's team in Gulu provided Peace Education training to ten schools, promoting a culture of peace through three-month conflict resolution programs.

A total of 1,212 students completed the intermediate-level course and received certificates of completion.

Primary pupils developed core skills in peaceful communication and problem-solving, leading to improved behavior, fewer conflicts, and greater cooperation in the classroom. Secondary students strengthened advanced mediation and leadership skills, enabling them to establish active peace clubs, resolve peer disputes constructively, and drive positive change within their schools.

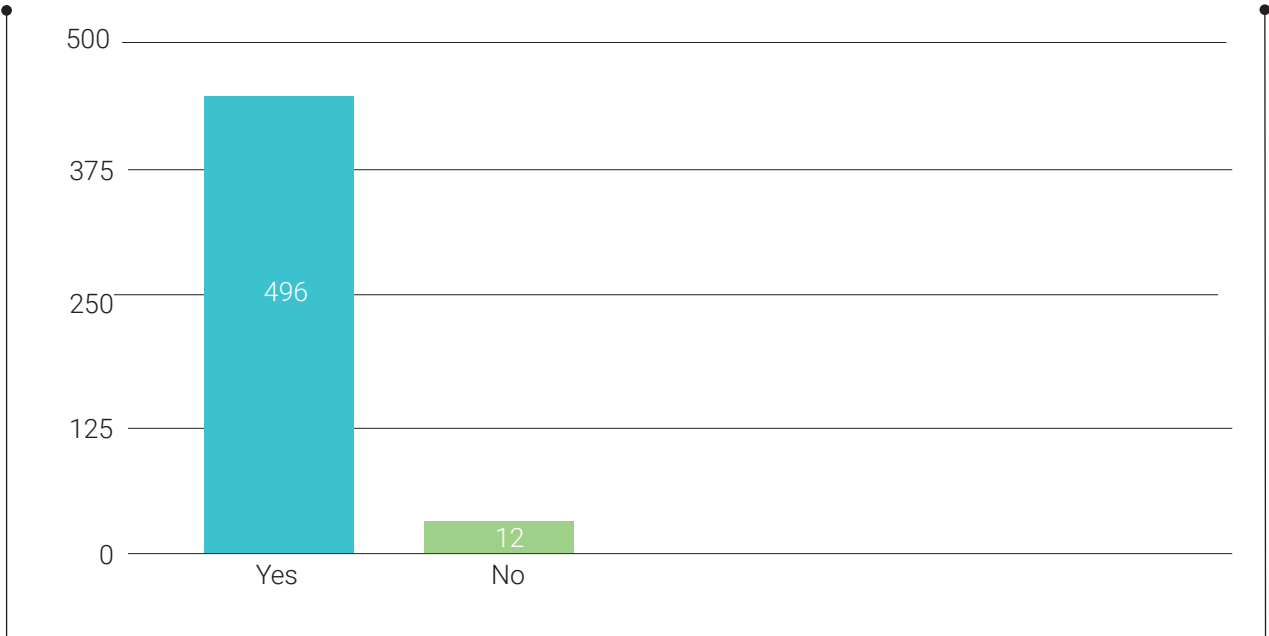
Beyond school walls, participants began applying these lessons at home and in their neighborhoods. They shared core peace values, including tolerance, constructive dialogue, forgiveness, empathy, and mutual understanding, with family members, helped resolve minor disputes, and encouraged open communication among neighbors.

As a result, family and community relationships strengthened, tensions eased, and neighborhoods became safer and more united, clearly demonstrating the far-reaching social impact of peace education. 508 students participated in our feedback survey to capture the impact of our training.



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**“Does the program help you feel less angry with others?” (responses from 508 beneficiaries)**



## Student Testimonials



“The CRE program has completely changed my life. I used to lose my temper quickly and was always getting into arguments with friends. Through the training, I learned how to stay calm, communicate clearly, and solve problems in a positive way. Now I can control my emotions, handle conflicts without fighting, and help create a calmer, friendlier atmosphere both at school and in my community”

***Olwoc Amos Maxwell, Student, Koro Secondary School***



“The peace education training introduced at our school has made an extraordinary difference for our students. I’ve seen clear improvements in their behavior, attitudes, and confidence, which have led to much better discipline throughout the school. Relationships between teachers and students are now far more positive, and these changes have also brought a visible boost in academic results. We are deeply thankful to WPDI for giving our learners the tools to create a peaceful and productive place to learn.”

***Lamaro Joan, Student, Newton High School***



## Teacher Testimonials



“The peace education training introduced at our school has made an extraordinary difference for our students. I’ve seen clear improvements in their behavior, attitudes, and confidence, which have led to much better discipline throughout the school. Relationships between teachers and students are now far more positive, and these changes have also brought a visible boost in academic results. We are deeply thankful to WPDI for giving our learners the tools to create a peaceful and productive place to learn.”

**Nyeko Beatrice, Head Teacher at Akwee Primary School,  
Gulu District**



“WPDI’s peace education program has completely changed how our students handle and resolve conflicts with their peers. The peace clubs set up through the initiative keep promoting peace, unity, and tolerance among the students, and they’re taking these messages out to the broader community through awareness campaigns. We’re truly grateful to WPDI for giving our young people the knowledge and skills to build lasting harmony both inside the school and beyond.”

**Obol Sylvester, Patron, Koro Secondary School, Omoro District**



### Impact Story: Reducing Bullying through Peace Education

Koro Senior Secondary School faced ongoing tensions with the surrounding community.

Before WPDI’s intervention, Koro Senior Secondary School faced ongoing tensions with the surrounding community, particularly over disputed land boundaries. Local farmers raised concerns about crops being damaged by students walking home from school, which strained relationships and fueled conflict between the school and community members.

Through WPDI’s peace education training, students gained practical conflict resolution skills and became active agents of change. The establishment of school-based peace clubs enabled students to lead advocacy efforts that helped rebuild trust and restore positive relationships with local farmers. As a lasting symbol of unity, the peace clubs planted peace trees near the school, reinforcing a shared commitment to coexistence and mutual respect.

As a result, conflicts between students and community members have significantly decreased. Both groups now engage with one another more cooperatively, demonstrating improved communication, respect, and shared responsibility.

## Training School Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

If the culture of peace is to become part and parcel of the school culture, the engagement of the adults of the school community must be an integral dimension of the CRE program in schools, starting with teachers, who must be a foundation for the sustainability of this initiative. To this effect, the CRE teacher-training was conducted in schools where WPDI's Peace Education Program is implemented. The training aimed to enhance teachers' capacity in conflict resolution and transformative peacebuilding, equipping them with the skills to effectively manage school-related conflicts and contribute to peace within their communities. In 2025, WPDI trained 78 teachers, in three partner schools across the Acholi sub-region, delivering both intermediate and advanced level courses.

These trainings have played a crucial role in strengthening peacebuilding processes within schools and the wider community, as teachers are key influencers who regularly interact with students, parents, and school administrators. The training sessions are highly interactive, participatory, and tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of each school, ensuring practical and context-relevant skills. By equipping teachers with conflict resolution, mediation, and peace promotion tools, the program has empowered them to foster a culture of peace, model positive behavior, and mentor students to become responsible and proactive peace ambassadors.



## Events and campaigns in schools

The school organized advocacy campaigns with 675 attendees, centered on carefully selected themes, each designed to address specific barriers to education. These campaigns aimed to raise awareness among students, teachers, and the wider school community about behavioral, cultural, and societal issues that hinder learning and academic success. By focusing on targeted topics, the campaigns encouraged open discussions, self-reflection, and practical solutions to protect and promote education.

Through these targeted efforts, students and school communities were able to identify key threats to education, including absenteeism, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, and harmful cultural practices, and take proactive steps to address them. The initiative also strengthened partnerships among schools, parents, and local leaders, fostering a shared sense of responsibility, accountability, and engagement to ensure education remains a valued and protected right for every learner.



"This training has completely transformed the way I teach and engage with my students. Previously, I would often react emotionally when conflicts arose, but I have now learned the value of patience, active listening, and effective conflict resolution strategies. As a result, I can foster a more peaceful, respectful, and conducive learning environment, not only in my classroom but also within the wider school and community."

**Odongkara Rosemary, Teacher at Patiko Prison Primary School, Gulu District**





# Livelihood

The livelihood program operates on the principle that peace and development are deeply interconnected, particularly in fragile contexts where poverty and violence perpetuate one another. This program aims to break these cycles by equipping individuals with the tools and opportunities needed to improve their economic prospects. Through vocational training, startup grants, and business incubation services, the program empowers participants to raise their profile, improve their employability or launch their own enterprises.

## Capacity-Building

<b>44</b> Financial Literacy trainees	<b>210</b> Vulnerable women trained in business	<b>219</b> Arts and Crafts trainees	<b>328</b> Business and entrepreneurship trainees	<b>360</b> ICT trainees	<b>1,161</b> Total trainees in vocational courses
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## Businesses

<b>23</b> businesses created in 2025	<b>145</b> businesses supported by WPDI in total	<b>305</b> jobs created	<b>984</b> indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)	<b>1,289</b> beneficiaries of all businesses
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# Capacity-Building Courses

**44**  
Financial  
Literacy  
trainees

**210**  
Vulnerable  
women trained  
in business

**219**  
Arts and Crafts  
trainees

**328**  
Business and  
entrepreneurship  
trainees

**360**  
ICT  
trainees

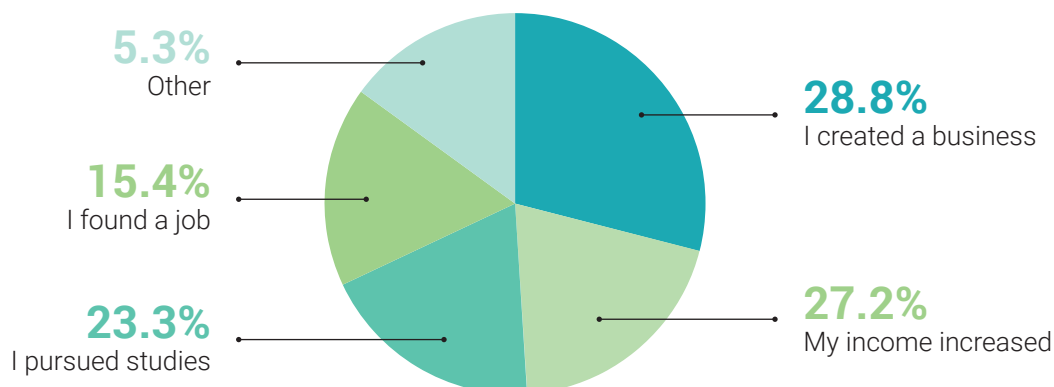
**1,161** Total Trainees in Vocational Courses

Vocational skills are essential for personal career growth and community development, especially in fragile contexts where poverty and instability reinforce each other. Many young people in the region face significant challenges, including limited access to formal education, leaving them vulnerable to unemployment and economic hardship. To help break these cycles, WPDI has put in place vocational training programs that provide practical skills as opportunities for professional development and economic progress.

These programs are founded on the principle that sustainable development and stability go hand in hand, equipping participants with the necessary tools to enhance their employability and career prospects.

Over 750 graduate trainees responded to our survey giving us insight on the impact of these trainings in their lives.

**“How has the program improved your career prospects?”**  
(responses from 751 beneficiaries)



## Arts and Crafts

The WPMI Arts and Crafts Program is designed to nurture creativity while equipping participants with practical, marketable skills that enable them to generate income and pursue sustainable livelihoods. Through hands-on, skills-based training, participants gain both technical expertise and creative confidence to produce and sell handmade goods and garments.

The Arts, Crafts, and Design track provides comprehensive training in orientation and color theory, followed by practical instruction in beadwork, crocheting, and yarn bag-making, and in local basket and bag weaving. Participants learn to produce liquid soap, hair shampoo, laundry bleach, and laundry bar soap, as well as craft shoes and sandals, door mats, wall hangings, and printed t-shirts. The curriculum also covers jewelry and accessory making, including earrings, necklaces, bangles, and bracelets, allowing trainees to develop a diverse portfolio of market-ready products.

The program also includes a Tailoring and Garment Cutting track, where trainees receive in-depth training in sewing machine basics, including parts, functions, assembly, and simple repairs. Participants learn to construct a wide range of garments, including skirts of all styles, dresses, shorts, trousers, and office wear. This integrated curriculum prepares graduates to confidently enter the workforce or launch their own tailoring businesses.

WPMI trained a total of 219 participants this year. The program achieved strong livelihood outcomes. Twenty-five graduates launched their own small businesses producing and selling crafts, liquid soap, and tailored clothing. Ten graduates secured formal employment in tailoring workshops and are saving to purchase their own sewing machines, while two graduates are renting sewing machines at Lukome Center and operating independent tailoring businesses.



“Before joining WPDI, I was a graduate with no job. I am so happy and proud that I enrolled in both the Tailoring and Arts & Crafts classes at the WPDI Community Learning Center. Through the training, I gained many valuable skills, especially in making liquid soap and jewellery. My passion quickly became jewellery-making and tailoring. Thanks to these skills, I had the opportunity to co-facilitate a training session with WPDI staff at Koro Senior Secondary School. This income allows me to comfortably meet my own needs and support my family.”

**Apiyo Irene, 26 years old, Laroo**



## Designing His Own Path: Obol's Journey to Independence

Before joining WPDI, Obol Sylvester's life had come to a standstill. “I dropped out of school because my mother could no longer afford university fees,” he recalls. With his education cut short, he found himself stuck at home, weighed down by uncertainty. “After that, I stayed home idle and frustrated, unable to earn any money for myself or to support my family. Life felt very hard.”

Everything began to change with a single conversation. “One day, my cousin told me about the WPDI training, so I immediately registered.” That decision marked a turning point. Eager to rebuild his future, he enrolled in both the Arts and Crafts and Tailoring courses, stepping into a world he had never imagined for himself.

“At first, I thought tailoring was only for women,” he admits. But what started as curiosity quickly became passion.

“The training completely changed my mind. I discovered I love designing and creating clothes.” With the support and encouragement of his trainers at WPDI, he began to see new possibilities. “Our trainers constantly encouraged us to work hard and aim for self-reliance.”

Through dedication and practice, he developed a wide range of skills. “I learned how to measure, cut, design, and sew many styles, including mermaid dresses, circle dresses, agbada, and many other fashionable garments.” What once felt impossible, building a livelihood, was now within reach.

Today, he carries not just skills, but a renewed sense of purpose. “My dream now is to work hard, save money, and one day open my own men's African wear line.” With confidence and determination, he looks ahead to a brighter future. “I am confident that, with the skills I have gained and continued determination, my life and my family's future will be much brighter.”



## Information and Communication Technologies

WPDI has been offering its certified Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) training at the CLC for many years, with the aim of equipping individuals of the Acholi Sub-Region with essential digital skills. The program has helped bridge the digital divide by providing participants with the capacity to use ICT in their daily lives. The ICT curriculum included basic computer skills, such as understanding operating systems and working with word processors and spreadsheets. Participants learned internet and email basics, including how to navigate online resources and use email for communication. Cybersecurity awareness is another key component of the program, focusing on safe browsing practices and password management. Additionally, the training introduced social media for community engagement, teaching participants how to promote sports events and connect with their communities. Digital content creation was also emphasized, equipping trainees with the skills to create and edit simple sports-related content using basic video and photo editing tools.

In 2025, 200 young people participated in regular ICT classes, many of them using a computer for the very first time. They gained confidence in basic computer operations, online research, email communication,

and safe internet practices, helping to close the digital divide between rural and urban areas.

The program also trained 30 teachers from Atyanga Primary School in essential ICT skills. This has enhanced their lesson preparation and classroom management, enabling hundreds of pupils to benefit from more engaging, technology-supported teaching.

Through the Ericsson Academy partnership, 50 youth explored robotics, electronics, and introductory game development. These hands-on advanced courses ignited creativity, fostered innovation, and opened new career possibilities in technology-related fields.

During school holidays, at least 80 learners joined special ICT sessions, using their break productively to develop practical digital skills. Meanwhile, ongoing walk-in training sessions provided flexible, on-demand support to community members, whether for school assignments, improving communication, or building digital confidence at their own pace.

Overall, the initiative delivered both wide-reaching access and lasting impact, equipping children, youth, and educators with the knowledge and tools to thrive safely and confidently in today's digital world.



## Creating Pathways to a Brighter Future in Acholi Sub-Region

Rubangakene Emmanuel, 26, joined the program knowing only the basics of computers. Through the advanced ICT course, he mastered website development, computer hardware maintenance, and troubleshooting, practical, hands-on skills that completely transformed his confidence and future prospects.

One of his class projects was to build a professional website for a hotel. When fellow community members saw the result, word spread fast. Soon, local hotels, restaurants, and small lodges were approaching him to create and manage their online presence. Today, Emmanuel earns a steady income designing booking pages, digital menus, and promotional websites for several hospitality businesses in the area.

With his earnings, he bought the necessary tools and set up a small ICT workshop. He has since hired one assistant to keep up with growing demand. Driven by a desire to give back, Emmanuel now volunteers every weekend, teaching other young people in the community how to build websites and repair computers, passing on the same skills that changed his life and creating new income opportunities for others. Emmanuel's journey shows the life-changing power of advanced ICT training: from a student with basic knowledge to a successful entrepreneur, employer, and mentor who is driving digital growth and economic empowerment in his community.

Emmanuel's journey shows the life-changing power of advanced ICT training: from a student with basic knowledge to a successful entrepreneur, employer, and mentor who is driving digital growth and economic empowerment in his community.



"I'm a 20-year-old student from Rom in Gulu District. Before joining this program, I had very limited exposure to technology. Growing up in the village, we didn't have access to computers, and I never imagined I'd one day be able to confidently use one. Most of my learning was done through textbooks, and even typing was something I only heard about. I am writing this testimonial to express my sincere gratitude for the knowledge and practical skills this program has given me. As an ICT student, I have learned so much, including how to type on a laptop, save documents, and use various applications that are useful in daily life. This organization has truly made a big impact, not only on me but also on many other youths and even the elderly in our community. Apart from ICT, there are other courses being conducted here, and we are all very happy and thankful for everything provided to us, especially the free access to equipment like computers, which help us learn effectively. Thank you so much for helping people acquire valuable knowledge. We are grateful and hopeful for more opportunities like this in the future."

***Keren Kisa, ICT Trainee - Robotics & Digital Skills***



## Business and Entrepreneurship

The training program was designed to equip youth and women with essential business and leadership skills to foster entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and improve career prospects. This training plays a crucial role in educating youth and women on effective business management strategies, resource optimization for income generation, and leadership development. It empowers them to manage group dynamics effectively, resolve internal conflicts, and maintain harmony within their business teams. The basic-level training focuses on poverty awareness, personal development, business identification, idea generation, and screening for the best business concepts.

The intermediate-level training covers key business management topics, including marketing and market analysis, financial management, record keeping, risk management, business structures, business ethics and social responsibility, and business plan development. Additionally, the training helps participants mobilize funds to start their businesses either by supporting them through WPDI's Business Bootcamp or by preparing them to seek financial support from government entities, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. In 2025, the business department mobilized and trained 328 participants. Several graduates participated in a business plan competition, with winners receiving additional training in group dynamics, leadership, and conflict resolution to prepare them for collaborative ventures.

"I completed the business skills training, business plan design workshop, and group dynamics training offered by WPDI. Thanks to these programs, I gained practical skills in business management, record-keeping, and marketing, skills that enabled me to successfully start my own business. Today, my sales have increased significantly because I apply what I learned every day."

*Ojok Isaac, a Member of Bed Ki Gen Youth Group, Kilak North*



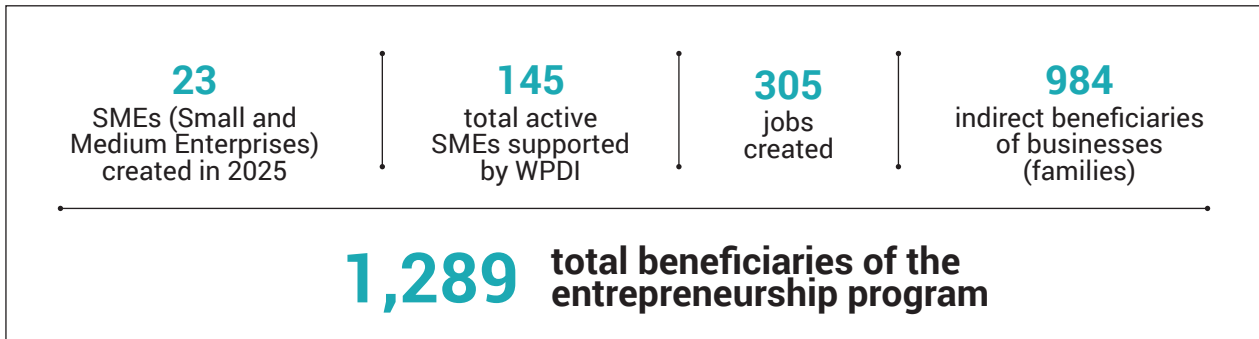
"I was part of the second cohort of trainees in 2025 who completed the business skills training. I am truly grateful for the training because it equipped me with essential skills in business management, financial management, record-keeping, and many other areas. Most importantly, I learned the value of self-awareness before starting any business. For a long time, I survived as a casual labourer, taking any job that could earn me money. But thanks to the knowledge I gained from WPDI, I was able to start my own business. I now manage it successfully using proper record-keeping and effective marketing strategies, which have helped increase my sales. I now earn at least 20,000 UGX per day, income that has completely transformed my life and allows me to support myself with dignity. I sincerely thank WPDI for investing in Uganda's young generation at a time when jobs are scarce."

*Ayubu Flora, Business Training Beneficiary*



# Supporting Local Entrepreneurship

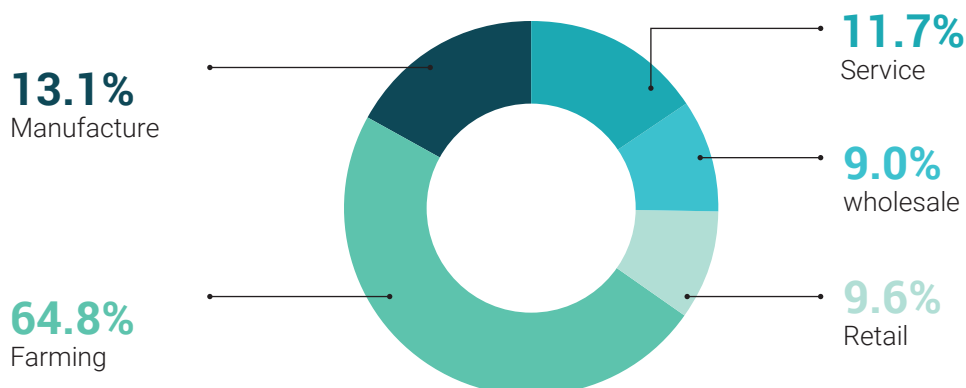
## Business Bootcamp



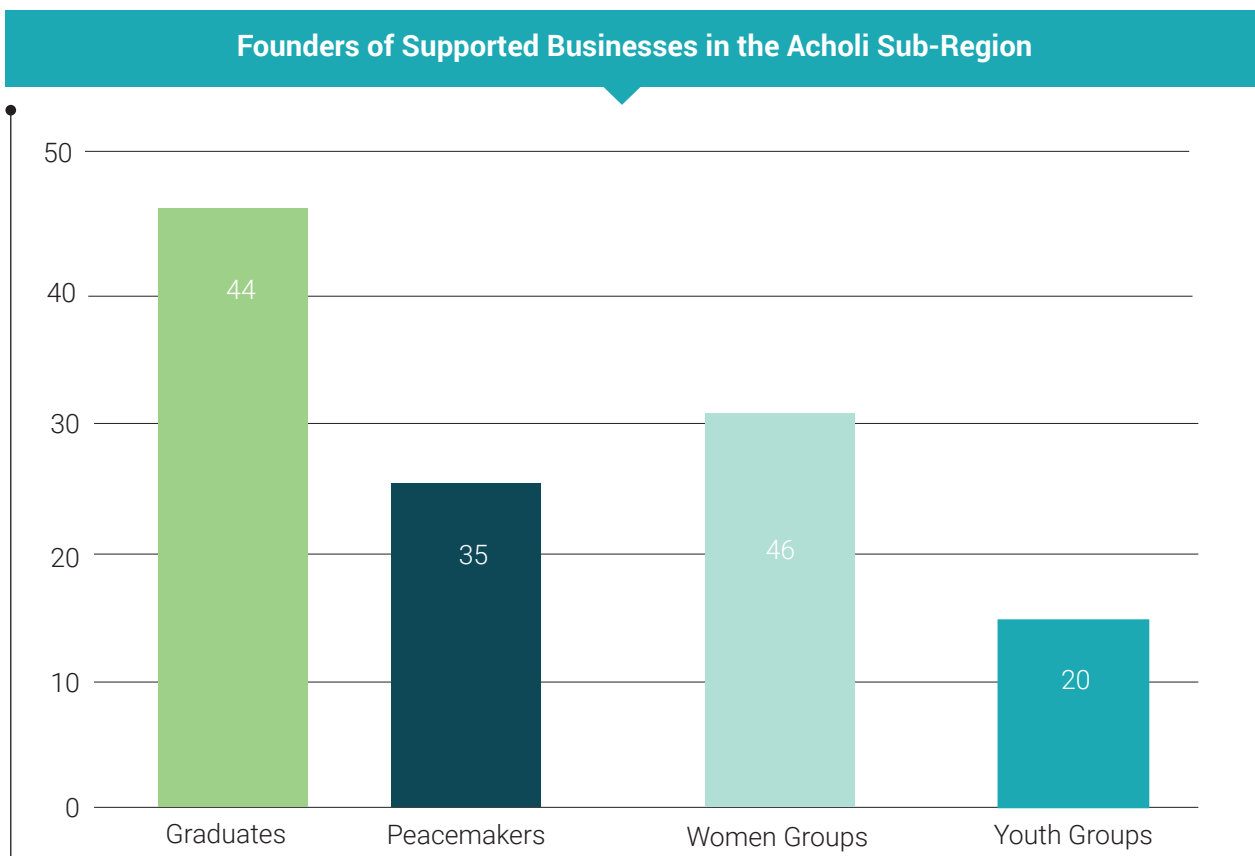
WPDI's Business Bootcamp program begins with the selection process of business plans that graduates of intermediate entrepreneurship courses can submit to us. Participants interested in the Business Plan Competition form groups of four to six individuals. They undergo specialized training in business plan design through a two-day workshop, after which they develop their business plan documents. These plans are submitted for review by WPDI technical staff and shortlisted groups are invited to compete in a selection process overseen by Gulu district and city officials alongside WPDI experts. This phase includes site visits to proposed project locations before the final approval of the top three teams.

Following the competition, the top three teams receive additional training, on group dynamics, to strengthen their capacity to work together and to equip them with strategies for resolving conflicts that may arise in the course of managing their businesses. The business plan development and group dynamics training sessions take place twice a year to ensure continuous capacity building. WPDI also implements specific programs for its priority groups, therefore certain businesses are launched as a result of training and support to vulnerable groups of women and youths. Indeed, out of the 145 active businesses launched in the region, 46 are led by women groups and 20 are led by youth groups.

Types of Active Businesses in the Acholi Sub-Region



WPDI also implements specific programs for its priority groups, therefore certain businesses are launched as a result of training and support to vulnerable groups of women and youths. Indeed, out of the 145 active businesses launched in the region, 46 are led by women groups and 20 are led by youth groups.



“I am extremely proud of the work that WPDI is doing in the Acholi sub-region, especially in Gulu City. Through business-skills training and start-up grants for youth and young women, the program has directly contributed to higher household incomes, job creation, and a noticeable reduction in crime rates, because our young people are now busy and productive in their own ventures. This is truly fostering lasting peace in our communities. As a member of the business-plan vetting committee, I have personally participated in reviewing project proposals, conducting site visits, and jointly monitoring the supported groups.

The impact is clear: beneficiaries have acquired practical production skills through tailored training in diverse fields such as welding, concrete works, porridge flour formulation, and many others. As a result, they are successfully marketing their products locally, nationally, and even internationally, leading to increased incomes and improved living standards.

The government’s reach is still limited, and many more young people are eagerly waiting for similar opportunities. On behalf of Gulu City and the people of Acholi, I sincerely thank WPDI for partnering with and complementing the efforts of the Government of Uganda in empowering its citizens.

**Lakwonyero Geoffrey, Gulu City Development Officer & Member of the WPDI Business-Plan Review Committee**



## Business Success Story: Lacan Pe Kun Produce Dealers

"We started as struggling mothers retailing small quantities of produce, never more than 5 kg at a time. Life was very difficult. Thanks to WPDI, everything changed. After winning the business-plan competition and receiving a grant, we applied the skills we learned in business training and financial literacy. Today, we have become wholesale producers, even getting to hire our own vehicle when we go to the villages to purchase stock. We began with just UGX 3,000,000 in working capital.

Now our capital has grown to UGX 15,000,000, you can see the full store behind us! Every month, each member takes home UGX 200,000 in profit share to run her own side business. Personally, I used my share of the group profits to open my own produce shop. I can now comfortably meet all my daily needs and those of my family.

My next goal is to scale my own shop to a wholesale level, just like the group has done. We are no longer struggling mothers; we are proud businesswomen. Our lives have truly changed. Thank you, WPDI, for transforming our futures!"

Through WPDI's support, these women have transformed from small-scale traders into successful wholesale business owners. Increased capital, steady income, and new enterprises are driving lasting economic independence for them and their families.





# Health and Well-being

**220**

Sexual and  
Reproductive  
Health individual  
beneficiaries

**1,192**

Sexual and  
Reproductive  
Health event  
participants

**292**

Trauma Healing  
individual  
beneficiaries

**1,003**

Trauma  
Healing event  
participants

**355**

students trained  
in Social and  
Emotional  
Learning

Health and Well-being play a crucial role in fostering inner peace, particularly in communities affected by persistent violence and poverty, where individuals often endure deep trauma and psychosocial challenges. To address these pressing needs, WPDI expanded its efforts in 2024, offering specialized programs in Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education and Trauma Healing. By addressing both emotional and physical well-being, these programs empower individuals to rebuild their lives and contribute to healthier, more resilient communities.

The suffering of the Acholi region at the hand of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) more than twenty years ago may seem today like a growingly distant past. But with countless individuals enduring horrific events such as abduction, imprisonment, torture, loss of livelihood, and physical assault, the past can only remain a prison in the present if such traumatic impact is not addressed appropriately.

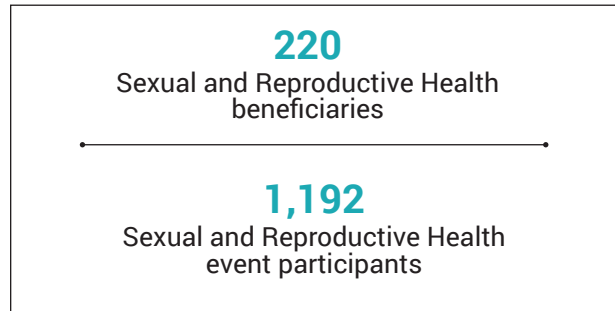
These experiences have left survivors with profound psychological scars, including depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal tendencies, substance abuse, and a sense of disconnection from family and community. Such trauma, compounded by stigma and a lack of access to proper mental health care, has perpetuated cycles of generational pain and conflict. Recognizing this gap in care for the most vulnerable, WPDI has tailored its programs to address these critical needs in conflict-affected communities.

Our Health and Well-being pillar includes Sexual and Reproductive Health Education (SRH) and trauma-informed therapy to help individuals heal from the deep psychological wounds caused by violence. WPDI also conducts awareness sessions on topics related to health and well-being that impact the community in order to change behaviors and deconstruct taboos. Trauma Healing and Sexual Reproductive Health courses were conducted at the CLC with participants attending class three times a week.



# Sexual and Reproductive Health

In many of the Acholi Sub-region communities traditional norms make it difficult to disseminate scientific information on issues like Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). To circumvent this obstacle, WPDI has established a SRH program that is intended to provide such knowledge as well as a safe space where these issues can be discussed freely and candidly. Thanks to these efforts individuals have more capacity to make informed decisions on their wellbeing, with a positive impact on their lives. This year 220 participants received individual support and 1,192 participated in awareness-raising events.

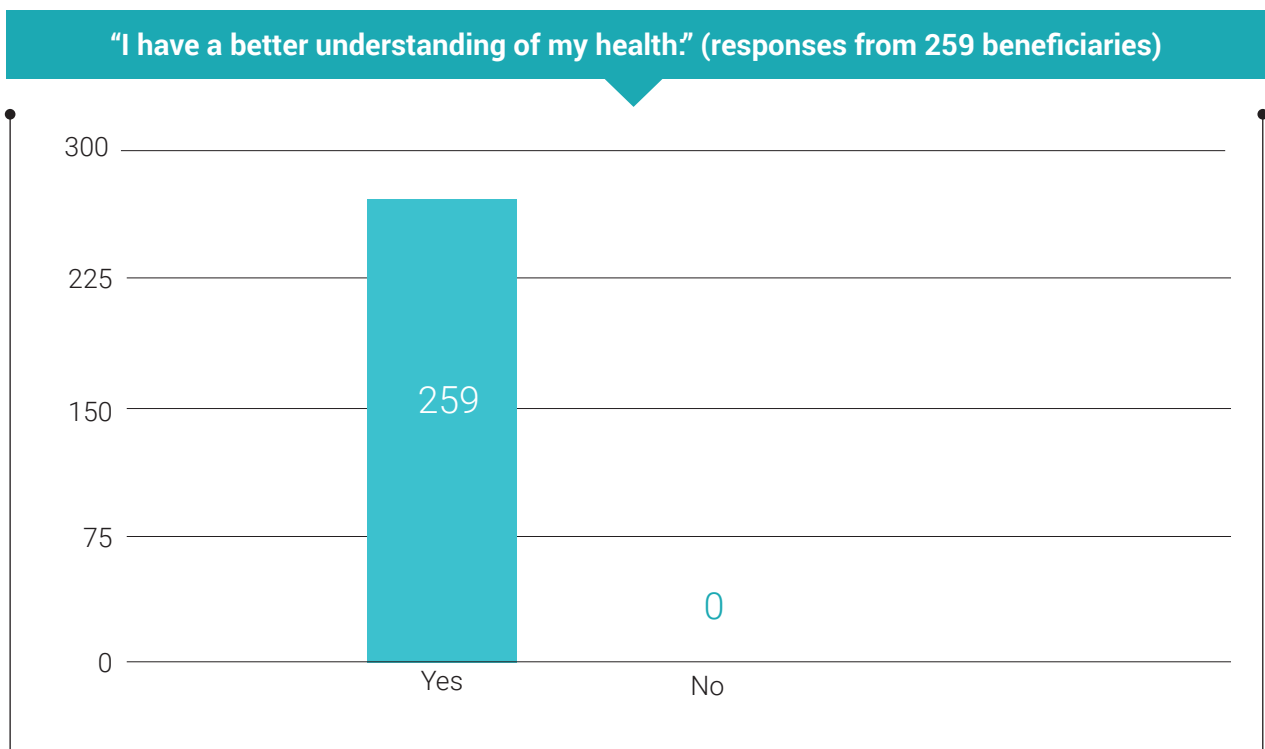


## Small Groups of Support

WPDI actively engaged youth through existing community platforms, including youth groups, self-help groups, youth clubs, and other local forums. These initiatives created safe, youth-friendly spaces for open discussions on Family Planning, Sexual and Reproductive Health, HIV and AIDS, with a strong emphasis on condom education, HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT), and awareness of accessible referral points within their communities. 220 participants benefited from this activity.

“When the WPDI SRH team first visited, they trained us to weave life-skills education into our weekly guidance sessions. The training gave me the confidence and tools to answer pupils’ sensitive questions appropriately and to refer them promptly to the health center when needed. Since then, we have recorded far fewer early pregnancies in the school, and the children are more open about discussing their concerns.”

**Abalo Alice Monica, Senior Woman Teacher, Kitgum Public Primary School**



## Awareness Events

In the Acholi sub-region, WPDI delivered 34 mental health awareness and trauma education sessions across 12 schools, 20 health centers, and surrounding communities, reaching 1,003 participants. These sessions strengthened local capacity to recognize trauma and mental health challenges, provide initial psychological first aid, and make safe, timely referrals to professional services. As a result, community awareness of trauma and its effects increased significantly, and referral pathways between schools, health facilities, and communities were strengthened. Teachers and frontline service providers are now better equipped to identify and support children affected by gender-based violence (GBV), trauma, and mental health challenges, both during and beyond school hours. This investment has expanded access to trusted, informed support for vulnerable children and adults, contributing to safer, more responsive, and more resilient communities across the sub-region.

"I live with my uncle, a farmer with no steady income. My parents passed away when I was very young, my father in 2015 and my mother in 2017. Last year, I completed the equivalent of upper secondary school at Lacor School and passed with strong results (Division Two, aggregate 27). However, due to financial difficulties, my uncle is unable to support my further education. He has other young children to support. I felt I had no choice but to stay home and wait for someone to marry me.

That's when I visited the WPDI Community Learning Center to see what support was available. They welcomed me and invited me to join a Sexual and Reproductive Health session on life skills and adolescent development. That session completely changed my perspective. I have always dreamed of becoming a healthcare worker. Thanks to WPDI, I have decided to put marriage aside and focus on finding a way to continue my education to achieve my career goal. I am so grateful to WPDI for opening my eyes and giving me hope. The center has also given me new friends to share with, caring staff to talk to, and a welcoming environment where I can forget my problems for a while. My heartfelt thanks go to WPDI and everyone who supports it."

**Anyono Charity, 17 years old, Layibi Village, Gulu City**



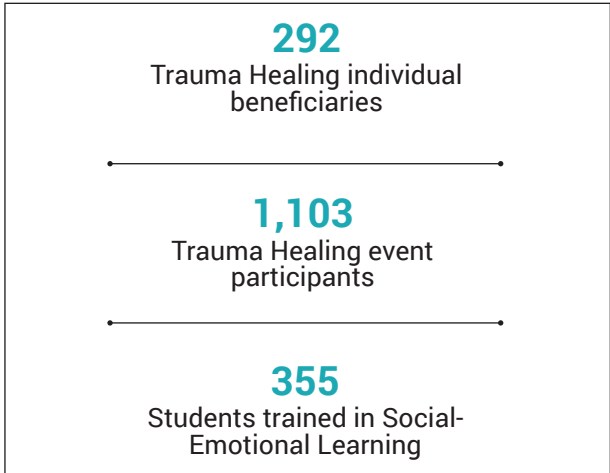
"I used to miss school every month during my period because I felt ashamed and had no pads. After the WPDI project started, the school began providing reusable sanitary pads and holding sessions on menstrual health. The club leaders even taught us how to make simple pads at home and how to speak openly with our parents. Thanks to this support, I hardly miss classes anymore, and my confidence has grown a lot. I've also learned about consent and how to say 'no' when someone pressures me."

**Aber Sakira, 13 years old, Kitgum Public Primary School**



# Trauma Healing

These efforts build the capacity of the community to support former abductees, former child combatants, and other prisoners of war. They also help refugees and others who have suffered horrific experiences begin the grieving process. Additionally, Trauma Healing assists poorly defended survivors in developing better coping strategies, especially through cognitive modulation of emotions in talk therapy. Ultimately, Trauma Healing ensures that survivors can experience healing, allowing them to begin rebuilding their lives and communities. This year 355 participants were trained in Social and Emotional Learning, 292 received individual support and were signposted, as needed, to specific care, and 1,003 people attended WPDI awareness events on a theme specific to trauma healing.



178 people responded to our feedback survey to shed light on the program's impact.



## Individual Support

WPDI delivered individualized psychosocial support to trauma survivors via screening, counselling, home visits, follow-up care, and referrals.

292 individuals received tailored one-on-one counselling and home-based psychosocial support. Additionally, 111 survivors were referred to clinical facilities for specialized mental health care. These personalized interventions helped strengthen coping mechanisms, improve treatment adherence, and build emotional resilience.

“What touched me the deepest was that the counsellor never treated me like just another file. After the first session, she didn’t disappear. Every month, she came back, sat with me again, asked how I was really doing, and reminded me of the small steps we had agreed on. When I forgot or felt discouraged, she gently brought me back to what we had discussed and cheered me on. That steady presence, month after month, made me believe that someone truly cared whether I got better or not. It was her consistency that gave me the courage to keep trying, even on the hardest days. Because she didn’t give up on me, I learned not to give up on myself. I am so grateful for those regular follow-up visits. They turned hope from something I wished for into something I could actually feel growing inside me.”

**Akello J., 28 years old, Gulu District**



“When I first heard about the mental health screening at the Community Learning Center in Gulu, I was terrified. I thought, “If I open my mouth, they will laugh at me or call me weak.” But from the moment I walked in, the staff welcomed me with nothing but kindness. They listened without rushing me, and they asked questions so gently that I felt safe to speak. For the first time, someone helped me see that what I was feeling wasn’t weakness; it was the heavy weight of everything I had survived. That single screening session showed me something powerful: healing doesn’t start when the pain disappears; it starts the moment we dare to name it and say, “This happened to me, and it hurt.” I walked out lighter that day, knowing I am not alone and that I deserve to heal. Thank you to the team at the Gulu CLC for treating me like a human being, not a burden.”

**Oroma Grace, 27 years old, from Pader District**



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This investment has expanded access to trusted, informed support for vulnerable children and adults, contributing to safer, more responsive, and more resilient communities across the sub-region.



## Abalo Alice's Story: Bringing Healing Back to the Classroom

"I am a teacher at Kitgum Public Primary School in Northern Uganda, where I have taught for several years. Teaching here is deeply rewarding, but it also comes with unique challenges. Many of our pupils, and even some of my colleagues, continue to carry the heavy scars of war, prolonged displacement, and painful personal loss."

Abalo Alice Monica, a teacher at Kitgum Public Primary School, shares how a trauma-healing programme transformed her classroom and her pupils.

Before the program, the effects of the LRA war were visible every day. Many children struggled with deep emotional wounds caused by displacement, violence, and loss. These experiences often appeared in the classroom as poor concentration, sudden anger, aggression, or complete withdrawal. Small triggers could easily overwhelm them, and some children had already begun to lose hope in their ability to learn.

When the trauma-healing sessions were first introduced, Alice admits she was sceptical. However, the changes that followed were remarkable. Through safe, non-judgmental spaces that used art, storytelling, and group sharing, children were finally able to express emotions they had carried silently for years.

Over time, pupils began to heal emotionally. They became calmer, more focused, and more engaged in their learning, rediscovering both confidence and hope in the classroom.





# Sports

**7**  
female teams  
managed by WPDI

**9**  
male teams  
managed by WPDI

**267**  
regular training  
participants

**1,601**  
participants in  
competition events

# Peace through Sports

WPDI has been implementing the Peace Through Sports program in the Acholi Sub-Region for the second successive year, working closely with local leaders to identify and support community-based teams. This program leverages the universal language of sports to transcend cultural, linguistic, and social barriers, bringing people together, fostering mutual respect, and breaking down prejudices related to race, religion, nationality, or social status. By promoting teamwork, shared goals, and positive interactions, Peace Through Sports not only cultivates immediate harmony but also lays the foundation for long-term peacebuilding. However, for sustainable change, sports must be integrated into a broader, multi-faceted peacebuilding approach.



## Training teams

In 2025, direct funding for the Peace Through Sports program came to an end. Yet WPDI sustained strong youth engagement by pivoting to dialogue-based mobilization activities. Throughout the first semester, these alternative activities maintained momentum with the same 16 committed community teams, 9 coaches, and 267 players.

Even without sports funding, the 2024 Peace Through Sports program demonstrated to local and national stakeholders that combining sport with education, dialogue, and skills training is a highly effective, low-cost approach to fostering teamwork, mutual respect, discipline, and lasting social cohesion in post-conflict settings.

While the playing fields may have fallen quiet in 2025, the relationships, skills, and spirit of peacebuilding cultivated through the program continue to thrive through ongoing dialogue and mobilization with the same 16 teams, 9 coaches, and 240 players.

“Before I found soccer, I was full of anger. Almost every week, I was in gang fights, and I carried a knife wherever I went. Peace Through Sports under WPDI gave me a chance to play. The rules were clear: if you want to stay on the team, you cannot fight, you cannot take drugs, and you must attend school. Soccer gave me something precious to lose. For the first time, I had a reason to walk away from trouble. It’s been two years since I last raised my fist in anger. Soccer didn’t just change my path, it gave me a new one.”

*Odong Anyeri, WPDI Soccer Player*



“As a soccer referee serving in Lamwo District, I have seen firsthand the positive impact of WPDI on our community. Although the formal program concluded in 2024, we have continued to engage these young talents through regular soccer training sessions and local tournaments. No other NGO has transformed lives in this area the way WPDI has. Despite the many challenges we face in organizing matches and competitions, WPDI’s program created vital opportunities for our youth to play competitive soccer and train consistently every day. Thanks to this initiative, countless talented players have emerged with the potential to represent not only Lamwo but the entire region at higher levels.”

*Ochaya Mark, WPDI Soccer Player*



## Mark’s Story: Finding Hope Beyond the Field

In 2024, Ochaya Mark joined WPDI’s soccer team, gaining far more than athletic skills. Like many young people in his community, he faces daily challenges including family conflict, financial hardship, and the effects of growing up in a post-conflict environment. The program has become a vital source of psychosocial support, offering a safe and structured space for healing and growth.

Reflecting on his experience, Mark shared:

“What this program has given me goes far beyond the game itself. WPDI’s sports program has truly been my mental therapy. Like many youths here, I carry heavy burdens, family conflicts, money problems, and the scars of growing up in a post-conflict area. Some days, it feels impossible to keep going. But the moment I arrive at training and step onto the field with my teammates, everything changes. The stress melts away. Laughing, running, and playing together lifts the darkness from my mind and fills me with hope. Soccer gives me a reason to think positively again, even when life at home feels broken.”

Through regular training and teamwork, participants are rebuilding trust, strengthening relationships, and expressing themselves in healthier ways. The field has become a safe space to release stress, build confidence, and feel a sense of belonging.

As Mark further explained:

“Through this program, I’ve seen soccer bring real peace, not just on the pitch, but deep inside us. We learn to trust again. We learn to talk instead of fight. WPDI didn’t just teach me how to play soccer. It taught me how to heal, how to hope, and how to believe in a better tomorrow.”

This story highlights the power of sport to improve mental well-being, restore hope, and foster resilience among youth in vulnerable communities.



# Peace Engagement Days

Peace Engagement Day is a series of monthly events that WPDI organizes as part of WPDl's Sports Pillar. The days mainly consist of a soccer mini-tournament and community dialogues on peace-related themes. The themes covered in the program focused on several key aspects essential for both personal and team development. Participants were encouraged to respect the dignity of their opponents, embrace the values of teamwork and tolerance, and understand the importance of fair play and regulations. The program emphasized tolerance and fairness, fostering peaceful living among individuals and communities.

In 2024, the Peace Through Sports initiative delivered profound positive impacts on youth and communities across multiple dimensions: social cohesion, psychological well-being, educational engagement in education, and economic empowerment. Through the vibrant Peace Engagement Celebrations, young people from diverse ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds came together, built lasting friendships, broke down stereotypes, and reduced prejudice in meaningful ways.

Throughout 2025, a total of 1,601 direct beneficiaries, primarily youth and young adults, actively participated in and benefited from the sports-for-peace programs.



"I never thought something as simple as soccer and uniforms could make us feel so seen. Life as a single mother in this community is a constant struggle, market in the morning, children in the afternoon, worries all night. When WPDl handed us those gifts on Labour Day, many of us cried. We are now training twice a week as the "Single Mothers Groups". The children come to watch and cheer; for the first time, they see their mothers not just working hard but laughing and running together. This team is giving me energy I didn't know I still had. Thank you, WPDl, for believing in us."

**Sarah Adong, 34, WPDl Beneficiary**



"As the leader of the Single Mothers Group, I speak for all 28 of us when I say: WPDl did not just give us sports items, they gave us dignity. People used to look at single mothers as problems. Now, when we train on the parish grounds wearing those beautiful uniforms, people stop and clap. Young girls come and ask to join. This is bigger than soccer, it is proof that we are strong, we are capable, and we are still here fighting for our children. We are more committed than ever to growing our savings scheme in 2026 because now we have something to celebrate together."

**Betty Lakot, 41, Chair Member of the Single Mothers Group**





## International Labour Day Celebration

In May 2025, in celebration of International Labour Day, WPDI partnered with the Single Mothers Generation Group, a community-based organization in Uganda that empowers single mothers through economic support and social solidarity.

Formed just six months prior, the group currently has 35 active members. Despite its short history, it has already achieved a major milestone by establishing an internal Savings and Credit Group using the Village Savings and Loan Association model. This system allows members to save regularly and access small loans to grow their businesses. Most members rely on petty trade, including selling foodstuffs, second-hand clothes, charcoal, and other daily essentials, as their primary source of income to support themselves and their children.

During the Labour Day celebration, WPDI recognized the resilience and dedication of these women by donating soccer balls and complete sports uniforms for temporary use. These gifts will enable the group to form a women's soccer team, promoting physical fitness, teamwork, stress relief, and community visibility, while offering both mothers and children a positive recreational outlet.

This partnership underscores WPDI's ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable, women-led households through economic initiatives and holistic community-building activities. The Single Mothers Generation Group expressed deep gratitude for the support and reaffirmed their determination to expand their savings scheme and improve livelihoods in the year ahead.



# Conclusion

The results detailed throughout this report demonstrate that by focusing on systemic integration, we have ensured that the global funding crisis has affected our interventions less than first feared, leading us to deepen our results at the grassroots.

Our primary strength throughout this period of transition has remained our proximity to the ground. In a global landscape where the distance between humanitarian planning and community reality can often widen during times of crisis, WPDI's presence in the Acholi Sub-Region has remained unwavering. Our "vectors of change", the Youth Peacemakers and the CLC, have proven to be our most resilient infrastructure to bring change across the sub-region.

Overall in 2025, WPDI made strong progress particularly through innovative advances in mental health & well-being and our Peace Through Sports initiative. Soccer has become a powerful tool to mobilize communities, drawing people together for dialogue meetings, business skills training, trauma healing, and sexual & reproductive health (SRH) awareness sessions. By blending sports with peacebuilding, we have shown how these integrated approaches create lasting impact on both individual lives and community cohesion.

We take particular pride in these achievements because their full-scale rollout means we have now successfully deployed, across Acholi, the complete vision of our strategic framework, organized around four interconnected pillars: Peacebuilding, Livelihoods, Health & Wellbeing, and Sports.

This holistic model has enabled WPDI to tackle the region's complex, interconnected challenges far more effectively. This allowed us to tailor our responses to local demands combining peacebuilding action with mental health intervention in one place while using sports to segue trainees into vocational training in another.

It is this constant exchange between our teams and community stakeholders that makes our work effective and valuable, as reflected in the testimonies that we have selected throughout the year and of which this report could only bring a fraction.

These narratives, reinforced by the consistently positive results of our recent impact surveys, provide the necessary validation for our strategic effort at long-term results. They demonstrate that while the global landscape remains volatile, the core of our work in the Acholi Sub-Region is resilient and primed to deliver high-impact results throughout 2026 and beyond. We enter this new phase with a model that is proven not just for past results but for its adaptability, ensuring that our presence continues to be a catalyst for peace and progress.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the local authorities and school administrators for their unwavering partnership and trust. We also thank our donors, whose commitment has enabled us to maintain our strategic footprint during a challenging period for the sector. Finally, we express our deepest appreciation to our field staff, whose dedication and ingenuity on the ground are the true drivers of the results presented in this report.



# Our Partners

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