



WPD Uganda

Adjumani District

2024 Annual Report

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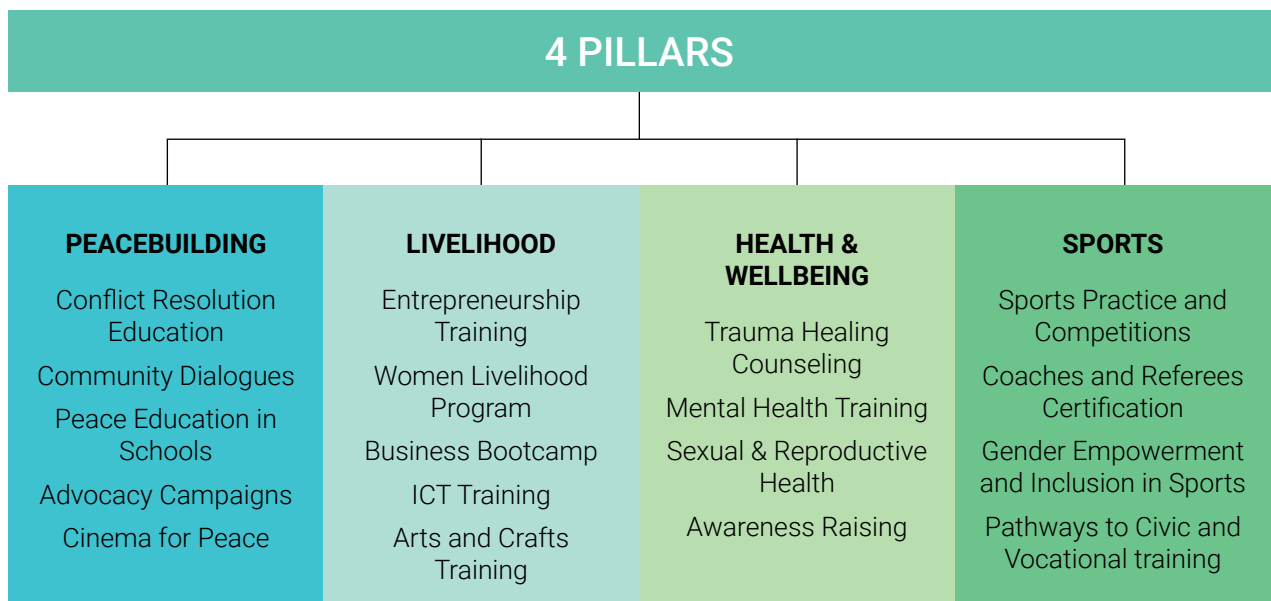
Background

The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) is a global nonprofit organization founded in 2012 by Forest Whitaker, an artist, social activist, and UNESCO Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation. WPDI is committed to fostering peace, reconciliation, and sustainable development in communities affected by conflict and instability, in Africa, Latin America,

France, and the United States. WPDI focuses on empowering especially women and youth by equipping them with skills in conflict mediation, peacebuilding, entrepreneurship, and technology. By nurturing youth leaders and supporting community-driven initiatives, WPDI helps break cycles of violence and promotes resilience.



Uganda is where WPDI launched and piloted its very first programs, expanding from the Acholi Sub-Region to three other ones, namely Bunyoro, Karamoja, and West Nile. We currently implement all four of our core pillars:



Under the Peacebuilding pillar, WPDI delivers activities promoting peace and empowering youth, women, and local leaders with skills to mediate conflict before it escalates. The Livelihood pillar focuses on economic empowerment by equipping individuals with essential skills for starting and sustaining businesses, including entrepreneurship

training and technology proficiency. Under Health & Wellbeing, WPDI provides Trauma Healing Counseling and Mental Health Training, particularly for those recovering from conflict-related trauma. Sports promote values such as teamwork, tolerance, and respect while encouraging healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, and personal growth.



In 2012, WPDI's work began in Uganda in the Acholi Sub-Region, an area deeply affected by over two decades of civil conflict.

In 2016, WPDI expanded its efforts in Uganda to the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, where thousands of South Sudanese refugees have sought safety.

Since 2020, WPDI has been operating in Karamoja, one of Uganda's most underdeveloped regions, historically plagued by inter-ethnic violence and economic hardship. By launching a Youth Peacemaker Network branch, WPDI is fostering local-led change through peace education, dialogue, and entrepreneurship.

In 2024, WPDI expanded its activities in Uganda, by launching a program in Adjumani, in partnership with UN Women. In line with the organization's strategic priorities, the program focuses on empowering

women by increasing their employability and supporting income-generating projects. In line with the organization's strategic priorities, the Adjumani program focuses on empowering women by increasing their employability and supporting income-generating projects. The novelty of the program is that it is a pilot of the new strategic format that we have adopted to mainstream climate- and environment-related goals within the solutions that we generally provide in the areas of peacebuilding and livelihood. The main objective of this strategic reframing is to expand the scope of our programs so that we can better help communities on their path to resilience. In this respect, the pilot program is all the more relevant that it is implemented in refugee settlement, where displacement creates an added source of fragility for vulnerable populations. In this respect also, lessons from this program will be carefully analyzed to improve our capacity to deliver services to our target communities and beneficiaries.



Introduction

Climate-Sensitive Ventures: Empowered Livelihood for Vulnerable Women in Adjumani

The “Advancing Women’s Leadership Empowerment and Resilience in Uganda’s Refugee Response (LEAP II)” project was formally launched in the Adjumani District on March 21, 2024. The event was attended by 54 participants, including 37 men and 17 women, and focused on engaging key stakeholders, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), political leaders, NGOs, UN Women, UNHCR, department heads for production and natural resources, community services,

sub-county representatives and settlement leaders.

The session was inaugurated by Mr. Kaijuka Richard, Deputy Chairman of the Local Council 5 of Adjumani District, representing the Local Government. Mr. Ajusi Pascal, the Deputy Refugee Desk Officer of Pakelle Refugee Desk, emphasized the need for collaborative efforts from all stakeholders to ensure the project’s success.



As climate concerns continue to grow worldwide, the lack of preparedness among local populations becomes increasingly evident. This situation underscores the urgent need for sustainable and climate-sensitive development strategies, notably for women, who do not receive their fair share of opportunities for economic development, and in refugee contexts, which present heightened levels of vulnerability and exposure to the disruptive changes incurred by altered climate patterns.

WPDI stands at the forefront of the response to such complex and intricate challenges experienced by local communities in fragility-affected areas. It is in this capacity that WPDI expanded its efforts in 2024 by launching, in partnership with UN Women and with funding from the Norway Cooperation, the Advancing Women's Leadership, Empowerment, and Resilience in Uganda's Refugee Response (LEAP II) program in the Adjumani District. The area has a population of 439,400, comprising 232,400 nationals and 207,500 refugees, mostly fleeing from armed conflicts in South Sudan (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) - Census 2024). LEAP II is being carried out in Ayilo 1 and 2 refugee settlements, neighboring host communities in Pakelle Sub-County, and Nyumanzi

Refugee Settlement in Dzaipi Sub-County, Adjumani.

The primary objective of LEAP II is to "promote positive coping mechanisms and sustainable economic activities for refugees and host community members," focusing on several key interventions, including Climate-Smart Agriculture, business training, financial literacy through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), access to alternative energy solutions, training on the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology, and the establishment of early warning systems for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). To enhance accessibility and visibility, WPDI established its office in Pakelle Town Council, which not only ensures a physical presence in the district but also helps to maintain seamless collaboration with stakeholders and smooth execution of field activities.

By integrating innovative solutions and promoting sustainable practices, WPDI aims to empower communities, enhance food security, and contribute to the global effort to combat climate change. In its first year, the program has already achieved remarkable success, engaging 1,171 participants, including 1,050 females and 121 males.



Engaging the Local Community in Sustainable Efforts

As per its community-gearred strategy, WPDI initiated the implementation of the LEAP II project with a scoping study to assess the outcomes of previously implemented projects and identify the current needs of the local community. Consultations were carried out with an array of stakeholders to this effect. During this study, community members expressed interest in a variety of business ideas tailored to their specific needs. Such insights facilitated the identification of the groups that would best benefit from the various planned activities, such as Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), business training, and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) programs. This mapping also helped WPDI to identify interventions to complement these efforts, including additional training, notably on market surveys and analysis, and

the selection of business ideas, particularly for those involved in off-farm activities.

To ascertain the feasibility of the project, a meeting was held with the selected groups to discuss land accessibility for Climate-Smart Agriculture initiatives. The groups confirmed the availability of a 70-acre piece of land in Okawa Village, located in the Pakele Sub-County, for orchard tree establishment. Subsequently, further discussions were conducted with all participating groups, resulting in the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the landlord and the groups. This collaborative approach fostered mutual understanding and strengthened the community's commitment to the project's success.



Key Achievements

1,171

people directly reached
through the program

2,720

seedlings were planted across
the 70 acres



66

trainers trained



829

Entrepreneurship
trainees



554

Environment
trainees



1,171

Financial Literacy
trainees



441

Gender Action
Learning Systems
trainees



25

SMEs supported
by WPDI



750

jobs created



1,000

total indirect
beneficiaries
of businesses
(families)

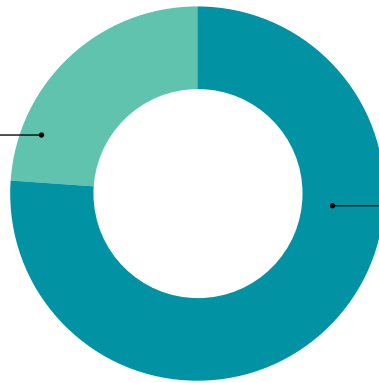
Survey Results

Below are some of the key findings of the survey conducted among 21 participants to assess the impact of the program in 2024.

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

23.8%

I completely agree



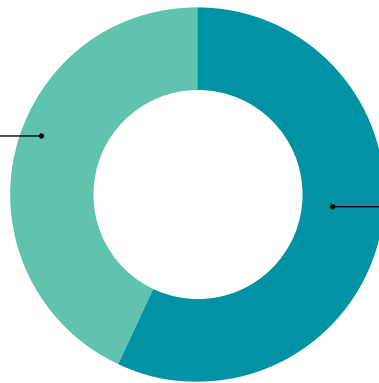
76.2%

I agree

How the program improved my career prospects

42.9%

I created a business



57.1%

My income increased

Feedback from Local and National Stakeholders

"The interventions by WPDI in Nyumanzi and Ayilo refugee settlements have significantly improved livelihoods through Climate-Smart Agriculture, business training, and alternative energy solutions. These initiatives have demonstrated remarkable potential to empower both refugees and host communities. As Adjumani District Local Government, we commend WPDI's efforts to address pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges while fostering resilience. We earnestly appeal for similar and innovative interventions in agribusiness and sustainable green economy enterprises to further enhance community self-reliance and environmental sustainability."

Dr. Mamawi Ambayo Godfrey,

District Production Officer at the Adjumani District Local Government



"The partnership between the Government of Norway, UNWomen, WPDI, and the refugee communities through the LEAP II initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration in fostering women's leadership and resilience. By introducing Climate-Smart Agricultural practices and supporting women-led business enterprises, WPDI has significantly contributed to transforming the livelihoods of refugee women and their host communities in Adjumani District. This intervention is empowering women and paving the way for sustainable development and self-reliance, which are key to a brighter future for all."

Mr. Kivumbi Erasto Muwanga,

Livelihood Associate UNHCR in Adjumani



"Training under the LEAP II program is an opportunity to learn with external people. The entire process has been helpful in that both the refugees and the host peacefully coexist. The trees are now growing in a place that people thought was just for animal grazing. I would like to thank WPDI for this opportunity and implore the local communities to seriously uphold the project intervention for a clean environment and steady income."

Mr. Ambaku Michael,

Village Chairman of Ayilo





Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio- Economic Empowerment

By offering comprehensive vocational training, startup grants, and incubation services, our Livelihood program equips individuals with skills and resources they can apply in their lives. Participants gain practical expertise in areas such as entrepreneurship, and financial literacy, empowering them to manage resources effectively and sustain their ventures over time. An important aspect of the program is to familiarize participants with the system of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) that improve access to finance for business development. By combining skills development, financial empowerment, and environmental sustainability, the Livelihood program is expected to not only improve the wellbeing of participants but also to contribute to long-term peace, prosperity, and cohesion in communities affected by conflict and marginalization.

Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)

35 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) created

As a community-based platform for financing promising projects, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) improve access to savings and credit services for individuals in underserved areas. Under the LEAP II program, WPDI supported the creation of 35 groups, comprising 1,171 members (1,050 women and 121 men). WPDI provided training to members who recognized the benefits of such associations, which strengthened social networks, fostered social cohesion, and created a sense of togetherness among participants.

Training sessions focused on record-keeping for welfare, savings, loan ledgers, and personal passbooks, while a tailored training plan was developed to address group dynamics, financial literacy, and auction audits. Improved financial record-keeping practices have benefited both groups and individuals, ensuring better organization and transparency.

To strengthen VSLA operations, 35 complete VSLA kits were procured and distributed, including customized metallic boxes, ledger books, passbooks, padlocks, storage bags, rulers, pens, stamps, ink pods, ink pads, calendars, and calculators. Practical

training on using these resources, managing loans, and ensuring timely loan repayments were provided to the groups. As a result, group performance improved, with increased savings, better borrowing practices, and a deeper understanding of record-keeping and meeting procedures, such as savings and loan disbursement.

WPDI mentored the groups through the registration process, ensuring that they could navigate the administrative process with success. Upon the issuance of their certificates, they were allowed to open dedicated bank accounts and access other developmental interventions targeting registered groups.

Although progress is evident, savings, loans, and social fund contributions remain relatively low. Efforts will focus on encouraging loan-taking and increasing the loan portfolio to build a stronger savings culture. Despite these challenges, group members have used savings and loans to support 25 small businesses, pay school fees, meet basic domestic needs, and address health emergencies. Most groups plan to conduct share-outs between January and June 2025.



Lillian's Journey of Transformation Through LEAP II

"I now see myself doing more than I ever thought possible, and my life will never be the same again."

Lillian's Life Before the LEAP II Program

Adrupio Lillian, a 48-year-old woman from Okawa Village in Lewa Parish, Pakele Sub-County, Adjumani District, reflects on her life and the changes she has seen over the years. "I married a wonderful man, and together we have seven children. My husband and I have always lived here, in Okawa, where the land was fertile. We grew maize, cassava, sorghum, and millet, and the soil was so rich that everything thrived. However, things began to change when refugees from South Sudan were settled in Ayilo II. Many trees were cut down, land was over-cultivated, and cattle roamed freely. Our usual streams started disappearing, and the fertility of the soil declined. The yields from our crops deteriorated, and we could barely afford three decent meals a day, let alone gather firewood.

Joining the LEAP II Program and a New Hope for the Future

In 2024, Lillian's group was selected to participate in the LEAP II program, which brought new opportunities. "We chose to focus on goat production and management during the enterprise selection. We were also enrolled in savings training, and we received a savings kit," Lillian shares. With a clear goal in mind, she is now saving for her future. "I plan to save 1,200,000 UGX by June 2025 to start a produce-buying and selling business. I am truly grateful to WPDI and UN Women for helping me reach this milestone. I now see myself doing more than I ever thought possible, and my life will never be the same again."



Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

The LEAP II program represents a key step for WPDI as a pilot for our strategic reorientation towards fully integrating climate and environmental concerns into our economic empowerment programs. In this light, the Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) program was designed to address the critical challenges faced by communities in fragile and climate-vulnerable areas with respect mainly to food security and economic security.

The initiative equips agribusiness entrepreneurs with skills and resources to implement climate-smart techniques such as crop diversification, water conservation, and agroforestry—enhancing soil fertility and productivity while minimizing environmental impact. Through innovations towards CSA, entrepreneurs are introduced to the use of smart agricultural inputs, including drought-resistant

seedlings, improved farming tools, and modern technologies like irrigation systems and organic fertilizers.

In addition to promoting sustainable farming practices, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) component of the program prepares communities for climate-related shocks, such as floods, droughts, and soil degradation. DRR focuses on preventing new risks, reducing existing vulnerabilities, and managing residual risks, ultimately strengthening community resilience and supporting sustainable development. Key DRR interventions include early warning systems, climate adaptation training, and emergency response planning, ensuring that communities are better equipped to handle environmental challenges. This aspect of the program will be implemented in 2025.



“This is the best gift I have ever received—the knowledge and skills on tree-growing. I was worried about how to take care of myself at an old age, but now the solution is at hand. I have planted one acre of assorted trees and plan to expand next year. Thank you, WPDI, for enlightening me.”

Mrs. Endreo Irene,
Member of the Amanzora group in
Ayilo II Refugee Settlement

“We now see ourselves as agents of change in our community. WPDI and UN Women have given us the tools and inspiration to dream big, and we are determined to keep progressing. We went from producing nothing to eight bags of simsim (1,280kg) with a projected income of 6,400,000 UGX in just five months. The impact we’ve made is just the beginning of a brighter future for all of us.”

Mrs Chandia Rose of Amesutakuru,
Farmer in Ayilo I Refugee Settlement

Ayikoru Nasuru: A Beacon of Hope and Leadership in Climate-Smart Farming

"Seeing the fruit trees grow and knowing that we are building a sustainable future together fills me with hope and pride. We are not just surviving; we are thriving."

Ayikoru Shares her Knowledge for Sustainable Farming with her Community

Ayikoru Nasuru emerged as an inspiring example of success following her training at Delight Farm, where she displayed a profound understanding of sustainable agricultural practices and an inspiring commitment to climate-smart farming. Returning to Ayilo with a renewed sense of purpose and optimism, Nasuru immediately began organizing training sessions for fellow refugees. She shared her knowledge of sustainable farming techniques, inspiring many within the community to embrace climate-smart practices. Her leadership, dedication, and willingness to uplift others earned her widespread trust and respect.

Driven by the transformative potential of agroforestry, Nasuru took the initiative to

establish a fruit tree in the Ayilo settlement. She mobilized a group of refugees, and together they identified a suitable piece of land. With support from WPDI and the local community, they successfully planted a variety of fruit and medicinal trees, including mangoes, jackfruit, macadamia, soursop, mulberry, and cinnamon.

A Personal Reflection on Growth and Resilience

Reflecting on her journey, Nasuru remarked, "Before the training, I felt helpless and uncertain about our future. The Climate-Smart Agriculture training at Delight Farm gave me the skills and confidence to not only improve my own family's situation but also to help my entire community. Seeing the fruit trees grow and knowing that we are building a sustainable future together fills me with hope and pride. We are not just surviving; we are thriving."



Reaping the Fruits of Efforts and Teamwork to Practice Climate-Smart Agriculture

"We never imagined that our community could turn challenges into such incredible opportunities."

Environmental Impact: the Adoption of CSA Practices

During a visit to the Amanzora Farmers in Ayilo II Refugee Settlement, Pakelle Sub County, Adjumani District, a remarkable story of transformation was reported to our team. Through the LEAP II Project, the Amanzora Farmers group has embraced Climate-Smart Agricultural practices with extraordinary results, proving how resilience and innovation can change lives.

Under this initiative, the Amanzora Farmers Group received extensive hands-on training in Climate-Smart Agriculture, with a focus on silvicultural practices. The group pioneered an agroforestry project, cultivating five acres of fruit and medicinal trees intercropped with groundnuts as cover crops, alongside commercial maize and rice. Through careful planning, they implemented best practices such as selecting high-quality seeds, proper planting techniques, organic fertilization, soil and moisture conservation, pest and disease management, and effective harvest and post-harvest processes.

Social Impact: Sustaining Future Generations

Mrs. Endreo Irene, the group's chairperson, reflected on their journey:

"We never imagined that our community could turn challenges into such incredible opportunities. The training and technical support from WPDI and UN Women taught us to maximize our land's potential while protecting it for future generations. Today, we proudly care for 5 acres of fruit and medicinal orchards with 100 mango trees, 15 jackfruit trees, and 25 medicinal trees. Their growth inspires us to expand further and transform our community."

The group's efforts are translating into improved livelihoods, better education opportunities for children, and access to essential services. Beyond financial benefits, the initiative has enriched the environment by enhancing soil fertility, reducing erosion through intercropping, and establishing long-term ecological benefits from the fruit and medicinal trees, such as carbon sequestration and future income generation.



Training Trainers for Sustainable Agriculture and Improved Livelihoods

Climate-Smart Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction build expertise in practices such as orchard and medicinal tree planting, post-harvest handling, biochar production, record keeping, and marketing.

66 individuals (34 women, 22 men), including 6 community leaders, were taken through a Training of Trainers (ToTs) at the Delight Farm Institute in Nwoya District. It is important to note that among the 60 ToTs, 17 are refugees. The ToTs then passed this knowledge to 12 VSLA groups in their communities, ensuring the adoption of good agronomic and Climate Smart Agricultural practices. This led to the establishment and effective management of orchards covering a total of 70 acres, which were identified for the 12 groups, with agreements developed under the guidance of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

The District Agricultural Officer conducted agro-input inspections and on-site verifications to ensure seedlings were pest- and disease-free and of the right varieties. A

total of 2,720 seedlings were planted across the 70 acres. Knapsack sprayers, insecticides, and fungicides were distributed, and farmers received training on assembling sprayers, handling agro-chemicals, and administering pesticides and fungicides, resulting in healthy, pest-free orchards.

Twelve groups received support in post-harvest handling, leading to strong yields despite some challenges from heavy rains. These 12 groups are among the 35 newly created VSLAs under the program. Groups like Amanzora, Amesutakuri, Cook Stove, and Amatura Women's Group celebrated successful harvests. Efforts to establish market linkages are underway to ensure the produce is sold at competitive prices, further enhancing incomes and livelihoods for the farmers involved.



"Before the training, I felt helpless and uncertain about our future. Training as a ToT at Delight Farm Institute gave me the skills and confidence to not only improve my own family's situation with sustainable farming techniques but also to help my entire community using Climate-Smart Agriculture principles. Seeing the Orchards (fruit trees) grow and knowing that we are building a sustainable future together fills me with hope and pride. We are not just surviving, we are thriving."

Chandia Rose,

Amesutakuru Farmer Group in Ayilo I Refugee Settlement



“We never imagined that our community could turn challenges into incredible opportunities. The training from Delight Farm and constant technical backstopping from WPD I and UN Women taught us how to maximize the land’s potential while protecting it for future generations. We have five acres of fruit and medicinal orchards comprising 100 mango trees, 15 jackfruit trees, and 25 medicinal trees. Their growth alone is our motivation to increase land production for economic transformation. From the intercrop of groundnuts and rice, we obtained seven bags of groundnuts and ten bags of rice with an estimated income of Ugx. 4,030,000. This money will expand production and procure value-addition equipment like rice huller in 2025. We now see a brighter future.”

Chandia Rose,

Chairperson of Amanzora VSLA group in Ayilo II Refugee Settlement



Mofuku Stella: The WPD I-Trained Trainer Leading the Way in Climate-Smart Agriculture for a Sustainable Future

Mofuku Excels in Her Climate-Smart Agriculture Training

Mofuku Stella, from Dzaipi Sub County, is a farmer excelling in Climate-Smart Agriculture who went through the Training of Trainers (ToT) under the UN Women LEAP II project at Delight Farm (U) Ltd in Nwoya. She gained hands-on skills in grafting, soil fertility management, water conservation, crop protection techniques, using traditional compost methods, key fruit tree establishment, and intercropping techniques. Applying her newly-acquired knowledge, she successfully grew local mango trees at her homestead to improve their productivity, a technology Mofuku shocked the residents with.

Mofuku Advocates for More Sustainable Practices

A natural leader, Mofuku mobilized her group to establish eight acres of mango trees intercropped with green gram to enhance soil fertility. Additionally, they cultivated eight acres of sesame. With improved farming practices, the group anticipates higher yields and income in 2025. They expect significant mango harvests in two years, which Mofuku believes will greatly uplift household incomes.

Beyond crop production, she advocates for mulching agroforestry, and organic manure use to sustain soil health. She described the training as a “game changer,” she envisions a future where smallholder farmers thrive economically through sustainable agricultural innovations.



Business and Entrepreneurship

WPDI's Business and Entrepreneurship support program is designed to empower vulnerable communities, including refugees and host populations, by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to create sustainable livelihoods. The training focuses on building entrepreneurial capacity and fostering financial independence. By providing tailored business skills training, guidance on business plan development, and financial support for viable enterprise ideas, the

program aims to transform individuals and groups into agents of change within their communities. This initiative not only addresses immediate economic needs but also promotes long-term resilience by enabling participants to establish and sustain income-generating activities that benefit their households and the broader community. Therefore, the program seeks to stimulate local economies, enhance social cohesion, and lay the foundation for sustainable development.



"I am from the Bill Enterprise Group in the Nyumanzi refugee group. Following the training on Business skills, we remained as a group and are working together for greater success. We rose from nothing and the business is self-rewarding. A high level of commitment is exhibited by the group members. Big thank you to WPDI for training us."

Mary Nyie,
Trainee in Business and
Entrepreneurship from Nyumanzi
Refugee Group



Adau's Story: Using Business Skills to Ensure a Better Future for Her Family

"It is now my responsibility to work hard, make positive changes in my life, and ensure a better future for my family."

Empowerment through Business Skills Training



"My name is Adau Deng Alut, a 37-year-old mother from South Sudan, currently living in Ayilo II settlement. I fled my country due to conflict and initially relied on support from the World Food Programme (WFP). Due to funding shortfalls, I no longer received aid. Hearing about the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative brought me renewed hope and a reason to smile. I believe that support through business training is the most sustainable way to uplift someone, and I am truly grateful. I want to sincerely thank WPMI and UN Women for providing us with invaluable training in business skills. The session on personal awareness was particularly eye-opening—it made me realize that I must take responsibility for improving my livelihood."

A Commitment to Positive Change

"Reflecting on the past, I see now how much time I wasted without being productive, but this training has ignited a sense of urgency and determination. It is now my responsibility to work hard, make positive changes in my life, and ensure a better future for my family. I promise WPMI that I will not sit idle—I am determined to rise, work diligently, earn an income, and inspire others like me to see that change is possible. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity and a fresh start."



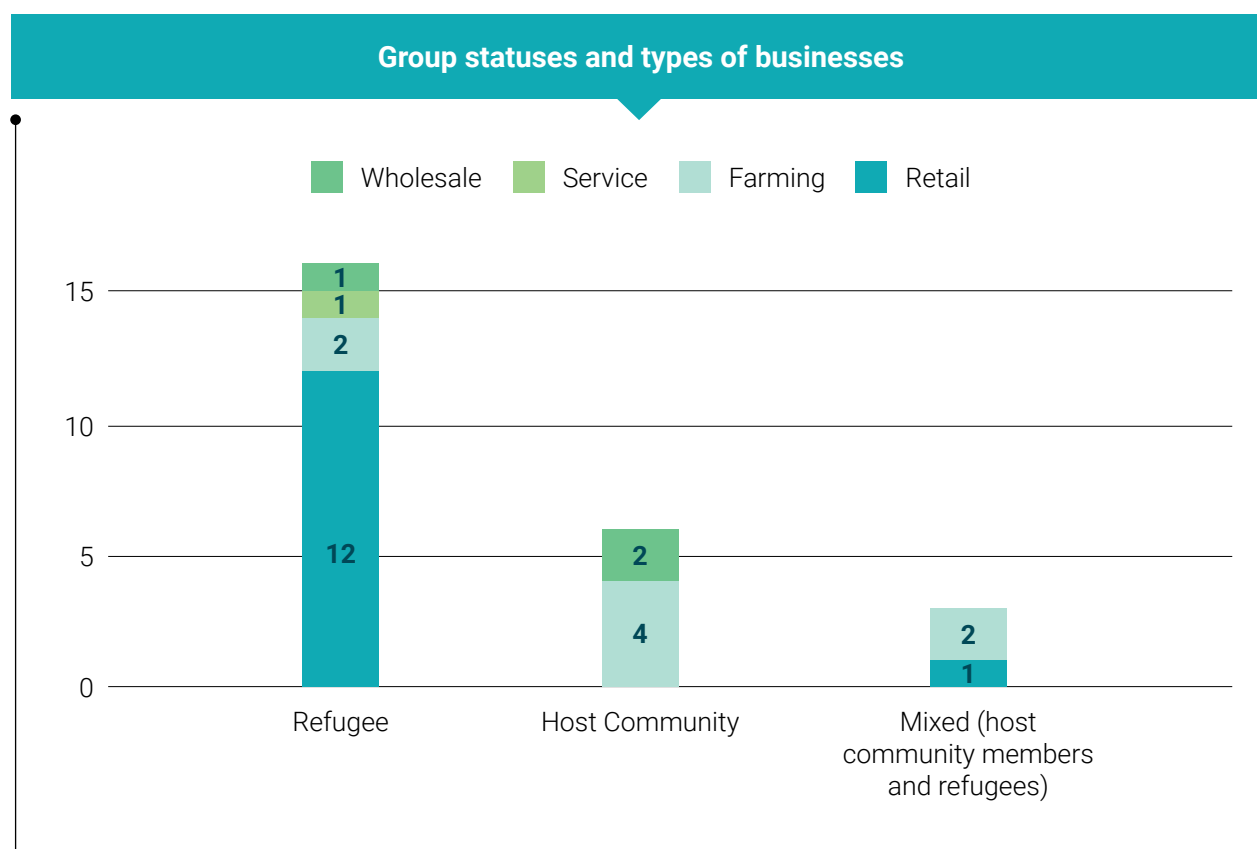
Supporting Income-Generating Projects



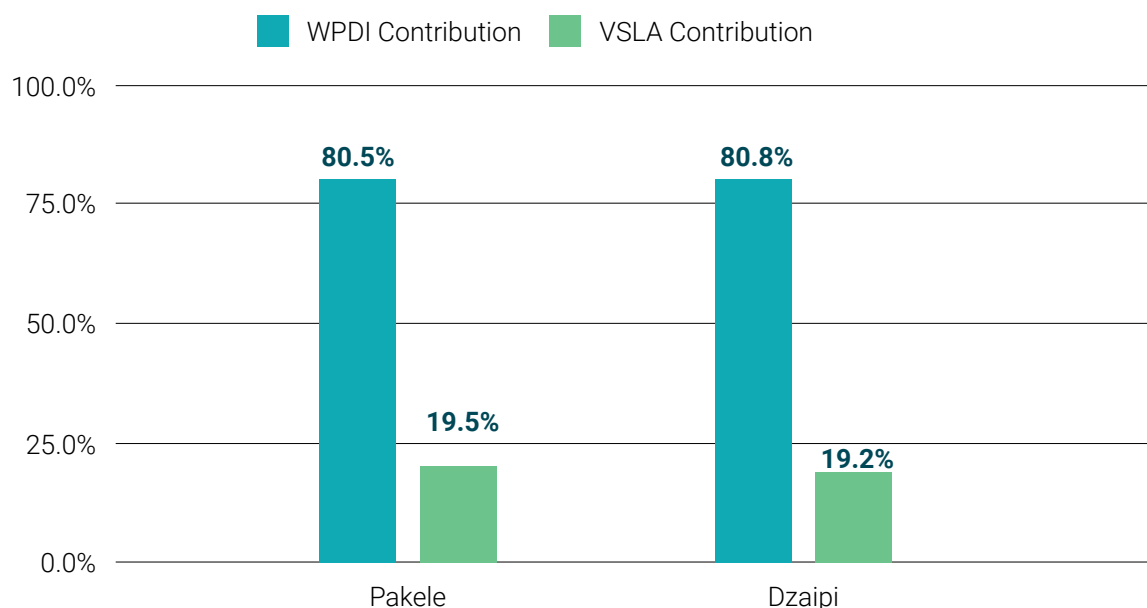
A central component of the project consisted of providing participants with assistance and resources in the establishment of environmentally sustainable income-generating projects. 25 groups, comprising 750 women, were registered and profiled to receive business skills training to support their income-generating projects.

All 25 groups were guided through the development of detailed business plans, which were reviewed with a focus on viability, business premises, formation of management committees, group contributions,

market feasibility, and long-term sustainability. The groups expressed interest in enterprises such as goat production and marketing, retail and general merchandise, event management, produce trading, and commercial legume farming, given the strong demand within the refugee settlements and host communities. As a result of this training, all 25 business plans were approved for financial support, setting the stage for the groups to bring their ideas to fruition. Remarkably, in the first months of implementation, VSLAs have already provided close to 20% of the funding for businesses.



Funding of businesses within the program's first year of implementation



Transforming Lives Through Entrepreneurship: Apiny Evaline's Story

"I feel transformed and more confident in working within a group."

Empowerment through Group Collaboration

"My name is Apiny Evaline, a 46-year-old woman with five children, living in the Ayilo II refugee settlement. I am truly grateful to be part of this business entrepreneurship training, which has taught me so much that I didn't know before, particularly how to generate business ideas, select the right ones, provide excellent customer care, and fill out the business plan template. I feel transformed and more confident in working within a group."

My group, Amasuta, decided to focus on produce-

buying and -selling. Before joining this training, we were not in a group and didn't understand the importance of working together. WPDI helped us realize the value of collaboration."

Turning Training Into Action

"After completing the training, we received kickstarting funds from WPDI, which we withdrew and are now using for our venture. The demand for produce is high, especially since refugees are now receiving cash instead of food. I am deeply thankful to WPDI for their support."



Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

In line with our priority on gender equality and women's empowerment, the implementation of the LEAP II includes Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) methodology. This community-led approach is designed to promote gender justice and equality through participatory training that encourages mindset change and collaborative decision-making. 441 individuals, of which 342 females and 99 males participated in workshops addressing issues such as women lacking access to land and the unequal division of labor. Participants committed to passing on the knowledge and skills, such as communication skills, joint planning, and shared family responsibilities,

to their spouses, neighbors, group members, and other members of the community who did not attend the training. The GALS methodology challenged participants' attitudes and behaviors, inspiring them to move toward a more equitable vision for their lives.

They were empowered to develop their own solutions to gender constraints and were inspired to catalyze change for both women and men in the refugee settlement and host communities. This training has fostered community-led action learning, encouraging participants to challenge the status quo and champion gender equality in their homes and communities.



"This is the kind of training the community needs, and if both partners/spouses attend, there will be no domestic violence at home. No need to run to LCS, community development officers, or probation officers."

Mr. Deng Chol,
Resident of Ayilo I Refugee Settlement





"I'm so grateful to be part of the WPDJ program in Ayilo Refugee Settlement. When this training started, I was unable to recognize my strengths and weaknesses, or how to relate to my husband properly. But after going through all this training, especially using the Justice Diamond Tree, Gender Challenge Tree, and Vision Road Journey, I now know what I can do and the business I can start based on my skills and talents. I used to open my small business in locations that were not suitable, but after coming here, I am able to identify good locations, understand customer demand, and how to welcome them. I now understand what brings poverty and am able to avoid it. I owe this to the GALS training."

Ajoh Bol Ghak,
GALS Trainee in the Ayilo Refugee Settlement





Conclusion

In 2024, WPDl was requested by UN Women to develop a livelihood program in Adjumani, leveraging our extensive experience with livelihood programs and refugee settlements. This opportunity allowed us to pilot a new strategic development: the mainstreaming of environmental and climate concerns into our programs on the ground.

We are pleased to report that very positive results were obtained within the first year. The LEAP II project empowered 1,171 participants, including 1,050 women and 121 men, through various initiatives. In line with WPDl's strategic priorities and UN Women's mandate, the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) addressed critical gender barriers, empowering 441 individuals (342 women, 99 men, including 29 people with disabilities) and fostering positive behavioral change and collaborative decision-making. Additionally, 25 groups were trained in business planning, financial literacy, and market research, leading to the development of social cooperative income-generating projects approved for financial support. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) further strengthened the financial independence of participants, improving

savings, credit access, and social cohesion within communities.

Significant strides were also made in Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA). Sixty Trainers of Trainees (ToTs), including 17 refugees, were equipped with the knowledge and skills to establish sustainable farming practices. With 70 acres of orchards planted, the CSA initiatives enhanced food security and income generation while incorporating disaster risk reduction strategies to build resilience against climate-related shocks. These initiatives have not only improved agricultural productivity but also fostered long-term resilience and social cohesion.

Beyond these quantitative results, which testify to the relevance of our model and the capacity of our Uganda office to deploy new teams and programs, our greatest satisfaction lies in the trust we have quickly gained from the communities and key stakeholders in the region. This trust is very promising as we move into the next steps of the program, which we see as key to further demonstrating the importance of empowering women through green entrepreneurship to respond to the needs of today and tomorrow.



In partnership with



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women





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