



WPDI UGANDA

Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

2025 Annual Report

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Introduction

Located in the mid-western district of Kiryandongo, the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement serves as a critical sanctuary for over 100,000 displaced individuals, primarily from South Sudan. However, the operational landscape has shifted dramatically over the last three years. According to UNHCR data, the settlement population has surged from approximately 64,000 in 2023 to over 160,000 by late 2025, driven largely by the ongoing conflict in Sudan (Source: UNHCR). This rapid influx has placed immense pressure on already limited resources and infrastructure. In a global climate where international funding is increasingly diverted to newer or more visible conflicts, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) has had to navigate a narrowing funding window while addressing a widening humanitarian need. This reality has demanded a shift from traditional aid to a more creative, strategic model of human capital cultivation.

In 2025, amidst this environment of heightened stress, the Kiryandongo settlement witnessed a profound shift in community dynamics. Through a model specifically adapted to the unique ethnocultural diversity of the refugee and host populations, WPDI has remained a steady and reassuring presence. Our work is grounded in the principle that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of dignity, calling for long-term action on the ground. Since establishing our footprint in Kiryandongo in 2017, we have reached tens of thousands of beneficiaries, including 44,000 new beneficiaries in 2025 alone.

The strategic significance of reaching 44,000 individuals in a single year lies in the “multiplier effect” inherent to our model, where each beneficiary is transformed into a frontline partner for peace. Our 2025 survey data provides the empirical weight to this approach: 98.5% of participants reported a significant increase in self-confidence and the ability to apply WPDI skills to their daily lives. This personal empowerment translates directly into community stability, as evidenced by the 84% of peacebuilding graduates who have successfully mediated conflicts within their own households and the 94% who have gone on to teach these mediation techniques to their peers. Furthermore, our commitment to economic resilience has turned vocational training into a cornerstone of settlement security. With 92% of business program graduates reporting that their income has increased and 97% of trainees expressing that their mindset toward self-reliance has fundamentally shifted, WPDI has become more than a service provider; it is a vital regional asset. By fostering a 99% recommendation rate among the refugee and host communities, we demonstrate that our teams on the ground have the capacity to cultivate a collective ownership of peace, proving that even as international resources narrow, the cultivation of human capital can create a resilient environment prone to lasting peace and sustainable development.



Background: the Action of WPDI in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, co-managed by Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR, is located in mid-western Uganda and serves as a primary refuge for individuals and families displaced by conflict from neighboring countries, particularly South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan. While Uganda's progressive refugee policy promotes integration and the right to work, it has also heightened competition over scarce natural resources such as water, firewood, and farmland between refugee and host communities.

Daily life in the settlement is defined by both resilience and significant challenges. Residents rely heavily on subsistence farming but face limited arable land and environmental strains. Overcrowded schools, stressed water sources, and few income opportunities compound protection risks including Gender-Based Violence, child labor, and the lasting psychological impacts of displacement. Community-led groups, supported by Uganda's national refugee framework, provide essential local governance and services, yet operational capacity is continually stretched by new arrivals and unpredictable funding.

In this complex environment, the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative (WPDI) implements an integrated, community-centered approach designed to address interconnected needs. WPDI's peacebuilding work introduces Conflict Resolution

Education in local schools and facilitates structured dialogues and advocacy campaigns that have helped ease tensions and foster a culture of dialogue. To bolster economic resilience, WPDI provides practical skills training in entrepreneurship, ICT, and artisan crafts, empowering participants to start small businesses and improve household stability.

Complementing this, WPDI offers psychosocial support and trauma healing services to help individuals and families process loss and rebuild emotional well-being. Dedicated Sexual and Reproductive Health initiatives provide vital education and access to services, strengthening health literacy and agency among women and youth. Through sports, the program promotes social cohesion, inclusion, and positive youth engagement, while civic education components nurture leadership and active community participation.

Together, these interconnected efforts have helped strengthen the social fabric of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and surrounding host community by advancing gender equality, fostering economic independence, and cultivating a shared commitment to peace. WPDI's multi-sectoral model has laid a meaningful foundation for stability and community-led development amid ongoing humanitarian challenges.



Key Achievements



PEACEBUILDING: 28,410 participants

19,325
Community Learning Center
(CLC) visitors

349
Youth Peacemakers

5,130
*individuals reached by
Youth Peacemakers*

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

252
Conflict Resolution
Education trainees

1,076
prison inmates
reached for
rehabilitation

1,555
participants in
Cinema for
Peace

679
advocacy
campaign
participants

3,562
**total participants
in peacebuilding
activities at the CLC**

Peacebuilding in the Community

8
Community
Dialogues held

819
participants in
Community Dialogues

70
local leaders
trained

889
**total participants
in community-level
peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding in Schools

41
schools
hosting WPDI
programs

1,050
learners trained in
Conflict Resolution
Education

60
teachers and school
administrative staff
trained

111
advocacy
campaign
participants

165
scholarship
recipients

4,285
**total participants
in school-based
peacebuilding**



LIVELIHOOD: 9,382 participants

Capacity-Building

568
Information and
Communication
Technologies trainees

795
Business and
Entrepreneurship
trainees

320
Vulnerable
Women trained
in business

128
Arts and
Crafts
trainees

560
Financial
Literacy
trainees

2,371
**total trainees
in vocational
courses**

Businesses

22
businesses
created in 2025

181
businesses supported
by WPDI in total

1,479
jobs
created

5,532
indirect beneficiaries of
businesses (families)

7,011
**beneficiaries of
all businesses**



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 1,281 participants

136
Sexual and Reproductive
Health individual
beneficiaries

288
Sexual and
Reproductive Health
event beneficiaries

290
Trauma Healing
individual
beneficiaries

567
Trauma
Healing event
participants



SPORTS: 5,017 participants

33
female teams
managed by WPDI

66
male teams
managed by WPDI

1,668
regular training
participants

3,349
participants in
competition events

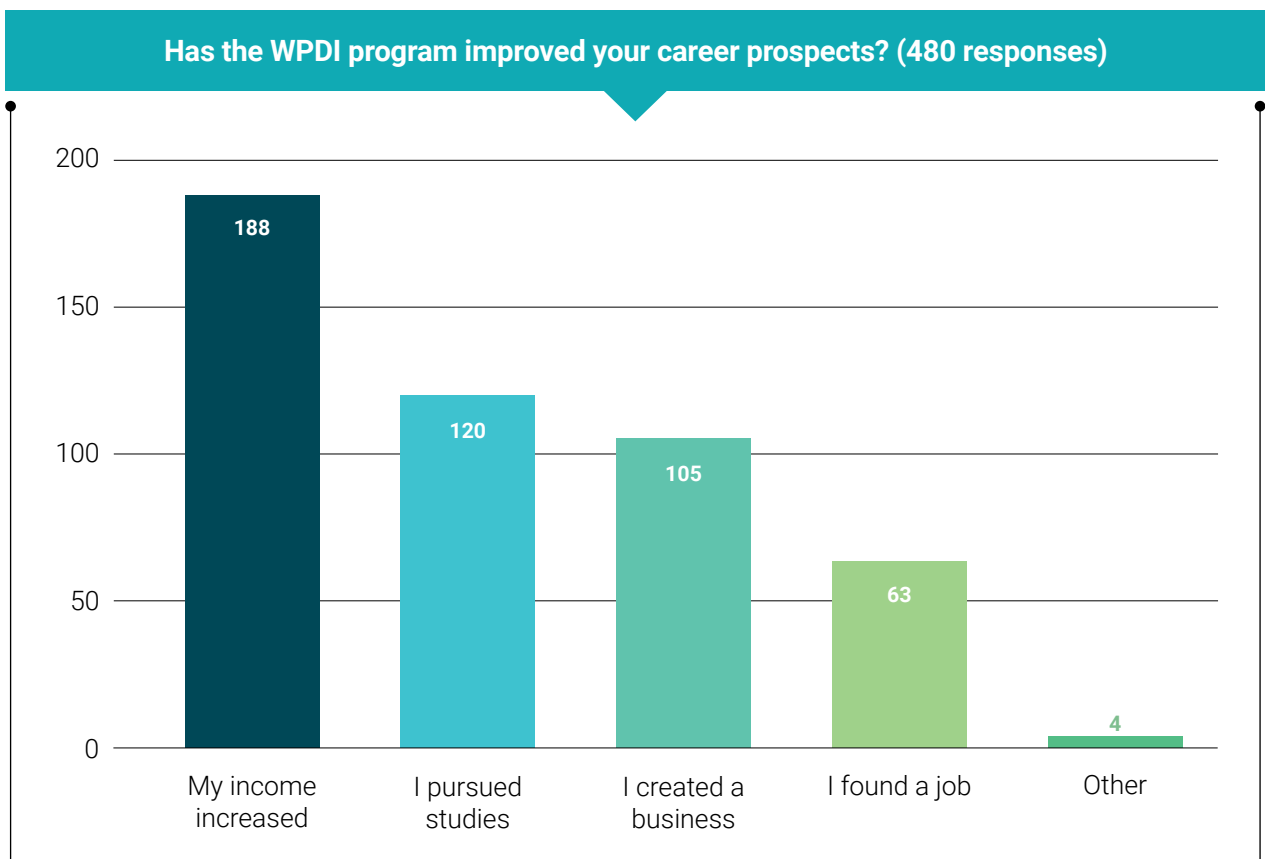
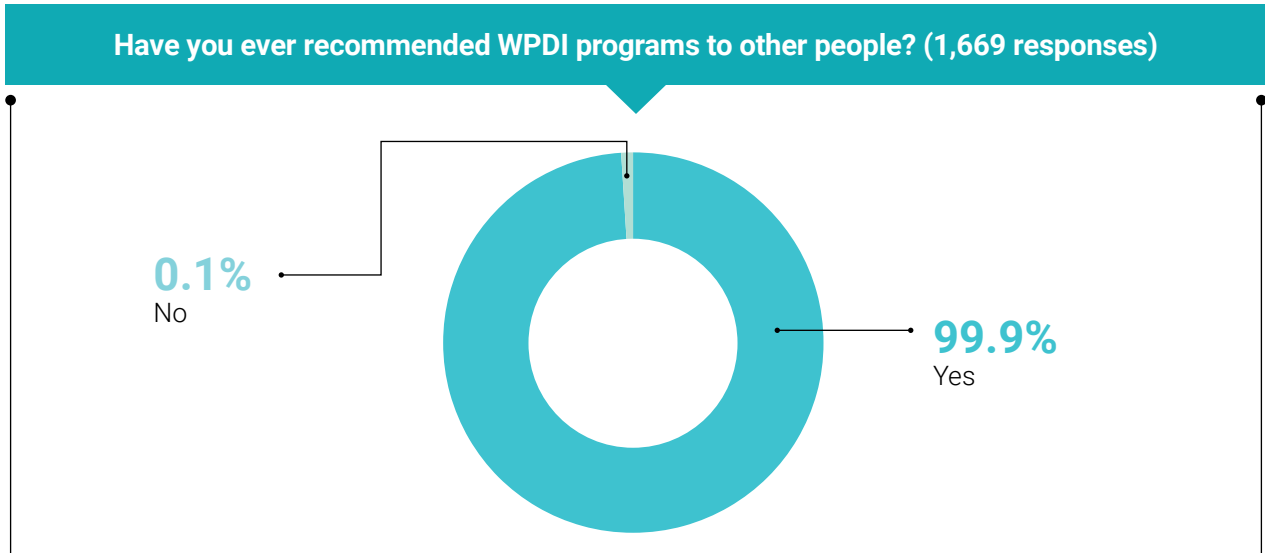
44,090

Grand total of people reached through WPDI's activities in the area, 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, 1,670 individuals surveyed provided insight into the effectiveness of WPDI activities. In addition to the following responses, the report includes survey results specific to each pillar of actions under each appropriate section.



Feedback from Local & National Partners

“The WPDI Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement Program has been instrumental in transforming the attitudes and mindsets of displaced communities. In a context where different ethnic groups hold strong and sometimes conflicting cultural norms, the program has helped people discover shared values of peace and embrace coexistence. Communities that once lived in mistrust are now engaging in dialogue, respecting differences, and actively championing peace, showing that even in displacement, unity and understanding can grow.”

Stephen Bogere,
Assistant Settlement Commandant Kiryandongo Settlement



“Despite the continued influx of new arrivals from Sudan, which has placed immense pressure on already limited resources, WPDI has remained a steady and reassuring presence in the settlement. For many new arrivals, WPDI was among the first sources of support helping them settle with dignity, feel welcomed, and rediscover hope after loss and uncertainty. Through ongoing peacebuilding activities and community support, the organization has helped turn fear and despair into strength and determination. Refugees are not only learning how to cope with the hardships of displacement, but are also finding the confidence to rebuild their lives and contribute to a more peaceful, united, and supportive community.”

Babra Namusooko,
Protection Assistant Community Services



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
- **Community Learning Centers (CLCs)**, which offer training, access to technology, and vital resources to support community development.



Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

Within the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, peacemakers have played an important role in promoting peace, conflict resolution, and community development. Their work has contributed to a reduction in violent incidents between ethnic groups, which were reduced from three per week to three over six months. This progress has been acknowledged by both the United Nations and the Office of the Prime Minister, which oversees the settlement.

In 2025, WPDI Kiryandongo Local Peacemakers played a vital role in implementing peacebuilding and resilience programs across refugee and host communities in Kiryandongo Settlement. Through daily and weekly sessions at the Community Learning Center (CLC) and community outreach initiatives, the Youth Peacemakers delivered training in conflict resolution, human rights, entrepreneurship, ICT, trauma awareness and psychosocial support, and sexual and reproductive health. They also supported community dialogues,

peace forums, advocacy campaigns, leadership training, women's livelihood initiatives, youth empowerment programs, and arts and crafts training, strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.

To enhance their impact, the Local Peacemakers participated in advanced capacity-building training in 2025 facilitated by UN-FAO, AYAN, SEED Effect, and Action Against Hunger. These focused on climate-smart agriculture, Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) management, post-harvest handling, and the African climate-smart agriculture Fungusa approach. Together, these efforts strengthened the peacemakers' technical and leadership capacities, enabling them to support sustainable livelihoods, mitigate socio-economic and environmental challenges, and promote long-term peace and stability within refugee and host communities.



“As a Youth Peacemaker in Kiryandongo, I am truly grateful for the training I have received as part of WPDI’s global network of peacemakers. These opportunities have equipped me with valuable skills and knowledge, allowing me to support both refugee and host communities to become more productive, resilient, and harmonious. I have seen firsthand how these efforts help communities overcome challenges, embrace peace, and build stronger, more united relationships. I am proud to contribute to fostering positive change and creating a lasting impact in our settlement.”

Aol Sunday,
Youth Peacemaker



“Being part of WPDI’s global network of peacemakers has been a truly life-changing experience. It has given me the opportunity to showcase my work within the refugee communities, and because of my dedication and passion for building a just and peaceful world, my efforts have been recognized. I am honored to have been selected to attend several trainings, which have strengthened my knowledge and equipped me to better support not only my own community but others beyond. This journey has deepened my commitment to peace and resilience, and I am proud to contribute to creating lasting positive change in the lives of those we serve.”

Abigaba Moses,
Youth Peacemaker



Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

The Kiryandongo Community Learning Center (CLC) serves as a hub for education, peacebuilding, advocacy, and community development initiatives. It is a safe space for refugees and host communities to come together, study, and build positive relationships. Key programs and activities at the center include training courses in Conflict Resolution Education, Arts and Crafts, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to foster economic empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Community engagement and outreach are integral to the center's mission. Clean-up initiatives and environmental conservation activities, such as tree planting and cleaning public gathering places in the settlement, health facilities, water points, and markets, exemplify the center's commitment to giving back to the community. WPDI also organizes inter-community sports tournaments, competitions, friendly matches, and mini-championships to promote social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and wellness among refugees and host communities. Cultural exchange programs further foster crosscultural understanding between refugees and host communities through peace engagement days, awareness campaigns, and other events. It is the venue for targeted advocacy campaigns and the celebration of international UN days such as World Refugee Day.



Playground for Children

The children's playground at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement's CLC was developed in 2023 through a community-led design process that integrated feedback from children and caregivers. Built using a mix of local and manufactured materials, the playground provides a safe, culturally appropriate, and stimulating environment. Since its establishment, it has become one of the most frequented spaces within the CLC, serving as a hub not only for free play but also for structured psychosocial support, informal learning, and caregiver engagement. Its popularity is evident through consistently high daily attendance, and its impact has been significant, improving child well-being, fostering social integration, and increasing engagement with other CLC programs. Importantly, the playground also enables mothers to fully participate in educational activities. On average, 15 to 25 children visit the playground daily.

The playground is recognized by partners as critical infrastructure for child protection and resilience. The Office of the Prime Minister views it as a cornerstone in ensuring children's well-being in a settlement context. UNHCR recognizes it as a key intervention for fostering social cohesion between refugee and host communities. For the District Local Government, it represents an investment in youth development, promoting physical health, conflict resolution, and learning beyond the classroom. Together, these perspectives affirm that a child-friendly space is not a luxury but an essential foundation for sustainable community development, healing, and resilience.





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.

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

252 Conflict Resolution Education trainees	1,076 prison inmates reached for rehabilitation	1,555 participants in Cinema for Peace	679 advocacy campaign participants	3,562 total participants in peacebuilding activities at the CLC
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Peacebuilding in the Community

8 Community Dialogues held	819 participants in Community Dialogues	70 local leaders trained	889 total participants in community-level peacebuilding
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Peacebuilding in Schools

41 schools hosting WPDI programs	1,050 learners trained in Conflict Resolution Education	60 teachers and school administrative staff trained	111 advocacy campaign participants	165 scholarship recipients	4,285 total participants in school-based peacebuilding
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PEACEBUILDING: 28,410 participants

Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

Community Dialogues serve as essential platforms for open discussion and conflict resolution. Led by WPDI Youth Peacemakers, who possess deep local knowledge and trust, these forums address both immediate disputes and long-term social challenges. In addition to resolving conflicts, they also serve a preventative and educational role, raising awareness of critical issues such as human rights and gender-based violence. Through these dialogues, WPDI has empowered local communities to take ownership of conflict resolution, foster peaceful coexistence, and create long-term stability within the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Peacebuilding in the Community

8
Community Dialogues held

819
participants in Community Dialogues

70
local leaders trained

889
total participants in community-level peacebuilding

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement is undergoing a profound transformation. Once home primarily to refugees from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and Kenya, the settlement now receives a continuous and significant influx of displaced persons fleeing the conflict in Sudan. Many of these new arrivals are Arabic-speaking, introducing new linguistic and cultural layers to the community. This rapid demographic shift has seen the settlement's population rise to approximately 165,000, reshaping daily interactions and, at times, heightening competition over scarce resources.

In this evolving context, WPDI has tailored its community dialogue meetings to directly address the emerging needs of this diversifying population. Recognizing that tensions and misunderstandings can vary from one cluster or village to another, each dialogue is designed to be demand-driven, rooted in the specific concerns voiced by refugee and host community members alike.

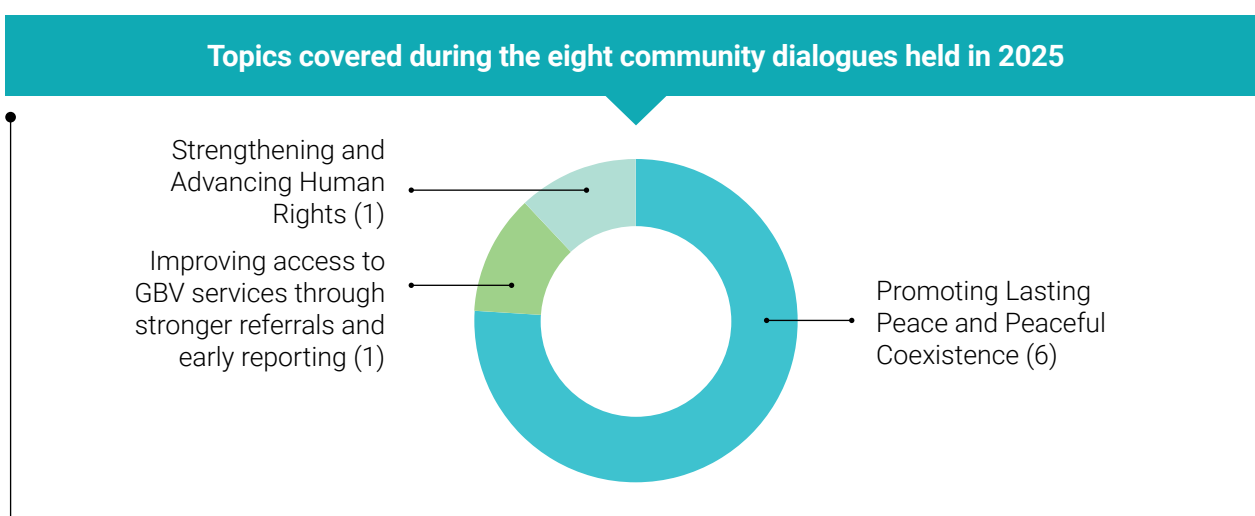
A central focus is building mutual understanding between longer-standing residents and the new Sudanese arrivals, often addressing cultural differences and communication gaps. Many sessions address the practical realities of resource sharing, fair access to water, firewood, and farmland that reduces conflict and fosters collaborative problem-solving. Underpinning these discussions is the continuous cultivation of tolerance and empathy, encouraging participants to share personal experiences of displacement and resilience to build bridges of shared humanity.



The process begins with WPDI Peacemakers working alongside refugee and host community leaders to identify emerging tensions or shared concerns, such as resource competition, cultural misunderstandings, or safety issues. Once a theme is agreed upon, community leaders and Peacemakers jointly mobilize participants, beginning outreach three days before the scheduled dialogue. They also coordinate closely with institutional stakeholders, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, and other local peacebuilding actors to ensure support and wide participation.

Participants typically include refugees from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds; members of the Ugandan host community; elected community leaders; youth representatives; women’s group delegates; local cultural and religious figures; and representatives from OPM, UNHCR, and other partner organizations.

Following every meeting, WPDI Peacemakers and staff actively monitor progress on the agreed-upon actions, verifying that commitments are met and objectives advanced. When challenges or delays occur, WPDI engages directly with key stakeholders, including UNHCR, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and other relevant partners to reinforce accountability and collaboratively address implementation gaps. This structured follow-up system not only strengthens community confidence in the dialogue process but also helps ensure that discussions lead to tangible, positive change within the settlement.



“The community dialogue meeting was a true awakening, it opened my eyes to the vital role we, as women, play in building peace and equality within the refugee community. We carry so many responsibilities and face challenges that often go unseen, but this platform felt like therapy: a rare chance to share our experiences, support one another, and develop practical solutions together.”

Nasila Jackline,
27, Refugee Leader



“The WPDI community dialogue meeting was a profound inspiration to me as a refugee leader. It truly recognized our voices, our responsibilities, and the essential role we play in strengthening unity and mutual respect. I deeply appreciated the open and inclusive nature of the discussions, which empowered all of us to speak with confidence, listen with empathy, and stand together across our diverse backgrounds. This experience has renewed my commitment to fostering hope, dignity, and genuine cooperation among men, women, and youth throughout Kiryandongo Settlement.”

Ezibon Mandiri Yata Waru,
34, Refugee Leader



Cluster G: Turning Early Warnings into Lasting Peace

In early 2025, Cluster G in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement faced rising tensions as new arrivals from Sudan placed added pressure on limited communal resources. Ethnic divisions deepened, incidents of hate speech increased, and small, ethnically based youth groups began to form early warning signs of potential conflict. Many new arrivals reported feeling unsafe and vulnerable.

On March 6, WPDI convened a community dialogue bringing together new arrivals, long-term refugees, local leaders, and protection partners in an inclusive forum designed to address tensions before they escalated. The dialogue encouraged open discussion, helped identify early-warning indicators, and supported community-led solutions for peaceful coexistence. Following two follow-up sessions, the community, WPDI, and partners committed to weekly dialogues, quarterly mediation and conflict-resolution training, and strengthened early reporting of violence. WPDI is working closely with the Police, UNHCR, and the Office of the Prime Minister to enhance community policing and coordinated responses. Together, these efforts are helping restore trust, improve safety, and lay the groundwork for lasting peace.



Community Leaders Training

Through comprehensive training sessions, 70 participants gained a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics, communication, negotiation, and mediation, empowering them to take proactive steps in preventing and resolving conflicts. The training covered key conflict concepts, including their types, characteristics, sources, and phases, providing leaders with the tools to identify early signs of tension and address them effectively. Trainees also explored the intersection of perception and emotions in conflict, recognizing how cultural beliefs, historical grievances, and emotional regulation influence disputes. By the end of the program, participants expressed greater confidence in their ability to manage conflicts, communicate effectively, and uphold the trust placed in them by their communities.

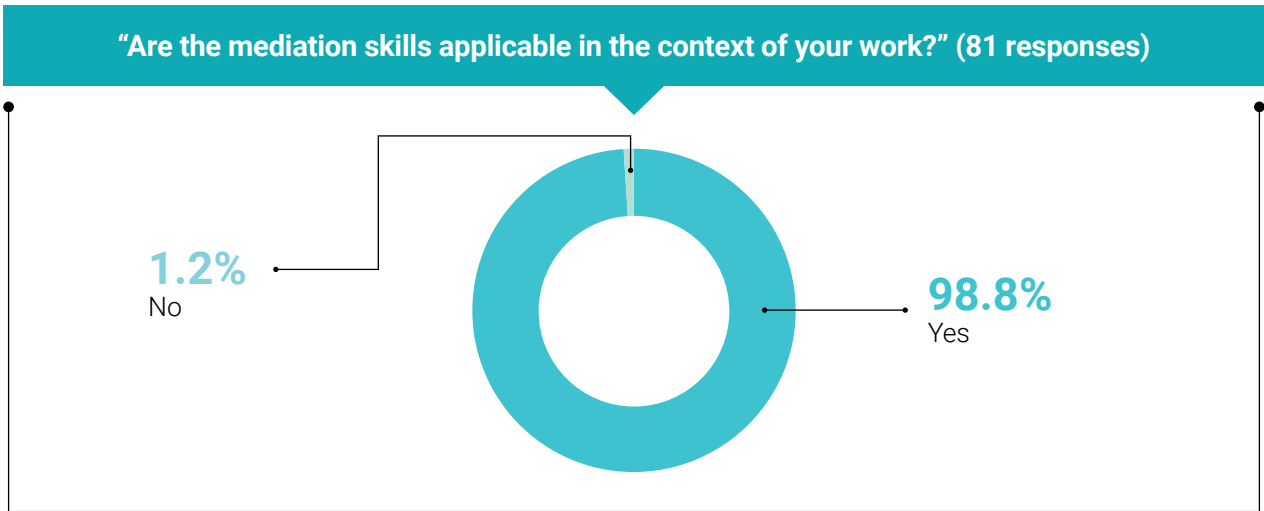
In 2025, WPD I organized and delivered a specialized Conflict Resolution and Transformative Peacebuilding training for community leaders from both refugee and host communities in Kiryandongo Settlement. The curriculum was strategically designed based on findings from community dialogue meetings and in alignment with recommendations from UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister. WPD I led the mobilization process, carefully selecting participants who hold key roles in managing refugee clusters and coordinating essential services for displaced populations. Given that community leaders are elected annually, the training ensures each new cohort is equipped with the skills necessary to foster peaceful coexistence and effective community governance.

Following the training, WPD I Peacemakers and staff conduct structured follow-up visits and meetings with the trained community leaders to support the ongoing application of skills within their respective clusters. Leaders are encouraged to maintain records of conflicts, mediation processes, and emerging community concerns, which are then reviewed together during follow-up sessions.

When disputes arise, leaders apply the mediation techniques acquired during the training to facilitate dialogue between parties and guide them toward peaceful, mutually agreeable resolutions. For more complex or persistent issues, WPD I coordinates with UNHCR, the Office of the Prime Minister, and other relevant partners to provide additional support and ensure timely intervention.



Community leaders who had been trained either in 2024 or 2025 shared their thought through a survey on the impact of the program.



“This training has deeply strengthened my understanding and skills in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and mediation. Before, as local leaders, we often found ourselves without the right tools or approach to handle disputes effectively. Thanks to WPDI, I now feel confident and prepared to address conflicts with clarity and fairness. The training has not only empowered me personally but has also renewed my capacity to serve and support my community with greater purpose and ability.”

Katusiime Yosamu,
Elder & Opinion Leader Bweyale Town Council



“This community leader’s training was my first formal introduction to peacebuilding and conflict management. I feel truly inspired and energized by the practical skills and knowledge I have gained and I am committed to using them actively to help my community nurture greater peace, mutual respect, and unity. I am deeply grateful to WPDI for this empowering and transformative opportunity.”

Lamwaka Evaline,
Female Refugee Leader

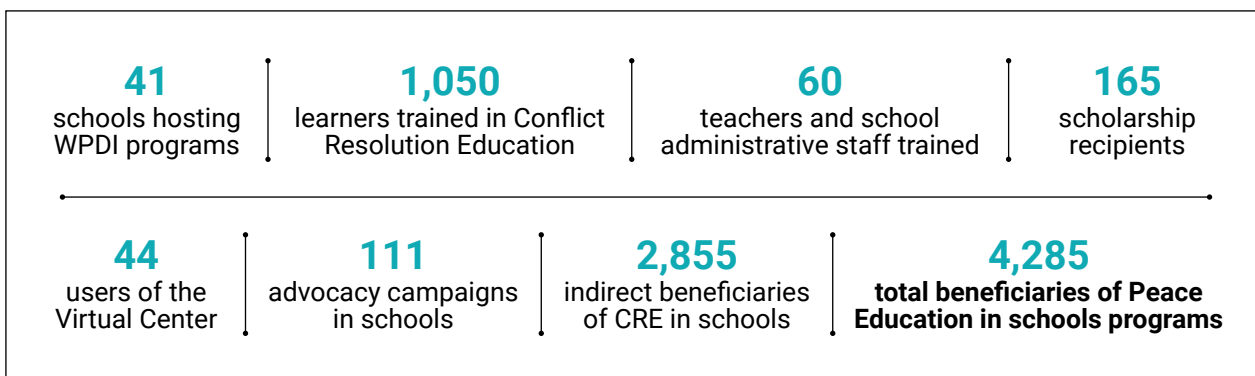


“This has been one of the most inspiring training of my time as a local leader. I’ve gained valuable skills in conflict resolution, servant leadership, and peace mediation and tools. I am now committed to applying in my daily work. I look forward to sharing these insights with fellow leaders and community members as we work together to build greater peace, unity, and harmony.”

Alinda James,
Community Leader



Bringing Skills and Values for Peace in Schools



Conflict Resolution Education for Students and Pupils

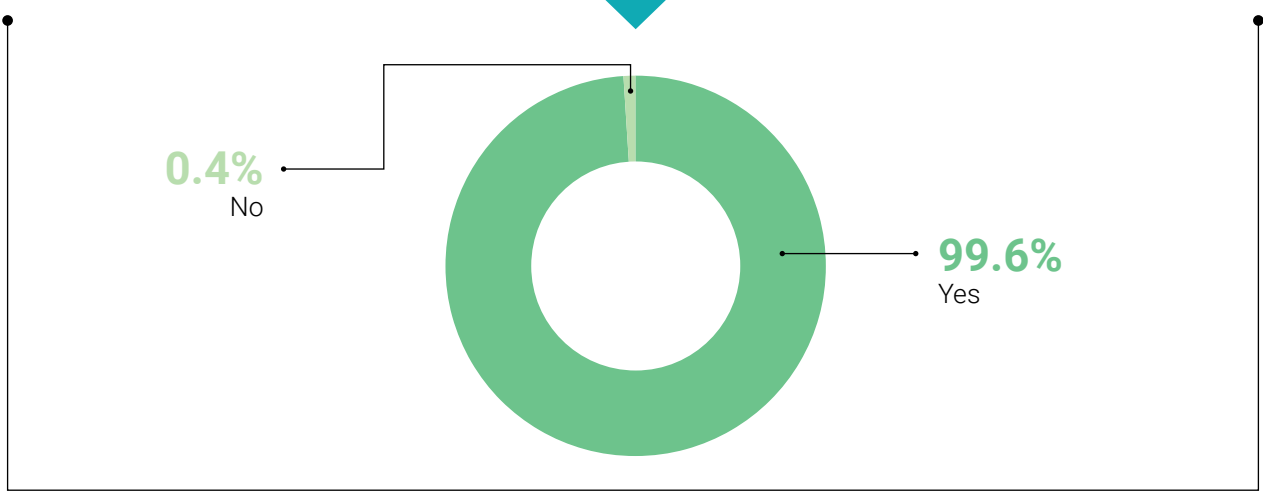
This training equips students with essential skills in conflict management and peace promotion, fostering peace values both within their schools and in their respective communities. 1,050 learners were trained from 41 schools. After graduation, trainees join peace clubs as peace ambassadors, actively participating in weekly activities such as events on the importance of peace and education. These clubs play a vital role in supporting peers during incidents of bullying and misconduct, promoting positive behavior, and working closely with teachers to amplify student voices through advocacy campaigns. They also engage in advocacy campaigns aimed at protecting education from attacks, both within their schools and in their respective communities.

Students in primary schools completed a series of 14 sessions, after which they were assessed and received certificates of attendance. Secondary students likewise participated in 14 sessions, totaling 28 hours of instruction, and concluded their training with an intermediate-level CRE examination. Those who succeeded were formally recognized at a graduation ceremony and awarded certificates of completion, affirming their competence in conflict resolution.


The training produced meaningful outcomes across both age groups. Primary school learners showed notable improvements in communication, empathy, and peaceful problem-solving, which contributed to better classroom discipline and peer cooperation. Secondary students gained more advanced skills in mediation and leadership, and went on to establish active peace clubs within their schools, extending their influence into the wider community.



Is there less fighting among students who attend this program? (555 responses)




Students testimonials



“Before the peace education training, I often found myself in fights with my friends. Now, I have learned how to talk things through and resolve disagreements peacefully. This change has made me a better friend, my classmates enjoy being around me more, and many want to spend time with me. This training has truly changed how I interact with others and helped me build stronger, happier friendships.”

Nyatang Nyak,
Primary Six Pupil, Bidong Primary School



“The peace education training at my school has helped me become more emotionally balanced and communicate with confidence among my peers. I’ve been able to help my classmates resolve disagreements peacefully, and I also plan to use what I’ve learned to support others in the wider community. This training has truly empowered me to become an agent of harmony, and I’m eager to promote peace wherever I go.”

Guo Kevin,
Pupil at Panyadoli Secondary School



Parent and teacher testimonial

“WPDI’s peace education training program has had a remarkable impact on the attitudes and behaviors of students in our school. The skills they gained from the training have led to a noticeable reduction in indiscipline incidents, improved communication, and stronger relationships between teachers and students. Parents have also observed positive changes, and overall, these improvements have contributed to better academic performance and a more harmonious learning environment. The training has truly transformed our school community.”

Parent,
Bidong Primary School



“The Conflict Resolution Education training has had a significant positive impact on learners. Students now relate better with their peers and collaborate effectively through the peace clubs, promoting peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. The influence of the training extends beyond the school, as learners take the principles of peace and unity back to their communities and refugee clusters, actively spreading a culture of harmony and mutual respect among their peers.”

Atim Judith,
Teacher at Panyadoli Secondary School



Training School Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

WPDI partnered with both secondary and primary schools in the refugee and host communities to conduct a transformative four-day CRE teacher training across five schools. In collaboration with school administrators, WPDI mobilized and selected teachers to participate in the program, equipping them with practical skills in conflict resolution, mediation, and leadership. 60 trained teachers are now empowered to serve as agents of peace, mentoring learners, fostering harmonious relationships, and championing peace within their schools and the wider community.



"I thoroughly enjoyed every session of this training and appreciated the interactive and engaging delivery, which made it both lively and transformational. I have gained valuable skills that I will actively apply to promote peace and effectively resolve conflicts both at home and within my school. This training has empowered me to be a positive role model for my students and contribute to a more harmonious and respectful learning environment."

Acen Esther,
Teacher, Panyadoli Secondary School



"The peacebuilding training has broadened my understanding of conflict management and introduced me to new perspectives. I have gained valuable skills in emotional regulation and emotional intelligence, which are essential in my interactions with learners, parents, and fellow teachers. As a peace ambassador, I am committed to applying these skills to promote peace and peaceful coexistence both in my school and in communities."

Odongo Denis,
Teacher, Kiryandongo High School



Alliance Integrated School

The challenge

The Alliance Integrated School is a mixed day and boarding school located in Bweyale Town Council, Kiryandongo District, serving both refugee and national learners. Despite its inclusive environment, the school faces significant challenges related to student welfare and safety. There are high levels of bullying and indiscipline, which are exacerbated by cultural differences, overcrowding, and limited psychosocial support structures. These challenges have created an environment of fear and insecurity among learners. As a result, many students experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and reduced participation in academic and co-curricular activities. Fear of victimization limits learners' ability to express themselves freely, form positive peer relationships, and engage fully in the learning process.

The solution

WPDI conducted peace education training at the school to address bullying, indiscipline, and low student self-esteem. The training focused on conflict resolution, non-violent communication, emotional awareness, and peer mediation. Through these sessions, peace clubs were established to provide a structured platform where students could practice leadership, promote positive behavior, and support their peers in resolving conflicts peacefully. As a result of the intervention, cases of indiscipline significantly reduced and incidents of bullying were largely eliminated. Trained peace club members emerged as peace ambassadors, actively mediating conflicts, promoting respect, and advocating for safe and inclusive spaces for all learners. This positive shift in school culture contributed to improved student participation, better peer relationships, and a noticeable improvement in academic performance.



Promoting Access to Education for Girls through Scholarships

Since 2021, WPDI has been providing scholarships to 165 girls throughout Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and surrounding host communities. The scholarship program has increased access to education for girls who would otherwise be unable to attend school due to financial constraints at the secondary and university levels. The girls who receive the scholarships are empowered to take control of their education, build confidence, and develop leadership skills during mentorship meetings. The scholars have demonstrated significant improvements in their academic performance, with many achieving top grades and academic awards in the target schools and have become role models and leaders in their communities, promoting girls' education and empowerment among their peers and families.



“My name is Adong Elisabeth Prudence, and I am an S.4 student at Stella Matutina Secondary School. Before the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative came into my life, my education was a story of constant struggle. With my family barely able to afford food, the thought of school fees, books, or a uniform felt like an impossible dream. I lived in relentless fear that any day could be my last in the classroom, that my education would be abruptly cut short.

The WPDI scholarship changed everything. It was more than just the payment of fees; it was the gift of hope and stability. For the first time, I could study without the terrible anxiety of being sent home. That burden was lifted, and in its place came the freedom to focus. This peace of mind allowed me to truly engage with my studies, and I discovered a deep passion for Geography and English—subjects that opened my eyes to the world and gave me the tools to express my own place within it. The WPDI mentors became like older sisters, guiding me not only academically but also through the personal challenges of growing up. They taught me a transformative lesson: that my voice matters. Because of this unwavering support, I have successfully completed my O-Level exams. The quiet, scared girl I once was has been replaced by a confident young woman with a future she is eager to embrace. My dream is to become a teacher, to return to my community and light the path for other girls, just as WPDI lit mine. Thank you for seeing my potential and for investing so deeply in my dreams. You have not simply educated a girl; you have empowered a future leader.”



Adong Elisabeth Prudence,
Student at Stella Matutina Secondary School



“My name is Ajok Catherine, and I am 17 years old and from grade six at Panyadoli Secondary School. For the past two years, the WPDI scholarship has been an unwavering light on my path. I cannot fully express my gratitude for this opportunity, which has not only transformed my life but has brought my most ambitious dreams within reach.



Before this support, the constant fear of not being able to afford my A-Level education was a heavy burden that clouded my every day. It was a source of deep stress, making it difficult to concentrate as my family faced immense pressure. Now, with the immense relief of having my tuition and all school requirements covered, my mind has found a profound sense of calm. This peace is the foundation of my success. Freed from anxiety, I can pour all my energy into my studies. This focused and calm mind has allowed me to excel, particularly in my science subjects. I am proud to be consistently achieving high grades results I once believed were impossible for a girl with my background.

But WPDI’s support goes far beyond books and fees. It has been truly inclusive, nurturing the whole person. Through the program’s mentorship sessions and peacebuilding workshops, I have found my voice and confidence. I have learned to lead, now spearheading our school’s debate club, and I volunteer my time to tutor younger students in my community. These experiences have taught me a powerful lesson: that education is not just for my own benefit. It is a tool I can use to help others and contribute to building a more peaceful and prosperous future for our settlement.

This scholarship has given me more than an education; it has given me a profound sense of confidence and a clear purpose. I am now more committed than ever to working hard to become a doctor. My goal is to return to Kiryandongo to serve my community, offering the same hope and healing that I have been given.”

Ajok Catherine,
A 17-year-old Student at Panyadoli Secondary School



Events and Advocacy Campaigns in Schools

In 2025, WPDI launched a dedicated advocacy initiative within local schools, focusing on two core objectives: safeguarding education from disruption and promoting its standing as a fundamental human right. These sustained efforts yielded positive, observable outcomes. They contributed to a noticeable rise in school enrolment and attendance, fostered stronger ties between schools and the communities they serve, and reinforced a widespread belief in education as the essential foundation for individual opportunity and the community's future prosperity.

"Before advocacy, many families believed girls belonged at home or in early marriage. Now after attending advocacy campaigns and being transformed by the messages we support girls' education and encourage return to school. Educating girls secures our community's future."

Adyero Stella,
Okumu Panyadoli Senior Secondary School



Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community

In a world often marked by conflict and instability, the pursuit of peace can appear to be an elusive ideal. However, at WPDI, we hold a steadfast belief in the inherent capacity of every individual to become a peacemaker when provided with the appropriate skills and tools. When individuals commit to peace, this dedication can create a ripple effect positively influencing relationships, communities, and even entire nations. WPDI provides free Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) training programs which are specifically designed to meet the needs of local residents, with content created by WPDI and adapted by trained local teams to ensure that it is relatable and easy to understand for participants.

Peacebuilding at the Community Learning Center

252 Conflict Resolution Education trainees	1,076 other peacebuilding trainees	1,555 Cinema for Peace participants	679 participants in Advocacy Campaigns	3,562 total participants in peacebuilding activities at the CLC
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Conflict Resolution Education at the Community Learning Center

WPDI expanded its conflict resolution training efforts in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, equipping community members with essential skills to address disputes and promote peace. The training provided a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics, including its types, sources, and phases, helping trainees recognize early warning signs and apply appropriate resolution strategies. Discussions on perception, emotions, and diversity helped trainees navigate cultural differences and historical grievances while promoting tolerance and coexistence.

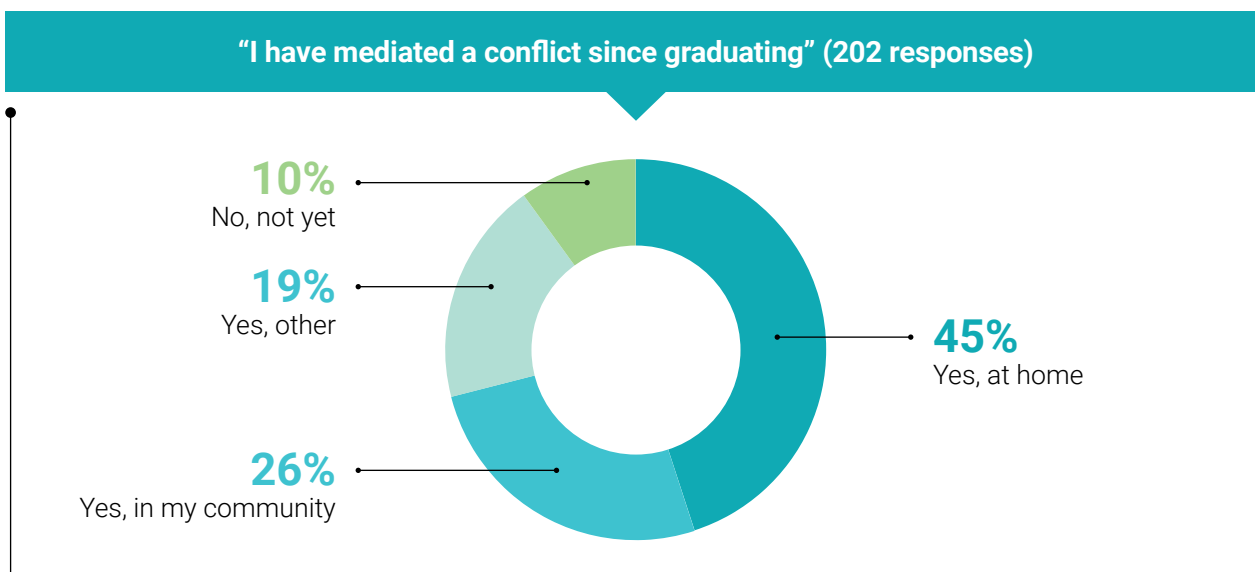
By the end of the program, trainees were empowered to replicate their learning by raising awareness, leading sensitization efforts, and mobilizing peace forums and advocacy campaigns.



Many have since become active in their communities, supporting local initiatives aimed at preventing violence, addressing youth challenges, and fostering social cohesion. Additionally, the training has increased employability among youth, with some securing roles as community activists and mobilizers dedicated to peacebuilding efforts in the settlement.

WPDI facilitated three successive cohorts of Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) and Special Human Rights training. These sessions brought together a diverse group of local leaders, civil servants, and young people from both the host community and the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, offering practical skills to navigate and defuse conflict while upholding human rights.

As shown in the graph below, 90% of graduates have mediated a conflict. The skills learned through CRE are used by graduates in different contexts of their daily lives, expanding the impact of the training throughout the community.



“This was my first formal training in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and I am deeply grateful to WPDI for this opportunity. I have gained valuable mediation skills that have inspired me to pursue a career in peacebuilding and to support youth and local leaders in resolving conflicts within my community. The training has empowered me to contribute meaningfully to building harmony and fostering unity in Bweyale Central Ward and beyond.”

Lawoko Fred,
Conflict Resolution Education Trainee, CLC Host Community,
Bweyale Central Ward



“The Conflict Resolution and Human Rights training has truly empowered me with the skills to prevent and resolve conflicts effectively. As a young Sudanese woman, this knowledge is both new and invaluable, transforming my understanding of human rights, culture, and respect. I am inspired to apply what I have learned to promote peace and harmony in my community. Thank you, WPDI, for your incredible work with youth.”

Ghadar Abubakr Mohamed,
Conflict Resolution Education Trainee



Cinema for Peace

The WPDJ Cinema for Peace program uses film screenings to promote peacebuilding, social cohesion, and community engagement in the KRS and surrounding host communities. Through screenings of films with powerful characters and narratives centered on peace, reconciliation, and conflict resolution, the program engaged 1,555 children and young people in conversations about a range of themes, including courage and resilience, teamwork and cooperation, overcoming adversity, leadership and responsibility, cultural diversity and inclusion, and the importance of unity.



"I'm a South Sudanese refugee living in the Kiryandongo refugees' settlement. I was isolated and struggled to connect with others due to cultural diversity, but everything changed when I joined the Cinema for Peace program by WPDJ. I am grateful for this opportunity and would encourage others to join WPDJ Cinema for Peace program. It helped me grow and thrive in ways I never thought possible."

Bigoa Gai,
12, South Sudanese Refugee



"I am honored to share my gratitude for the impactful Cinema for Peace program. This transformative experience. Through my participation in film screenings and discussions, I have learned to embrace love, understanding, and peaceful coexistence in my family and the community. I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the facilitators in making this possible. Your work has created a ripple effect of peace and love."

Hanadi Ali,
26, Sudanese Refugee



Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

This year, 679 people participated in campaigns convening key education stakeholders including parents, teachers, local leaders, and community representatives to collectively champion the importance of regular school attendance and encourage families to prioritize education. The discussions focused on identifying and addressing barriers that hinder children’s learning, while also strengthening community commitment to creating a supportive and motivating environment for students.

The advocacy efforts resulted in tangible improvements within the community. Schools reported increased enrollment and more consistent attendance, reflecting growing awareness of the value of education. Parents also became more engaged in their children’s learning journeys, taking up their responsibilities more actively and participating in school activities and decision-making processes. Overall, the campaigns contributed to a stronger culture of education in Kiryandongo, reinforcing community ownership and helping ensure that more children access and remain in school.



“Since the education advocacy campaign reached our community, more parents are enrolling their children, dropout rates are falling, and parental involvement has increased. As a community leader, I’m inspired by how advocacy transforms attitudes, strengthens families, and brings meaningful change.”

Kur Shida Kuch Kur,
Community Leader



“Before the advocacy, many of us including new arrivals from Sudan, who come with different cultural beliefs about education believed girls belonged in the kitchen or in marriage. After the awareness sessions, our mindset changed completely. We now support our daughters to stay in school, encourage those who dropped out to return, and truly understand that educating a girl is investing in the future.”

Salem Elsa Mohamed,
Community Member





Livelihood

WPDI's livelihood pillar aim to break the cycle of poverty and instability by equipping individuals with practical skills that enhance their employability and economic independence. In fragile contexts where poverty and conflict are closely linked, many young people face barriers to formal education, making them vulnerable to unemployment and financial hardship. By bridging the gap between peacebuilding and economic empowerment, WPDI ensures that stability translates into long-term prosperity.

Capacity-Building

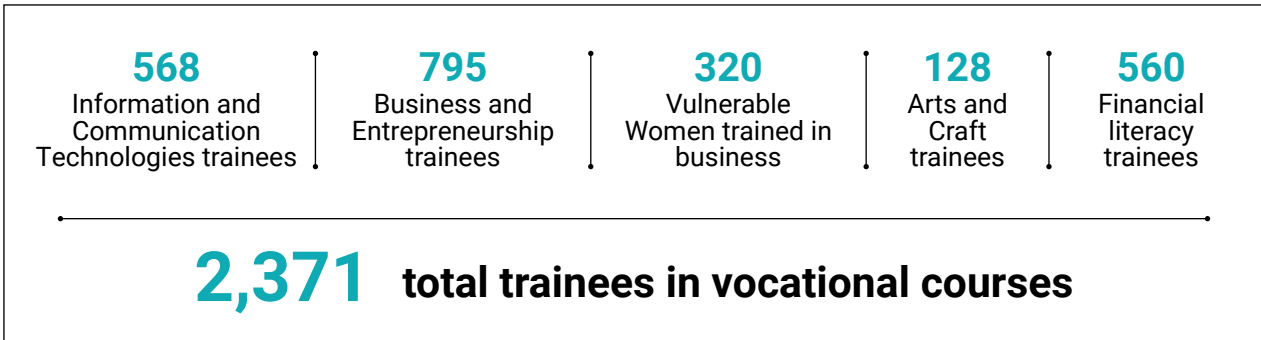
568 Information and Communication Technologies trainees	795 Business and Entrepreneurship trainees	320 Vulnerable Women trained in business	128 Arts and Crafts trainees	560 Financial Literacy trainees	2,371 total trainees in vocational courses
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Businesses

22 businesses created in 2025	181 businesses supported by WPDI in total	1,479 jobs created	5,532 indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)	7,011 beneficiaries of all businesses
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LIVELIHOOD: 9,382 participants

Capacity-Building Courses



WPDI offers vocational training in ICT, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Arts and Crafts, providing participants with the knowledge and tools needed to secure job opportunities or launch their own businesses. These initiatives not only equip individuals with essential livelihood skills but also contribute to sustainable community development, reinforcing the link between economic progress and lasting peace.

Information and Communication Technologies

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills are essential for everyone, regardless of age or background. WPDI's ICT training program aims to empower beneficiaries, including students, community members, and young people, with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the digital world with confidence.

In 2025, 568 trainees learned how to browse the web, use search engines, evaluate online information, create email accounts, compose emails, manage their inboxes, and edit, format, and share documents in real time.

The program's true impact unfolded in three meaningful ways. First, it built essential digital literacy, empowering participants to research, learn, and participate in an increasingly connected world. Second, it became a springboard for education and livelihoods, helping youth pursue further studies, secure administrative roles, or start their own small enterprises. Finally, and perhaps most powerfully, the shared space of the computer lab fostered unexpected connections. Side by side, refugees and host community members collaborated on projects, turning idle time into productive learning and building a palpable sense of shared purpose.





“Before WPDI’s Advanced ICT training, my dream of studying graphic design felt impossible, I had never even touched a computer, and my family struggled just to eat. Joining the training changed everything. I learned Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Pixel for designing posters in a supportive, welcoming lab. With encouragement from mentors and classmates, I gained skills and confidence I never thought possible. Now, equipped with my WPDI certificate, I’ve been accepted into a university graphic design program. I used Word to write my application. It felt like writing about my future. My family is overjoyed, and I’m no longer the scared girl I once was.”

Adam Mohamed,
24, a Sudanese Refugee in Kiryandongo



Tut Boutros Deng, a 24-year-old South Sudanese refugee living in the Kiryandongo Settlement

“Life before joining WPDI’s ICT program was honestly tough. I came to the camp with very little hope and no clear direction. Back home, I had dreams of working with computers, but war and displacement pushed those dreams far away. Most days I just stayed at home helping with small chores because I didn’t have the skills or opportunities to do anything more. Everything changed the day I heard about Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative offering ICT training. At first, I wasn’t sure if I would manage, but something in me said, “Just try. Learning how to type, use Word, browse online, and save files felt like discovering a whole new world. I started looking forward to every class.

When I joined the Intermediate level, my confidence had already grown. I could now complete tasks that once scared me. Here, I learned troubleshooting, advanced Excel skills, computer maintenance, and more professional tools. This level challenged me the most, but it also changed me the most. Solving computer issues, helping classmates, and working on bigger tasks made me feel capable. For the first time in a long while, I felt proud of myself.

After completing all three levels Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced my life took a new turn. With my certificate and confidence, I applied for a job at a stationery shop in Bweyale, and to my surprise, I was accepted as an ICT trainer. Today, I train customers, support computer maintenance, and help young people type documents and learn basic skills. Every day I use what I learned from WPDI, and I still hear my trainers’ voices in my head reminding me to be patient, organized, and professional. Standing behind that computer desk, teaching others, I realize just how far I’ve come.

This transformation still feels unreal to me. I walked into WPDI not knowing anything about computers, and now I am the one training others. My confidence has grown, my life has direction, and my family is proud of me. Most importantly, I feel useful again.”

Business and Entrepreneurship

WPDl's Business and Entrepreneurship program equips community members with essential skills to foster economic resilience, self-sufficiency, and long-term stability. By promoting business knowledge and financial management, these programs empower individuals to generate income, break the cycle of poverty, and contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion. This year, 795 participants were trained in Business and Entrepreneurship.

The business and entrepreneurship curriculum covers the basic and intermediate levels, and then they undergo training in financial literacy, group saving, and climate-smart agriculture for those undertaking agribusiness projects. The basic-level curriculum targets beginners who can read and write and want to start new microenterprises. Sessions delivered include poverty alleviation, personal awareness, business idea generation, identification, screening, and selection of the best idea, and developing a simple business plan. The intermediate-level curriculum targets existing entrepreneurs who are in business and want to improve their businesses. Sessions include: marketing & market analysis, financial management, record keeping, forms of business & their environment, social & personal aspects of business. Other sessions delivered include savings, loan management, investment, old-age planning, and digital financial skills.

Advanced level curriculum targets agribusiness projects and sessions delivered include the aim of climate smart agriculture, effects of climate smart agriculture, causes of climate change, impacts of climate change on production, how to increase soil fertility and best practices, harvesting water & storage practices, minimum soil disturbance "funguza," approach, post-harvest handling, agrosilvo-culture & agrosilvo-pastoral, and Sustainable energy.



Functional Adult Literacy/English for Adults (FAL/EFA)

For those facing the added challenge of a language barrier, Functional Adult Literacy and English for Adults classes offered a vital foundation. 560 were trained this year. These courses opened doors not only to further learning but also to integration within their new communities. The curriculum is designed to progressively build English language and practical skills for real-life situations, especially among the new arrivals who speak Arabic only. The training also benefits the surrounding host community, who are illiterate. The curriculum is designed into three levels, after which the trainee proceeds to enroll in other courses.



“After arriving here, I discovered WPDI’s skilling courses at the Community Learning Center and was warmly welcomed into their business program. I have now completed the basic and intermediate levels, am currently advancing, and await certification. This training is already equipping me to manage a business, keep good records, and participate more meaningfully in my community.”

Princess Fatima,
A Sudanese Refugee living in Kiryandongo



“As a former businesswoman, I struggled in Uganda due to language barriers. Joining WPDI’s English program transformed my reading, writing, and speaking skills, and led me to their business training. This renewed my confidence and equipped me to successfully restart my business. WPDI has restored my economic independence, and I strongly recommend their programs to anyone looking to rebuild their future through education and opportunity.”

Samah Mohammed Adam,
A Sudanese Refugee living in Cluster N, Kiryandongo



Arts and Crafts

WPDI's Arts and Crafts program aims to equip community members with practical skills that enhance their economic independence and self-empowerment. Through hands-on training, participants develop expertise in creating marketable products and skills in the production of craft shoes, liquid and laundry soap, beaded bags and purses, bracelets, necklaces, hair shampoo, shoe polish, bag knitting, and crocheting. This program has empowered participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to start their own businesses in art, design, and tailoring.

In KRS, the program primarily supports women, young mothers who have left school, and young men and women by providing them with the skills needed to start small businesses in art, design, and tailoring. 128 participants were trained this year. Participants are empowered to produce and sell goods locally and nationally, improving their livelihoods and long-term self-reliance. By creating a supportive and sustainable environment for artisans, WPDI promotes economic growth, cultural preservation, and social development.

The tailoring and fashion design component provided hands-on technical training aligned with local labor market needs. Trainees gained competencies in sewing machine operation, basic maintenance and repair, body measurement, fabric cutting, pattern drafting, and garment construction. Graduates produced a variety of garments and accessories, including skirts, dresses, trousers, shorts, school uniforms, and backpacks. As a result, graduates were able to launch small tailoring businesses, secure wage employment, or advance to higher-level training. Several graduates also returned as peer trainers, strengthening knowledge transfer and long-term program sustainability.

Strategic partnerships in 2025 significantly enhanced graduate outcomes and transitions to sustainable livelihoods. Collaboration with Momentum Associates in Kampala enabled graduates to access sewing machines at affordable prices, reducing start-up barriers to self-employment. In addition, partnerships with AYAN and Assistance-Global linked trainees to further education opportunities, specialized courses, and sponsorships beyond WPDI's current offerings. These collaborations expanded career pathways, increased income-earning potential, and reinforced long-term economic resilience for trainees and their communities.



“Enrolling in the tailoring program at WPDI CLC has enabled me to acquire life-changing skills in tailoring and cutting garments. Being a refugee from Sudan after the frustration from war I was in serious distress and had conflicting ideas within myself. The opportunity WPDI offered me in tailoring supported me, inspired and taught me to always stay focused, never to lose hope and restore my dream since I have a skill at hand which can help me feed myself and live an independent life. The program left me with not only technical skill but also confidence and passion to pursue tailoring as a profession.”

Amani,
32, Cluster MR



“This program opened my eyes to endless possibilities of creativity and opportunity due to its market demand. This has helped me save some of my money and reduced my financial burden. I am happy to say I no longer buy soap for my family, instead I make and sell to the community, through this I earn a living for myself and provide for my four children since their father is in Sudan.”

Enas,
Mother of 4, Refugee



Impact Story: Atto and Community

“Hi, my name is **Atto Filder**, I am 27 years old and from Uganda. Before, life was not easy. With limited income, family responsibilities, and the constant feeling of being left behind, I often wondered what the future held for me.

Everything changed when I joined WPDI’s tailoring and garment-cutting course. Through this program, I gained new skills that restored my confidence and hope. Today, I live a self-reliant life: I pay my siblings’ school fees, stand tall with financial independence, and earn a living by sewing clothes. What began as uncertainty has now turned into a journey of strength, creativity, purpose, and economic empowerment. This experience proves that knowledge shared creates a lasting impact.

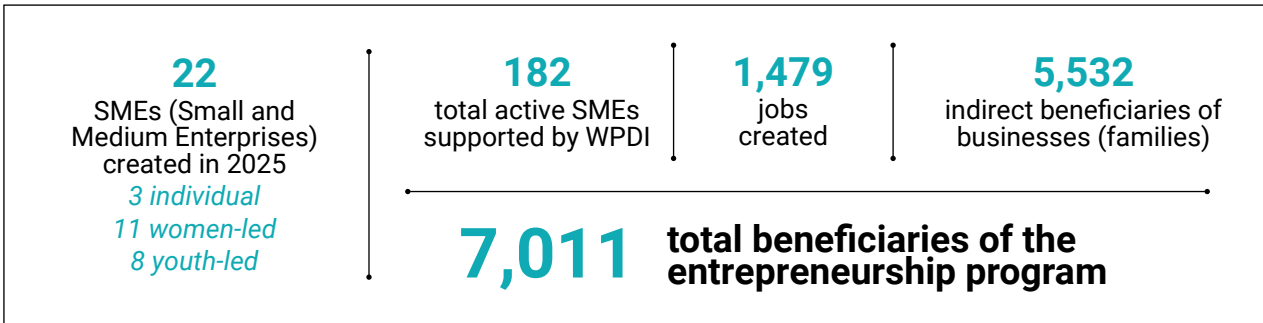
I also want to share the stories of two women I work alongside:

Rasha Isaa, a 28-year-old refugee from Sudan living in Cluster D, attended WPDI’s tailoring and art craft design course. She hires a sewing machine to make and sell children’s clothes and liquid soap, earning 100,000 to 150,000 Ugandan Shillings after paying for the machine. Her income helps cover her bills and supports her family, and she is saving to buy her own sewing machine in 2026.

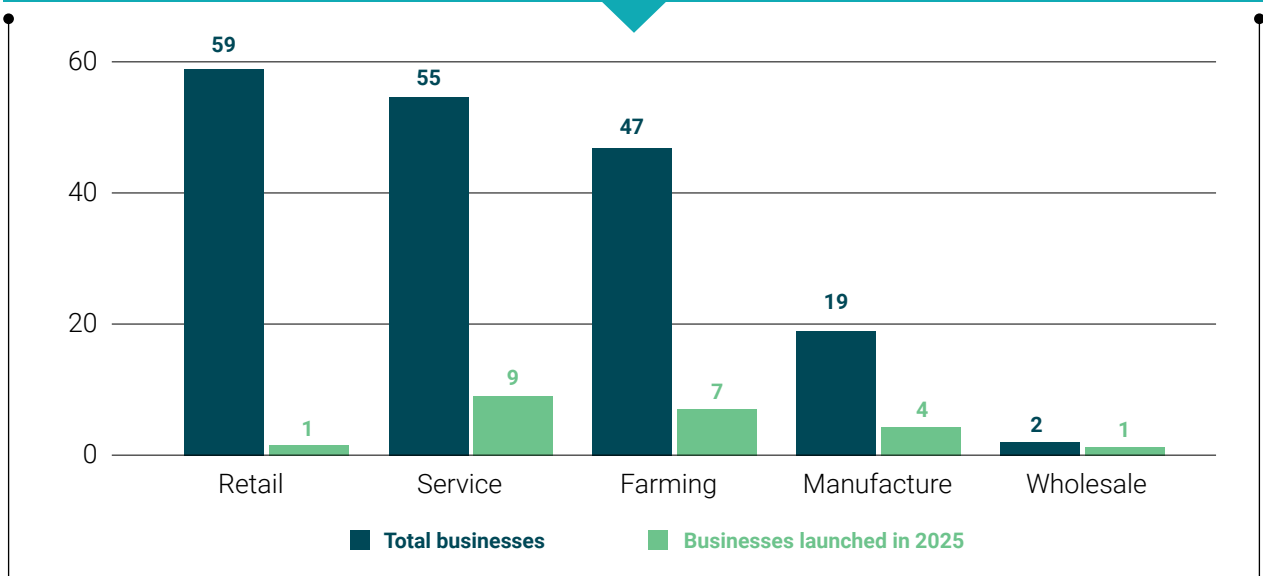
Enn Mahdi, a Sudanese refugee widow, hires a sewing machine in Bweyale Main Market. After attending WPDI’s tailoring course, her life has improved. She now works hard to provide for her two children, earning 150,000 to 250,000 Ugandan Shillings each month to support them and build a better future.”

Supporting Local Entrepreneurship

WPDI provides funding and backstopping support to individuals who have successfully graduated from the Business training and have won our business plan competitions. This year, 3 businesses were launched through this support. WPDI also supported 8 youth-led and 11 women-led income-generating projects, through tailored programs that reach vulnerable groups throughout the settlement. To this day, 22 businesses were launched in 2025, which brings the total of active businesses supported by WPDI in KRS to 182, hereby impacting the lives of 1,479 founders and their employees, and through them, 5,532 members of their households who see their lives improved with these new income streams.



Types of businesses supported by WPDI in Kiryandongo



The Business Bootcamp

Participants interested in the Business Plan Competition (BPC) 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 the BPC, for which the selection process is overseen by local officials alongside WPDI experts. This phase includes site visits to proposed project locations before the final approval of the top three candidates. Once selected, groups are required to open bank accounts. WPDI verifies these details before disbursing grants in two or three installments, depending on the progress and achievement of key milestones.

This year, WPDI conducted a business plan competition targeting former trainees who completed their training with certification of the intermediate level and have a passion to operate a social cooperative group income project. 12 groups applied to participate in the competition, out of which the best three with compelling and viable ideas were approved by the oversight committee for support.



“I’m from the host community in Bweyle town council. I am the Chairperson of Bright Future Youth Group, and this is our second time participating in this competition. I feel excited on behalf of our group to be part of this journey that has allowed us to be one of the winners. Our project on carpentry and joinery will change many of their lives through employment, as we serve the needs of our customers in the community. We therefore extend our appreciation for the opportunity that WPDI has given us this time. We believe that this activity is going to benefit a lot of youths in our community of Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement and also in the host community.”

Opio Joseph,
23, Member of the Host Community, Bweyle F



“As a member of Albarka Youth Group, I attended the most exciting and memorable business plan competition of my life. Everything was perfect, and our expectations were met when we became the third winner. Proudly, I can confess that from now on, I can develop a very competitive business plan if there is another competition. This project will change our lives greatly. I thank WPDI for making me proud of who I am now and in the future by giving us this opportunity to compete with our fellow business students and for exposing me to many business ideas from different groups.”

Rama Mohammed,
22, Refugee from Sudan, Living in Cluster L



The story of Mubarak Muhammed Ahmed, a Refugee from Khartoum City in Sudan

"I became a refugee due to the war that broke out between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Force, resulting in insecurity and mass ethnic killings. When I arrived in Uganda, I was resettled in Kiryandongo, where everything was new, and I had to start a new life; some experiences I had never gone through in life because the war had separated my parents and me.

After I was given a shelter, I made friends with other refugees who were from Sudan. We started to support each other in terms of how we can rebuild our lives, the fact that we dropped out of school due to the war. Another friend talked about WPDI. We, as youth refugees numbering 10, went to the WPDI office, and it was on that day that we enrolled for English class since we did not speak or write English well. All of us enrolled and completed all three levels successfully within three months, and again enrolled in the business and entrepreneurship class. By then, I had already spent one year in the settlement. After completing the two levels of basic and intermediate business, we participated in the business plan competition, which we applied for and were admitted to participate in. Fortunately, we passed and were supported with some small grants to implement a poultry project. As a group, we had done a thorough survey and believe this is going to succeed since the market is available.

Today, when I speak of myself and friends in the group, we are better than before because at least there is some income from the group project that has changed our lives from hardship to self-reliance. I mean, we can change meals, not like when we came, when we had to line up for food. This poultry started in July when we began receiving support, and as I speak, this lot of 500 chicks is the second lot after a big sale we earned from the first lot we sold, earning an additional \$2,000. Much as the profit was small, but that was a good beginning. Thank you for empowering us as young men to become resilient to hardship and become self-reliant."



Women and Youth-led Businesses

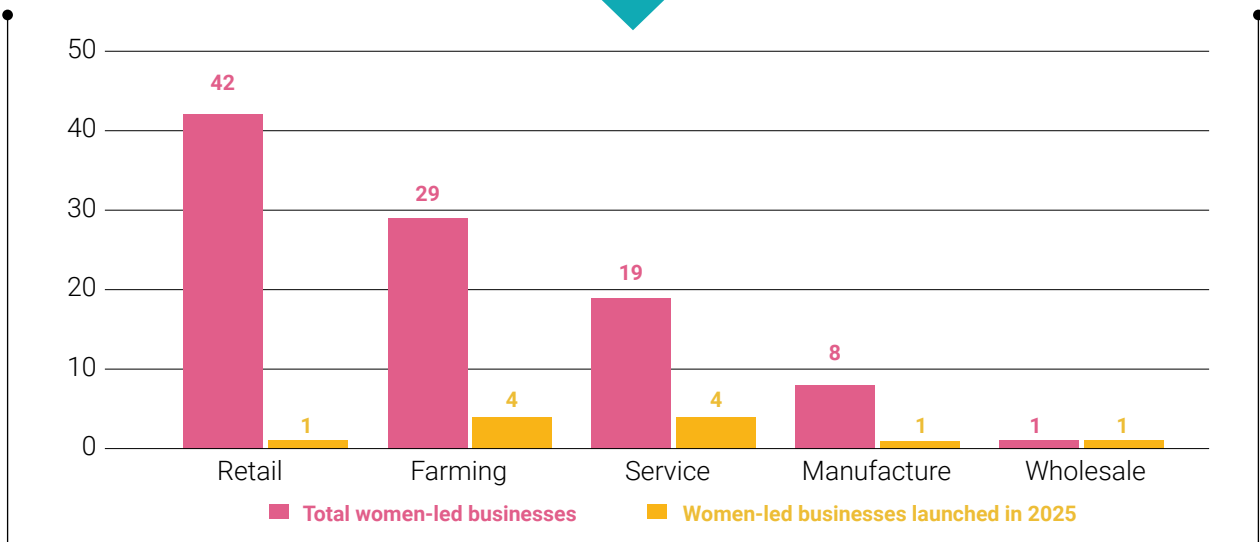
WPDI supported 11 women-led and 8 youth-led businesses in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, empowering participants to establish sustainable enterprises and fostering economic independence and resilience. This year, groups were mobilized with the assistance of the Refugee Welfare Council and peacemakers across the seventeen settlement clusters. These partners identified eligible groups and provided introductory letters confirming their existence.

A screening process ensured that selected groups met the following criteria: members must be refugees or nationals from the settlement neighborhood; willing to operate in a group setting and manage social cooperative projects sustainably; not from the same family or household to ensure transparency and equal participation; had not previously benefited from WPDI or other NGO programs to avoid duplication; and included consideration for persons with special needs. Groups were also assessed for sound financial conduct, excluding those with a history of loan defaults or misuse of funds.

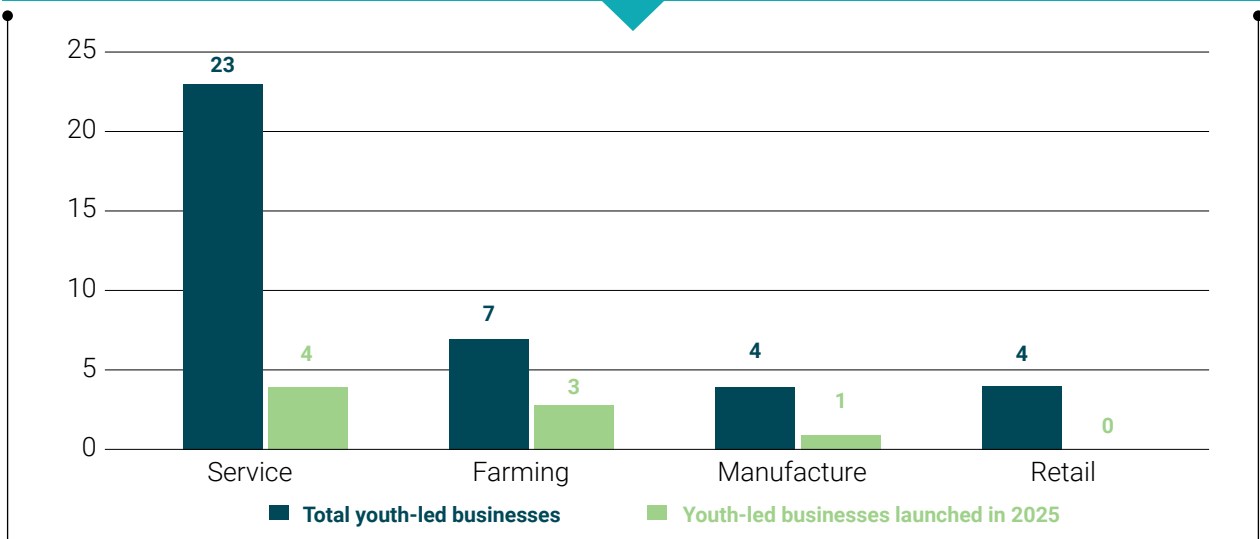
WPDI continues to provide regular onsite visits to strengthen group savings and financial literacy. Training focuses on savings, investment, digital financial services, and planning for the future. Additional support and training for the 11 women-led groups will continue into next year to ensure lasting impact.



Types of women-led businesses supported by WPI in Kiryandongo



Types of youth-led businesses supported by WPI in Kiryandongo



The story of Karanja Susan, WPDI Beneficiary and Retailer, Cluster OQ, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

"I became displaced to Uganda as a result of the war in South Sudan in 2016. I started by being a member in Camp United Women's group, composed of women affected by war like single mothers, widows and some elderly with no support. The challenges I faced as a single mother taking care of orphans made me almost lose hope, but after receiving training from WPDI and being in the Camp United group, that was the beginning of my resilience to the hardship because I became more empowered with skills to do business to earn income that would make me self-reliant as I meet the needs in my household.

After completing training in business management, I again enrolled for training on the production of liquid and bar soap this time. The two skills combined made me excited since I had started making my own money besides the income we realized from our group business project of farming and produce sales, since that was seasonal, whereas the soap production had a market and was regular. Currently, through my commitment and hard work, I have been able to buy my own production machine for making both liquid and bar soap. I meet all the needs in my household and have applied to OPM to give me space for the construction of a room to sell my products, since I have many customers placing many orders. I can now compete with other competitors who still have not reached my level of production, since I even do branding for my products. I have managed to become self-reliant, and I pay my children at school, feed them, and pay for their medical bills. I am now left with certification of my products since this is a process, but I know this will be done. This is all I can say: thank you for the mentorship, WPDI."

Climate-Smart Agriculture

This year, 160 women and youth (80 women and 80 youth) across 16 clusters completed 32 hours of Climate-Smart Agriculture and business skills training. Many families here rely on small plots that no longer produce enough. Without new skills, they stay trapped in hunger and low income. We have covered planting techniques, soil management, and record keeping. Participants are already trying out what they learned on their own land. This moves us closer to the goal of building long-term food security and economic independence for young people in the settlement. With the support of WPDI, 10 acres of land are now used for orchards and kitchen gardens, with climate-smart agriculture and post-harvest training improving food security and income prospects.





Health and Well-being

136

Sexual and Reproductive
Health individual
beneficiaries

288

Sexual and
Reproductive Health
event beneficiaries

290

Trauma Healing
individual
beneficiaries

567

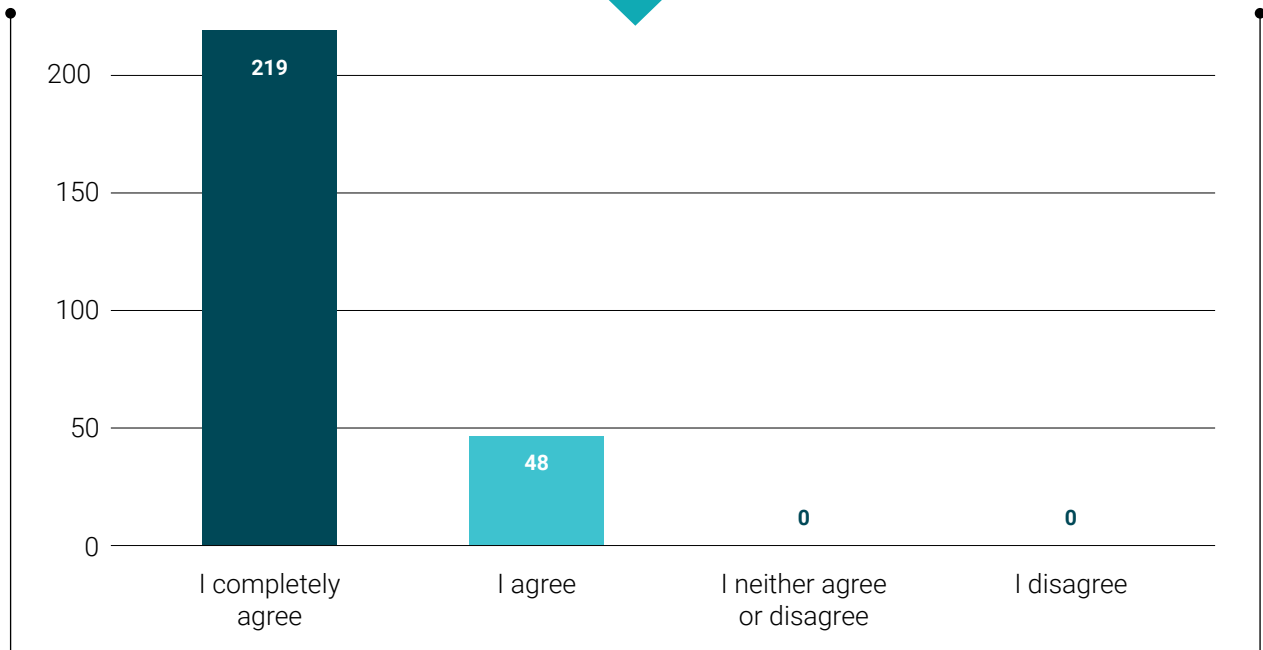
Trauma
Healing event
participants



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: 1,281 participants

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 2025, 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.

“Understanding and addressing personal issues has put me on a positive path” (267 responses)



Sexual and Reproductive Rights

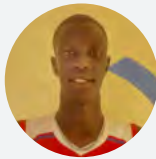
Individual Support

Launched in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) program safeguards human rights and wellbeing by overcoming barriers to care, addressing unique vulnerabilities, and empowering displaced individuals and host community members to make informed health decisions. A key objective of the SRH program in KRS is addressing gender-based violence (GBV). This includes providing support services for survivors, such as psychological counseling, as well as awareness workshops to reduce stigma and promote safety within the community. This year, 136 individuals were supported through health prevention appointments and signposting to appropriate care.



“At first, I was hesitant and afraid to talk about my sexual health concerns because of stigma and fear of judgement. But after receiving the SRH services from WPD, I found a safe space where people listened to me without judgement and I shared my story. When the staff took time to talk to me, I felt more respected and cared for. The support has empowered me to make informed choices about my health for the first time. It was a real turning point and a moment of relief and hope that I richly remember.”

Shamim Eriya,
33, Bweyale Town Council



“The WPD youth friendly SRH program that offers respectful, confidential and non-judgmental care made a very big difference in my life. It made me feel more respected and I can now seek advice and use HIV prevention methods effectively.”

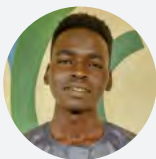
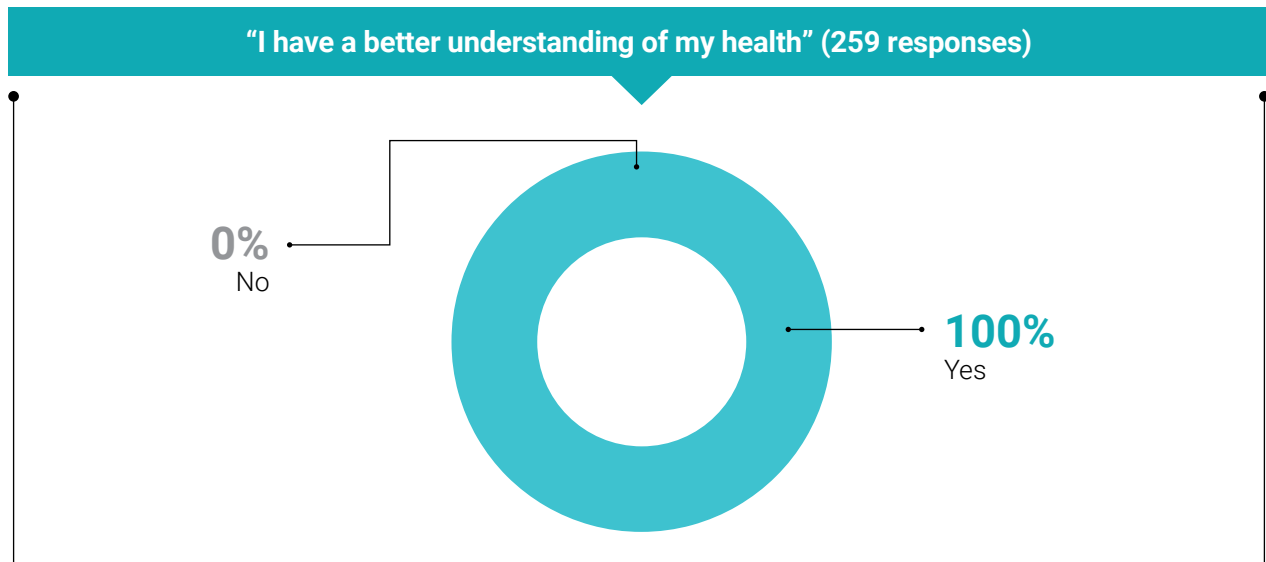
Gatdor Rout,
16, Refugee



Awareness Events

The SRH awareness sessions empower individuals and communities by providing knowledge on SRH issues that affect the community and the appropriate pathways to care. This program was launched in 2023 and this year, it reached out to 288 community members.

The focus of this year's campaigns was on reproductive rights, with a particular attention on addressing teenage pregnancy as this has been an ongoing issue in the community. The angle of these campaigns was as much on prevention as it was on addressing stigma of teenage girls.



"After attending the WPDI SRH awareness session, I became a peer educator. I now teach other young people about reproductive health, and where to find the services. It feels good to help my community and see others become more informed and confident."

Mohamed Abdelrahman Haroon Essa,
23, Refugee



"The SRH sessions taught me about the risk of teenage pregnancy and how to recognize early signs. I now know where to go for help if I or my friends need support. The sessions made me feel safer and more confident to talk about these issues with my family."

Nyalat Sharon Joseph,
17, Refugee



"Before attending the WPDI SRH awareness session, I did not know that I had the right to demand quality health services. After learning about my rights through the community awareness event, I felt empowered to speak up when services were inadequate. This helped me and many other youths access better care at the facility."

Mohamed Ali Idris,
23, Refugee



Trauma Healing

Individual Support

Launched in 2022, the WPDI individual trauma healing support program provides culturally sensitive, trauma-informed care to help refugees and nationals in Kiryandongo recover from the psychological wounds of displacement. By addressing both immediate and long-term mental health needs, the program aims to rebuild resilience and support successful adjustment to new lives.

This year, the program has reached out to 290 individuals, helping to reduce symptoms of trauma such as PTSD and anxiety, strengthen emotional coping strategies, improve social and economic integration, and provide a stable foundation for recovery and a renewed sense of safety.



“While in Sudan, I endured a lot of traumatic events during conflict and displacement, combined with the stress of adapting to a new culture. But through the counseling support I received from WPDI, I have developed emotional regulation skills and resilience. The support I received taught me how to face my pain without being overwhelmed. I now have the tools to cope and the courage to start again.”

Fatima Alzharaa,
19, Sudanese Refugee



“I suffered traumatic violence and displacement while in Congo. Since my arrival in Kiryandongo, I experienced PTSD symptoms and struggled with social isolation. The one-on-one counseling sessions at WPDI helped me to process my trauma narrative using testimony therapy. I was encouraged to share my story, which helped me reclaim my voice and dignity. Sharing my story helped me see that my suffering is real but not all that I am. I found strength in telling my truth and connecting with others who understand.”

Nosuba Adam Esshag,
27, Sudanese Refugee



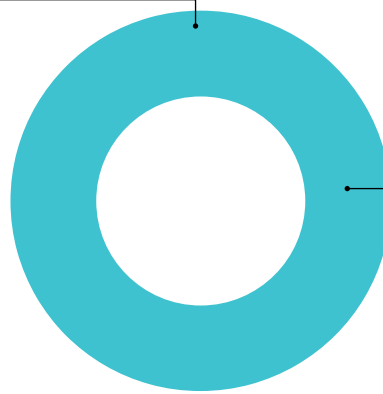
“I fled conflict and experienced significant losses including separation from my family. I struggled with depression and anxiety during resettlement in Uganda. Through the individual psychosocial support that I received at WPDI I gradually regained my emotional stability. My counselor used a culturally sensitive approach that included my cultural identity and faith into the therapy. Talking about my pain in a safe space made me feel heard and less alone. Bit by bit, I learned how to manage my fears and imagine a future for myself.”

Lemia Abshadil Faujoub,
39, Refugee



"I have a better grasp of myself and my emotions" (259 responses)

0%
No



100%
Yes

Mahab Ahmend's Healing Journey, 19 years old

The WPDl Narrative Exposure Therapy program in Kiryandongo provides a structured, evidence-based path for refugees to process and integrate memories of violence and displacement. A powerful example of its impact is the journey of Mahab Ahmed, a 19-year-old woman from Sudan.

Before joining the program, Mahab's trauma manifested as debilitating anxiety, social withdrawal, and sleepless nights, which made adjusting to life in the settlement immensely difficult. Through several NET sessions in a safe, group-based setting, she was gently guided to reconstruct and reframe her traumatic experiences. This process allowed her to significantly reduce her anxiety symptoms, reclaim restful sleep, and rebuild her sense of safety.

Mahab's healing extended beyond her own recovery. With renewed confidence, she began actively participating in community youth groups and later stepped into a role as a peer supporter. She now helps other young women process their own experiences, guiding them toward healing. Her transformation from being paralyzed by trauma to becoming a compassionate leader highlights how targeted therapeutic support can restore personal agency, foster supportive communities, and create a ripple effect of resilience.

Awareness Events

Launched in 2022, the WPDl Awareness Program aims to educate refugees on the importance of addressing mental health issues and the impact of potential unaddressed trauma, reduce stigma, empower individuals, and connect communities with vital support systems to foster healing and resilience.

This year, advocacy campaigns included 567 community members, achieving notable progress through increased engagement, positive feedback on coping strategies and resources on PTSD, expanded access to trauma-informed care for new arrivals, and the broader integration of trauma-sensitive practices by other service providers in Kiryandongo.



“I attended the trauma awareness workshop where I shared how my two years of displacement and loss left me feeling isolated and unable to talk about my pain. During the event, when I was given the chance to narrate my story in a safe environment, I felt a weight lifted. For the first time, I felt someone was truly listening. Sharing my story made me realize I am not alone, and it gave me strength to face each day. The story telling helped me reclaim my identity beyond trauma and inspired me to become a peer supporter for others.”

Nancy Altgane Tama,
21, Refugee



“I attended the awareness sessions that focused on trauma awareness and coping strategies. Initially unconvinced I found comfort in hearing others stories and realizing shared struggles. I thought my pain was unique and unbearable, but in the group, I learned that many suffered too. That made me feel connected and hopeful. The sessions helped me learn breathing exercise and mindfulness techniques that reduced my anxiety and improved my sleep.”

Hafiz Adam Edris,
33, Sudanese Refugee





“The stigma around mental health in my community made me hide my pain and trauma, but after participating in the awareness session about trauma healing organized in my cluster, I realized that what I was feeling was not shameful, but a natural response to what I endured. I sought counseling afterwards and started to heal. The event was a turning point that encouraged me to prioritize my wellbeing and support my children emotionally.”

Samah Mohammed Ali,
22, Refugee, Mother of two



The story of Fatuma Yahaya, a 32-year-old mother of two

She arrived in Kiryandongo after a harrowing journey marked by loss and displacement. Struggling with persistent flashbacks, nightmares, and isolation, she once believed her pain was a sign of personal weakness.

After joining WPDI's trauma awareness sessions, Fatuma found a supportive community where she could safely share her story alongside others with similar experiences. She learned practical coping skills such as grounding techniques during moments of distress and ways to soothe her nervous system and gained a deeper understanding of trauma and recovery.

Today, Fatuma is not only managing her emotions with greater confidence but has also begun mentoring other women in her community. She now attends a peer support group regularly, accesses counseling when needed, and has taken steps to rebuild a sense of home and stability for her children. Her journey reflects a powerful shift from surviving to reclaiming hope, agency, and emotional well-being.





Sports

33
female teams
managed by WPDI

66
male teams
managed by WPDI

1,668
regular training
participants

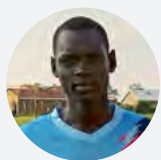
3,349
participants in
competition events



SPORTS: 5,017 participants

Training Teams

Launched in 2017, the Peace Through Sports program in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement uses sport as a tool to build unity, reduce tension, and promote cohesion. It creates a safe space for refugees, especially youth, to connect, heal, and develop skills through leagues, clubs, and girls' teams. The program has engaged many participants, trained coaches and referees, and increased women's involvement, growing into a sustainable platform that strengthens community ties and fosters a more peaceful future.



"I grew up in a landscape where the roar of weapons stole our childhood. My life transformed at Kiryandongo settlement when I discovered a football pitch and a WPDI coach who introduced us to peace through sport. Each kick of the ball helped me release pain, and I went from feeling alone to becoming part of a team where we built discipline, respect, and laughter together. Sports rebuilt my identity, turning friendly matches into bridges between cultures. Now, I dream of playing professional football and using the game to heal the unseen wounds that medicine cannot reach, because I've learned that true peace is found in unity, purpose, and hope."

Machot Deng,
South Sudanese Refugee

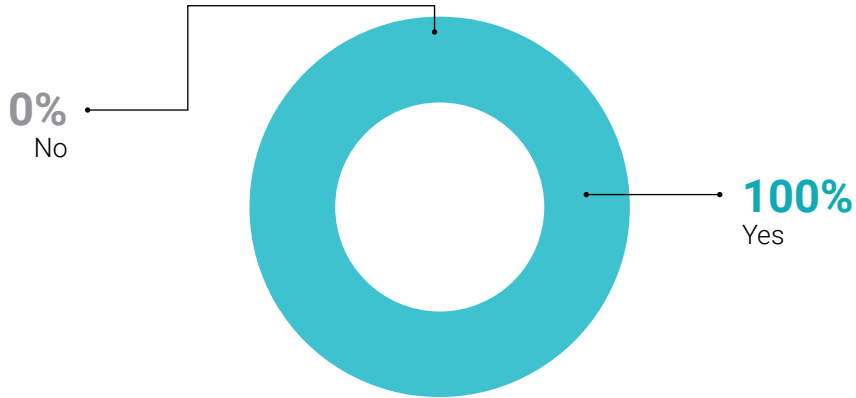


"I joined to improve my soccer skills and be with my peers, despite it being seen in my community as a sport only for boys, a belief that drives me to play even better to prove that wrong. Growing up with little access to soccer and within a strict cultural background, I now aim to balance my studies with the sport, with the dream of playing for South Sudan. I plan to use these skills to show girls in my community and beyond that soccer is a sport for everyone."

Ayerwoth Teopista,
Refugee



Do you think that the program is helping girls to assert themselves? (638 responses)



The story of Steven Nyalimo

"My name is Steven Nyalimo, a South Sudanese refugee living in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. Before displacement, my childhood was shaped by conflict. In my community, the sound of gunfire was more common than laughter, and fear replaced the joy that children are meant to experience. School was difficult to reach, and most of my days were focused on survival. Sports were not part of my life, and football felt like a distant dream.



Everything began to change around 2017 when I was introduced to Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative through the Peace Through Sports program. I still remember the football pitch with joined metallic goalposts and the first day we gathered after being mobilized by a WPDI staff member. Our coach spoke to us about peace, unity, and respect. That moment helped me understand what peace could truly feel like.

Through football, I slowly rebuilt my confidence. Each kick of the ball helped me release pain I had carried for years. I stopped seeing myself as a victim and started seeing myself as part of a team. We laughed, shared experiences, and learned discipline and respect. Our coach did more than train us; he listened to us and believed in us.

At the same time, WPDI encouraged me to grow beyond the field. Around 2019, I was able to go to university, where I studied software engineering for three years. That opportunity helped me develop my thinking, discipline, and responsibility. After completing my studies, I returned to WPDI and continued with the Peace Through Sports program, this time not only as a player but also as a junior coach. I assisted senior coaches during training sessions and helped guide younger players, which strengthened my leadership skills.

With continued support from WPDI and especially with guidance from Coach Richard, my football journey moved to another level. I was connected to Calvary Midigo FC in Yumbe, a team competing in the Uganda Premier League. Joining the club was a dream come true. Today, I proudly play as a striker for Calvary Midigo FC, and I continue to grow both as a player and as a person.

Sports helped me rebuild my identity and gave my life direction. I now understand that peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of opportunity, unity, and purpose. I am deeply grateful to Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative and the Peace Through Sports program for believing in me and helping transform my life. My hope is to inspire other young people to believe that through sport, healing and success are possible."

Peace Engagement Days

Peace Engagement Days, organized monthly as part of WPDI's Peace Through Sports program, combine football mini-tournaments with community dialogues focused on peace-related themes. These events offer a platform for discussing personal growth, teamwork, and broader issues of reconciliation.

In 2025, the WPDI Kiryandongo Field Office conducted a series of Peace Engagement Day celebrations aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence and strengthening shared peace values among both long-term residents and newly arrived refugees from Sudan in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. The Peace Engagement Day model has proven to be a strong and effective WPDI approach to conflict transformation in complex refugee settings, intentionally bringing together diverse ethnic groups previously affected by tribal tensions, hate speech, and competition over limited resources.

Through structured dialogue, cultural exchange activities, and community-led peace messaging, WPDI created a safe and inclusive platform for interaction, understanding, and reconciliation. Sports were used as a transformative tool, particularly engaging young people to unite for peace through soccer matches, where opposing teams played together and concluded games by shaking hands as a symbol of mutual respect and recognition that peaceful coexistence is possible through appreciation of cultural diversity in the settlement.

"The Peace Engagement Day celebration touched me in ways I did not expect. For the first time in a long while, I felt my heart grow lighter as the stress and pain of displacement slowly eased. Listening to cultural folk songs awakened memories of home and reminded me of the deep values carried within our different cultures across the settlement. Seeing people from many ethnic backgrounds stand on the same stage singing, dancing, and celebrating together brought tears to my eyes. In that moment, I felt hope return. It was a powerful reminder that despite our losses, we can still live together in tolerance, unity, and peace."

Wich Yak Wagak Kochor,
Youth Representative



"The WPDI sports activities during Peace Engagement Day have changed our lives in ways I never imagined. Tribes that once saw each other as enemies, shaped by fear and conflict, now meet on the same pitch with open hearts. As we kick the same ball, run side by side, and share moments of laughter and victory, the walls between us slowly disappear. Where there was once hatred and mistrust, there is now respect, acceptance, and genuine friendship. Playing together has healed old wounds and shown us that peace is possible not just among the players, but throughout the entire refugee community."

Mayak Samuel Mayuen,
Player and Refugee



Conclusion

From Displacement to Agency

The results achieved by WPDI in Kiryandongo in 2025 demonstrate a fundamental distinction between the types of change a community can experience. While displacement is a forced change imposed from the outside, a rupture of home and history, the transformation facilitated by WPDI is a sustainable change generated from within. The data presented in this report confirms that our impact is not something that merely “happens” to the refugees and host communities; it is a reality they have actively engineered. When a student at a school moves from being a victim of bullying to a mediator in a Peace Club, or when an inmate identifies and heals the trauma of his peers, we see the transition from passive survival to active leadership.

This evolution would be impossible without the permanence of our Community Learning Center (CLC) and our dedicated staff, who have become part and parcel of the social fabric in the settlement and in the Bweyale district at large. By remaining a constant, physical presence, WPDI has earned the trust of beneficiaries and local leadership with a depth that transient aid organizations cannot match. Our facilitators are not merely instructors; they are the face of a positive, locally-owned change that persists even as global attention fluctuates. They ensure that our programs remain responsive to the evolving stresses of a population that has nearly tripled in size in just three years.

As we conclude this period of reporting, the evidence suggests that the path forward lies in further deepening this integration. The “ripple effect of peace” mentioned by our beneficiaries is the most reliable safeguard against the volatility of the region. We extend our sincere recognition to the local leaders and the Office of the Prime Minister for their continued commitment to this inclusive model. To our international partners, we offer these results as proof that even in the most pressured environments, the cultivation of human dignity remains the most strategic investment possible. WPDI remains steadfast and ready, alongside our front-line partners, to ensure that the resilience of Kiryandongo continues to outpace its challenges.



Our Partners



A foundation that wishes to remain anonymous



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



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