



WPDI UGANDA

Karamoja Sub-Region

2023 Annual Report

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Introduction

The Karamoja Sub-Region of Northeastern Uganda, with a population of 1.2 million, primarily engages in pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood systems. This sub-region has experienced decades of insecurity, notably in the form of cattle raiding, a practice common throughout pastoral areas of eastern Africa as a means to illegally redistribute wealth, particularly following ecological shocks such as droughts. The government disarmament in 2000 led to a reduction in firearms for about a decade. However, security in the sub-region began to deteriorate around 2019, varying by location. Initially hoped to be a temporary setback, the rise in insecurity proved steady, encompassing livestock raids, small-scale thefts, road ambushes, killings in urban areas, land disputes, and sexual violence against women and girls. To address the deeper drivers of these challenges, WPDI has been active in the Karamoja Sub-Region since 2020, working to mobilize women and youth as agents of transformation to assist their communities on their path to peace, sustainability, and resilience. As reflected throughout this report, the impact of WPDI's work in Karamoja in 2023 is evident in both numbers and personal stories.

We are proud that over 24,000 individuals have directly benefited from our programs. Our programs in Karamoja have made significant strides through our renewed strategic platform organized around four key pillars: Peacebuilding, Livelihood, Health & Wellbeing, and Sports. Under the Peacebuilding pillar, the program has reached over 19,000 beneficiaries both at the Community Learning Center that we maintain in Moroto, the main city of Karamoja, and at the community level. For instance, our peace education program was hosted in 20 schools, training over 2,750 learners and teachers, and reaching 4,000+ people through advocacy campaigns in schools. We have also supported 75 girls through scholarships

that have already transformed their lives by helping them stay in school. At the community level, our Youth Peacemakers have facilitated 25 dialogues gathering nearly 5,700 participants and trained 315 local leaders to ensure that our tools are appropriated even in remote areas. Through our Livelihood pillar, we have trained more than 1,500 individuals in TVET areas and supported the creation of 57 SMEs, bringing the total number of SMEs supported by WPDI to 130. These businesses have created 532 jobs and indirectly benefited 1,550 beneficiaries. 2023 has also been a turning point since we introduced our trauma healing program in Karamoja, which has engaged close to 900 individuals, and our sports program "Peace Through Sports," which already boasts 8 teams and participation in sporting events that have shed a very positive light on our work.

Even though they express our work and impact, the numbers above only tell part of the story. Throughout the year, our teams collect testimonials from beneficiaries and stakeholders that provide a deeper understanding of the transformative power of WPDI's programs. The testimonials are provided throughout the report and constitute material that we see as being as important as the data and outcome analysis that make up the bulk of it. From individuals who learned to navigate community conflicts peacefully, to those who found hope and resilience after a personal crisis, the stories are a testament to the profound impact of WPDI's programs. In schools, testimonials from students and teachers alike highlight the value of these programs. The appreciation expressed by local leaders, from administrative officers to local NGOs, underscores the relevance and impact that WPDI has continued to achieve in the sub-region in 2023, upholding a mission that is not just a vision but a reality being lived every day.



Key Achievements

24,189 Total number of beneficiaries of our program in Karamoja

35

Lead Youth Peacemakers

180

Local Youth Peacemakers

12,839

Individuals reached by Lead Peacemakers

Peacebuilding

6,500

Total participants in activities at, or around, our Community Learning Center

898

Conflict Resolution Education trainees

1,765

Participants in Cinema for Peace

3,837

Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns

6,907

Participants in school-based peacebuilding activities

20

Schools hosting WPDI programs

2,763

Learners and teachers trained

4,069

People reached through advocacy campaigns in schools

75

Girls supported through scholarships

6,007

Total participants in community level peacebuilding

25

Community Dialogues held

5,692

Participants in dialogues

315

Local leaders trained

Livelihood

1,514

Total trainees in vocational courses

418

Information and Communication Technologies trainees

752

Entrepreneurship trainees

25

Vulnerable women trained in business

319

Arts & Crafts trainees

2,082

Beneficiaries of all Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

57

SMEs created in 2023

130

SMEs supported by WPDI in total

532

Jobs created

1,550

Indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)

Health and Wellbeing

895

Trauma healing participants

8

Teams managed by WPDI

Peace Through Sports

144

Regular training participants

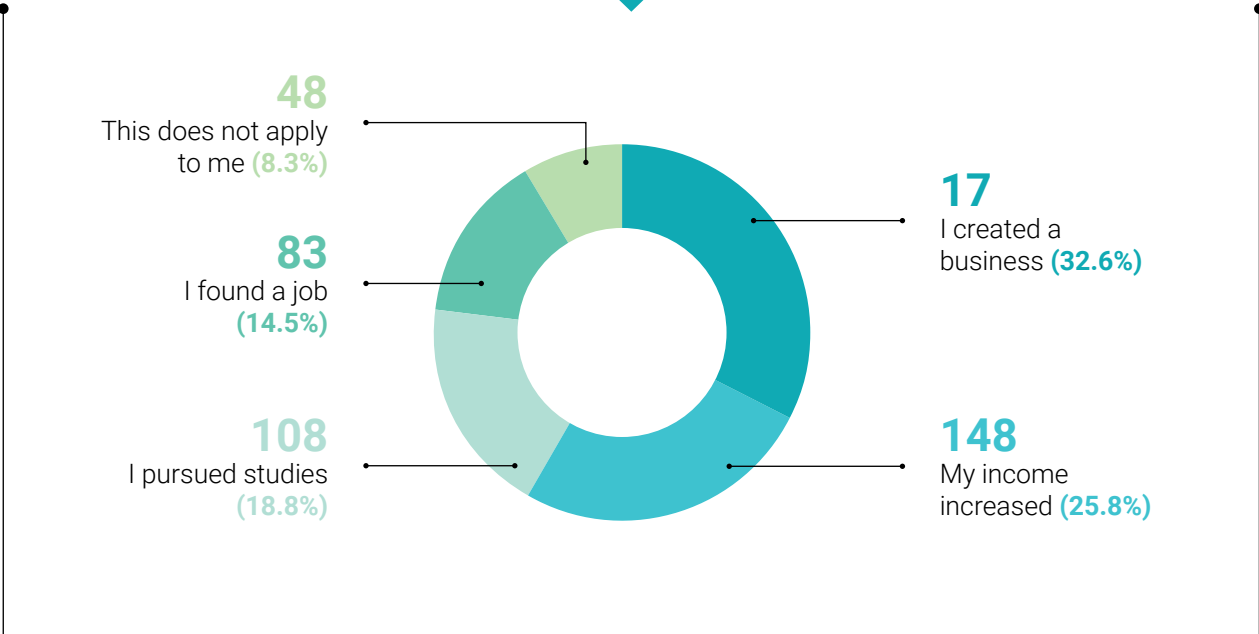
230

Participants in competitions events

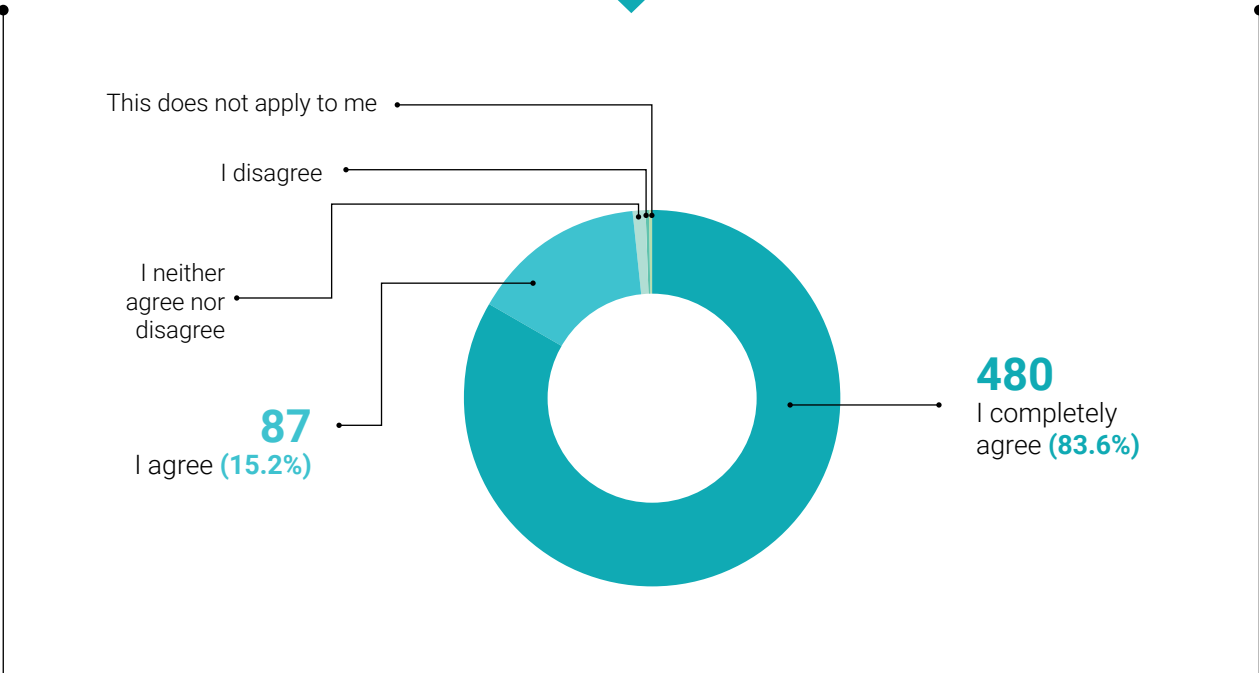


Survey Results

Has the program improved your career prospects?



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



Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders

“The empowerment projects and education scholarships (access to secondary education for vulnerable girls) is one area that is a plus to Karamoja. This is therefore to acknowledge the initiatives started by WPDI in vocational skills, economic empowerment, and secondary education scholarships which are highly appreciated and I wish such activities to be continued.”

Onyang Joseph,
Senior Assistant Secretary of the Moroto District Local Government



“I wish to affirm that WPDI has been an organization with which the government has been working very closely with different government departments for their intervention. Because of the direct involvement of all the stakeholders in the programming, there is no doubt that the project interventions shall be sustained. [...] Thank you for your continued support to Karamoja communities.”

Achia Lawrence,
District Commercial Officer, Moroto District Local Government





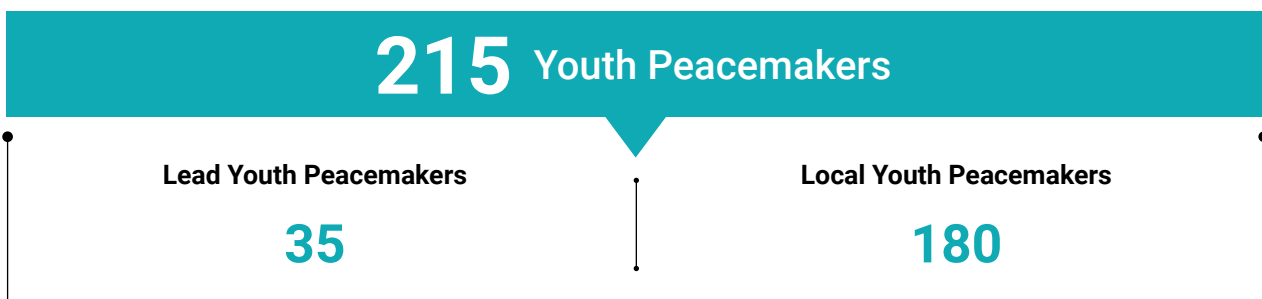
Vectors for Change

To generate meaningful impact on the ground, closest to our target populations, we implement our activities through what we call vectors of change. These vectors enable us to be positioned at the community level. We have two such vectors: cohorts of young leaders known as the Youth Peacemakers, and our Community Learning Centers. The Youth Peacemakers serve as relays in their communities, building capacity for peacebuilding and reducing conflict. Our Community Learning Center provides free access to training, connectivity, awareness-raising events, and other resources for any community members. Throughout the year, WPDI has been able to support beneficiaries in Karamoja through close cooperation with grassroots organizations, local youths, and trusted partners.

Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

Since 2020, WPDI has adopted a community-led approach involving Youth Peacemakers across 36 sub-counties of 9 districts of the Karamoja Sub-Region. This cohort of young leaders has played a pivotal role in WPDI interventions within their communities. Their responsibilities range from mobilizing communities and delivering training in peacebuilding and business to conducting advocacy campaigns and dialogues on issues affecting their communities. Additionally, they provide psychosocial support to those in need. In the reporting year, Youth Peacemakers reached 12,839 people. Notably,

10 Youth Peacemakers championed psychosocial support to trauma clients in their respective sub-counties. In this past year, alone, they identified, screened, and counseled trauma clients, with follow-ups conducted for 53 of them. Throughout their work, there has been positive feedback from clients. Community members couldn't believe their very own Youth Peacemakers would dedicate time to offer counseling, and during these sessions, clients experienced a sense of relief and warmth to be cared for by those in their communities.



Hellen Korobe, a Youth Peacemaker actively involved in our Trauma Healing program

Hellen Korobe, a Youth Peacemaker from Namalu Sub-County in Nakapiripirit District, has garnered significant praise for her dedicated work within our trauma healing program. One particularly poignant testimonial emerged from a client who was her age and a former schoolmate. Struggling after dropping out of school, he spiraled into alcoholism and grappled with a chronic illness that ravaged his health. Recognizing his plight, Hellen initiated a counseling program tailored to his needs. Despite initial resistance, her persistent efforts eventually broke through his barriers, fostering a space where he could open up and embark on a journey of recovery. Through a series of sessions, she guided him towards reclaiming a semblance of normalcy in his life. Today, Hellen proudly reports his remarkable progress: his health has significantly improved, and he has expressed profound gratitude for her role in transforming his life. Their encounters in Namalu are marked by his heartfelt appreciation and updates on his ongoing achievements, illustrating the enduring impact of her compassionate intervention.



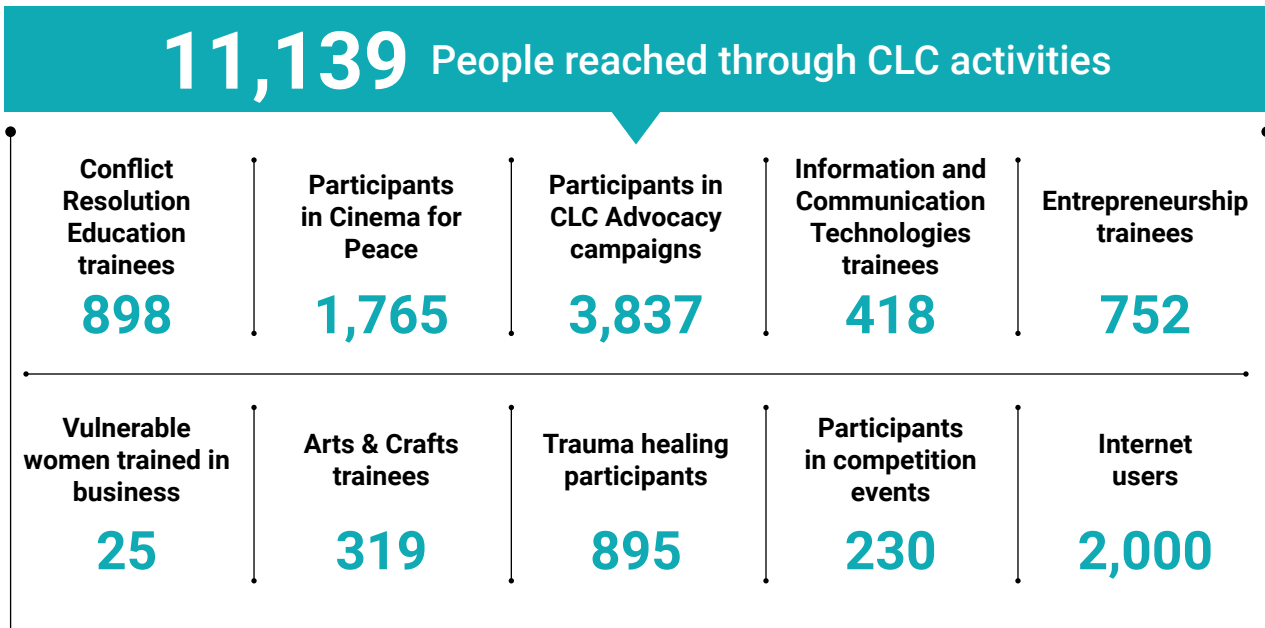
Hellen Korobe, Youth Peacemaker counseling one of the clients



Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

Karamoja’s Community Learning Center (CLC) is centrally located in the Moroto district, serving as a hub for all nine districts in the Karamoja Sub-Region. The CLC is staffed by individuals who provide both training and administrative support. Courses offered at the CLC encompass Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Conflict Resolution Education, Business & Entrepreneurship, Arts and Crafts, and Tailoring & Garment Cutting. Additionally, Trauma Healing through counseling is a vital component of the services provided. In 2023, more than 2,000+ people visited the CLC to access internet services, or reading material. Notably, the

CLC introduced a “Cinema for Peace” component, attracting over 1,700 community members, students and pupils. The center also conducts advocacy campaigns on pertinent issues within Moroto Municipality and surrounding communities. To meet the growing demand for CLC courses, WPDI has established two ICT classes and extended training to other districts in response to requests from District Chief Administrative Officers. Over 50 Parish Chiefs have benefited from the ICT training initiative. Through its combined activities, the center has reached over 11,000 individuals, demonstrating its relevance for local residents.





Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment

Based on our principles of grassroots empowerment and local appropriation, our teams and youth leaders mediate conflicts, advocate for values of peace and resilience, and teach conflict resolution skills to community members at large, including local leaders as well as students and teachers that we train directly in their schools. In turn, our beneficiaries become our partners in the pursuit of peace in their communities.

Mediation Among Community Members

6,007 Total participants in community level peacebuilding

Community Dialogues held

25

Participants in dialogues

5,692

Local leaders trained

315

Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

Coordinated by Youth Peacemakers within their community and with active support and attendance from WPDI staff, Community Dialogues provide an effective medium to address issues that community members face. Together, they find peaceful resolutions agreed on by all parties.

During the year, WPDI continued to engage with local communities, leaders, and security operatives through 25 community peace dialogues, which saw the participation of 5,692 people, alongside high-level regional peace meetings aimed at reviewing the security situation and charting a way forward. These dialogues targeted Local Council Ones (the most local level of government, i.e. villages or neighborhoods) in Nabilatuk and Napak, recognizing their crucial role in addressing youth involvement in raids. Notably, the dialogues led to fruitful outcomes, as many youth voluntarily returned their guns to the army, contributing to a significant reduction in the scale of cattle raids, with only isolated cases reported

during subsequent dialogue meetings. Often initiated by local authorities such as district councilors and chairpersons, these open processes emphasized peaceful coexistence and joint efforts in recovering stolen animals, with high-level discussions focusing on comprehensive security strategies, including voluntary disarmament and improved coordination between local leaders and security forces. However, challenges persist, particularly concerning cross-border conflicts with Turkana herders from Kenya, highlighting the need for sustained engagement and implementation of agreed-upon resolutions. Overall, these efforts stress the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to addressing cattle conflicts in Karamoja, emphasizing community involvement, inter-district cooperation, and enhanced security measures to promote lasting peace and stability in the region. Follow-up monitoring is planned for the coming year to assess the effectiveness of the implemented resolutions.

“I am greatly encouraged by the outcomes of today’s meeting. The discussions held have the potential to significantly alleviate tensions between the Pokot and Pian communities, leading to a substantial reduction in disputes. I extend my sincere gratitude to WPDI for their unwavering support in facilitating this dialogue.”

Lolem Samuel,
Chairperson of the Peace committee, Nabilatuk District



“I extend my heartfelt appreciation to WPDI for convening this gathering of Local Council Leaders. Through our exchange of experiences, we have gained valuable insights into strengthening peace within our communities. By uniting all security personnel and LC III representatives from across sub-counties, I am confident that we can effectively disseminate peace messages and promote harmony among our people.”

Loucho Kizito,

Local Council one, Loteede village, Acegeretolim parish, Nabilatuk Town Council, Nabilatuk District



“The Dialogue meeting has underscored the collective responsibility we all share in fostering peace. We have recognized the critical importance of coordination and information sharing in addressing insecurity within our villages. As a Local Council One leader, I commend and urge WPDI to persist in their invaluable support for peace initiatives in the Karamoja Sub-Region.”

Lokut John Amuria,

Local Council one, Katanga Village, Nabilatuk District



Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace

Our organization’s peacebuilding efforts are founded on the principle that effective dialogue and conflict mediation among community leaders require the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. Through our Conflict Resolution Education course, WPDI endeavors to enhance the capacity of district and community leaders, as well as security personnel, by imparting them with the necessary conflict transformation techniques and approaches. This year, we extended our reach by training 315 Security

Intelligence Officers in conflict resolution techniques tailored to their roles within the community. These intensive training sessions, conducted over three days in each district, aimed to equip participants with practical tools for conflict resolution. Importantly, feedback from leaders indicates a tangible reduction in security concerns within their communities following the implementation of dialogues facilitated by WPDI-trained individuals. Topics covered in these training sessions included:

- Introduction to conflict
- Types of conflict
- Characteristics of conflict
- Sources of conflict
- Conflict Approaches
- Conflict and Power
- Conflict stages
- Understanding Violence
- Peace
- Conflict early warning systems
- Introduction to conflict Analysis
- Human Rights
- Equality
- Diversity
- Communication and Active Listening
- Servant Leadership
- Negotiation
- Mediation

“Prior to the training, I often found myself entangled in various conflicts, especially concerning land disputes within my community. I lacked the necessary tools to effectively navigate these disagreements, often resorting to confrontational methods. However, the invaluable insights gained from the training have illuminated the efficacy of peaceful approaches in conflict resolution. Cooperation and negotiation have emerged as pivotal elements in fostering enduring peace. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for empowering us leaders with these indispensable skills.”

Kodet Samson,
Nabokat village Nadunget Sub-County,
Moroto district

“I am deeply grateful to the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for their unwavering support in facilitating our leaders’ training. The knowledge acquired, particularly in the realms of human rights and diversity, holds tremendous potential for enhancing our effectiveness as leaders in the Karamoja region. Armed with this newfound understanding, I am confident that our region will experience substantial progress, fostering greater inclusivity and harmony. Thank you, WPDI, for your steadfast dedication to peace and development.”

Lokol Peter,
Kaabong district



Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community

Integral to the mandate of WPDI is the assumption that peace is a shared responsibility of every member in the community and that it should, subsequently, be taught as a skillset that anyone should have irrespective of their age, gender or status. To this effect, we have developed an array of programs aimed at equipping all members of the community with adapted skills and competences,

including youths, children and adults as well as local leaders. In 2023, our peace education and advocacy program reached a total of 6,500 individuals in Karamoja. Bearing in mind that levels of insecurity and violence remain a concern for the populations, this intervention is critical to ensure that peace can be promoted at the grassroots level in ways that are adapted to local realities.



Creating Access to Skills at the Community Learning Center

The Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) course is tailored for the Karamoja Sub-Region, which grapples with insecurity stemming from frequent cattle raids. This comprehensive course empowers community members with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to effectively de-escalate such instances of insecurity. Delivered by WPDI Conflict Resolution Education Trainers and Youth Peacemakers, the

training sessions take place both at the Community Learning Center (CLC) and within the communities themselves. Notably, in response to community requests, we expanded the reach of CRE training to directly address local needs. In the past year, a total of 898 youth successfully graduated from WPDI's CRE course, signaling a significant step toward building a more peaceful and resilient Karamoja.



“Before this training I was just like any other community youth living in the community just for formality without knowledge of certain things and also one who did not know the differences between conflict and human rights. After this Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative training, my mind is now full of knowledge and I have come to know how to respond to conflict with comparison to human rights. I now know the styles of solving any conflict even those issues I had before I have solved especially with my family members. I therefore thank the management of WPDI for bringing this training to our community youth.”

Ilukol Sam,
Nakapiripirit district



“Thank you WPMI for this course; as a community youth, the knowledge and skills gained has enabled me to help my colleagues at work. For instance, there was a conflict between one of my colleagues with the supervisor and the situation went out of hand and one of them nearly lost work. However, with skills and knowledge on negotiation and mediation process I was able to help my colleagues come out of the conflict. As I speak now there is unity and love within the workplace”.

Lomokol John Victor,
Nakapiripirit district



Cinema for Peace

This year marked an important progress in our capacity to disseminate a culture of peace in the Karamoja sub-region as we launched our Cinema for Peace program in schools and at our CLC. Cinema for Peace targets children and youths with the aim of opening their minds and starting conversations about peace and reconciliation. Since the launch

of this activity, 12 screenings were conducted reaching 1,765 pupils, students and community members. There was receptiveness and enthusiasm among participants. At the end of each screening, participants were engaged to reflect and discuss what they have learned from the movie.



"I am appreciative of the cinema for peace program which I heard on the radio. It's such a pleasure and it does change our perspective. I had many challenges in making peace with my friends. This program has helped me to learn how to be determined in everything I do and to be fearless and make peace with my friends."

Nagir Christine,
a student of Kangole Girls
Secondary School

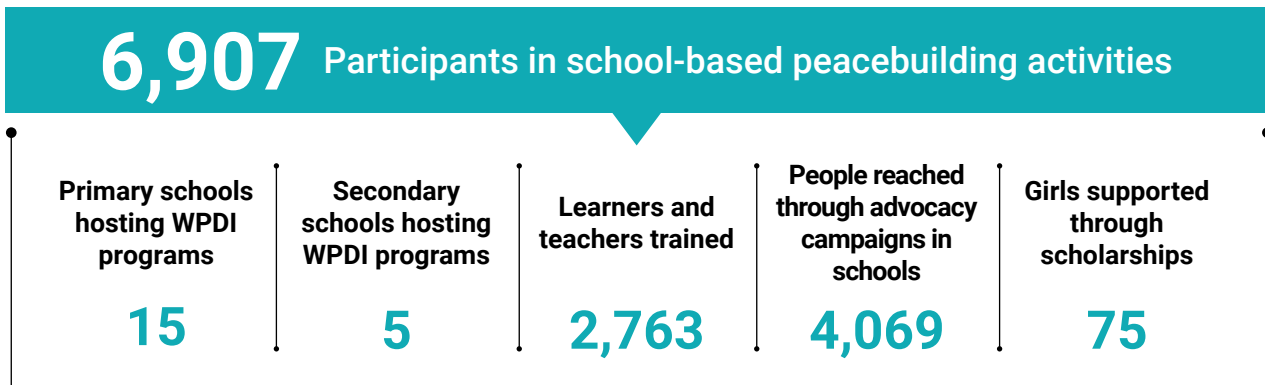


"I got to hear about the program from my parents who encouraged me to go and participate. I was a person who loved and fueled people to fight and create problems. Through the discussions after the movies, I have learned how to help people solve problems instead of create them. Thanks WPD I for the program"

Ekong Aaron,
a student of Jeressor High
School in Soroti

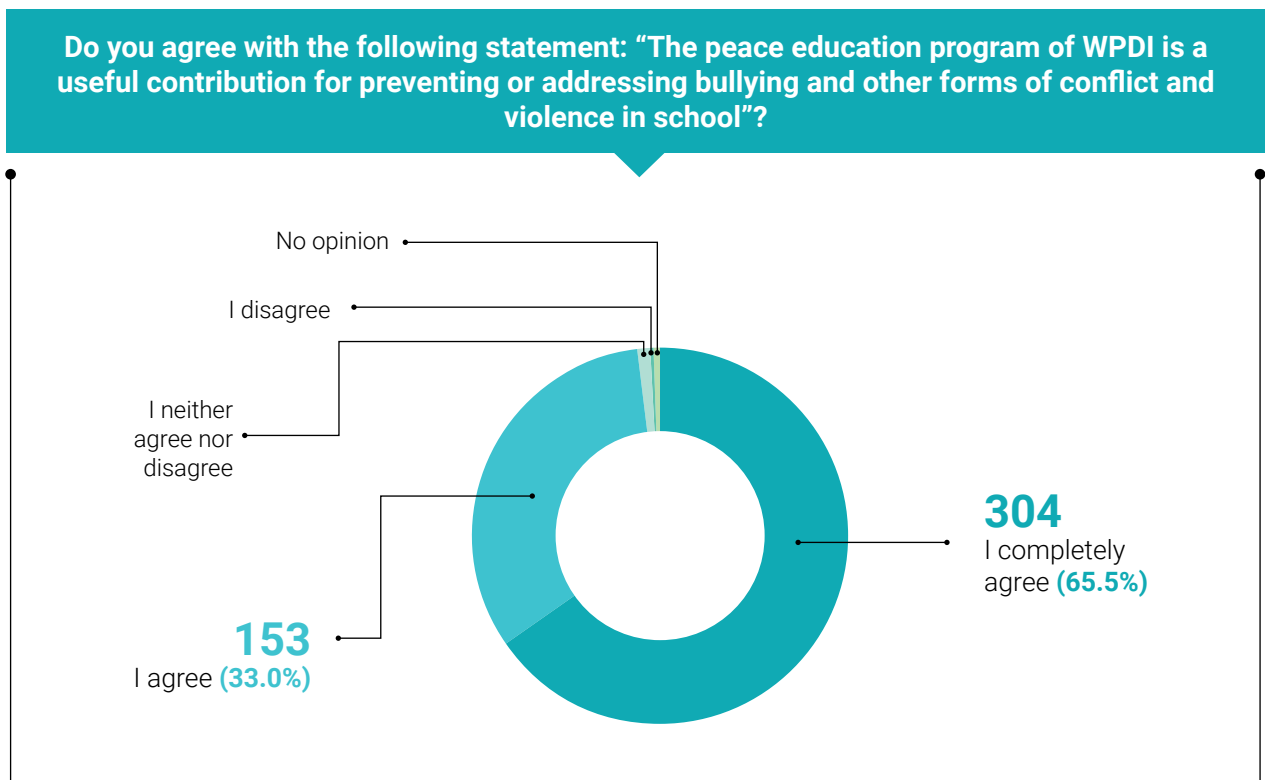


Bringing Skills and Values to Schools

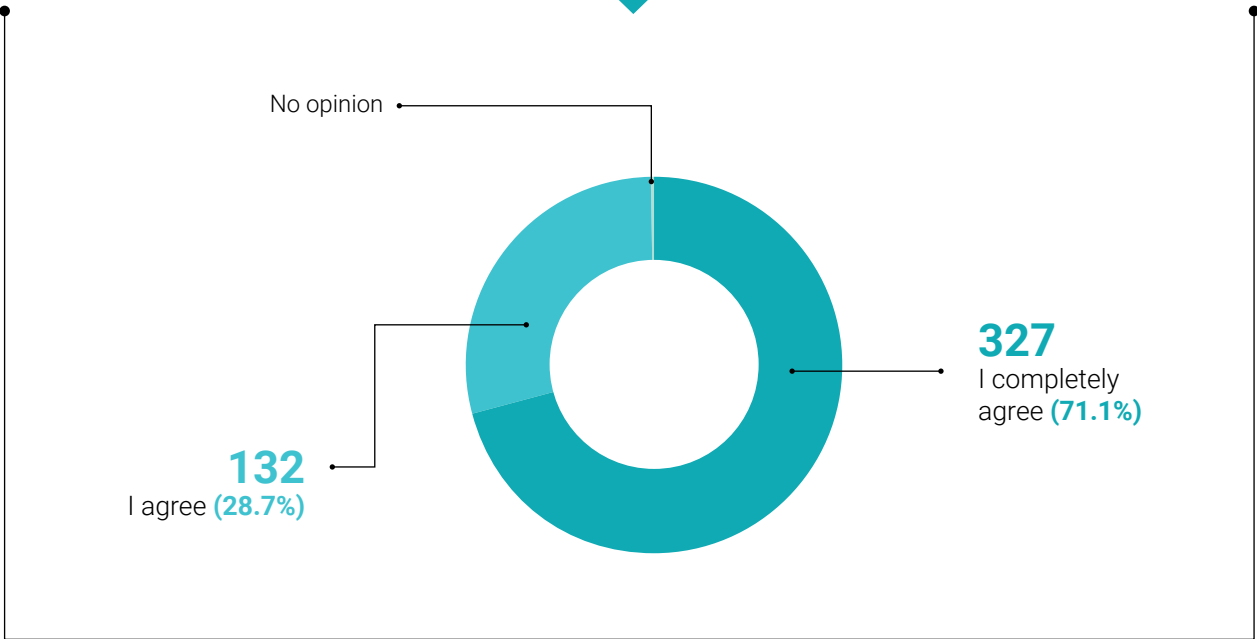


In 2023, WPDI has continued its commitment to nurturing a culture of peace, reconciliation, and compassion among young learners, fostering a harmonious environment characterized by reduced conflicts and enhanced discipline within schools. Through engaging Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) sessions led by WPDI Youth Peacemakers, a total of 2,497 students (1,247 primary and 1,250 secondary) have successfully completed the program, with positive impact not just for themselves but also for their schools. In 2023, our program was implemented in 20 schools (15 primary and 5 secondary schools), marking significant growth from the preceding year when we were operational in 13 schools. This expansion was prompted by the request of District Education Officers and school authorities.

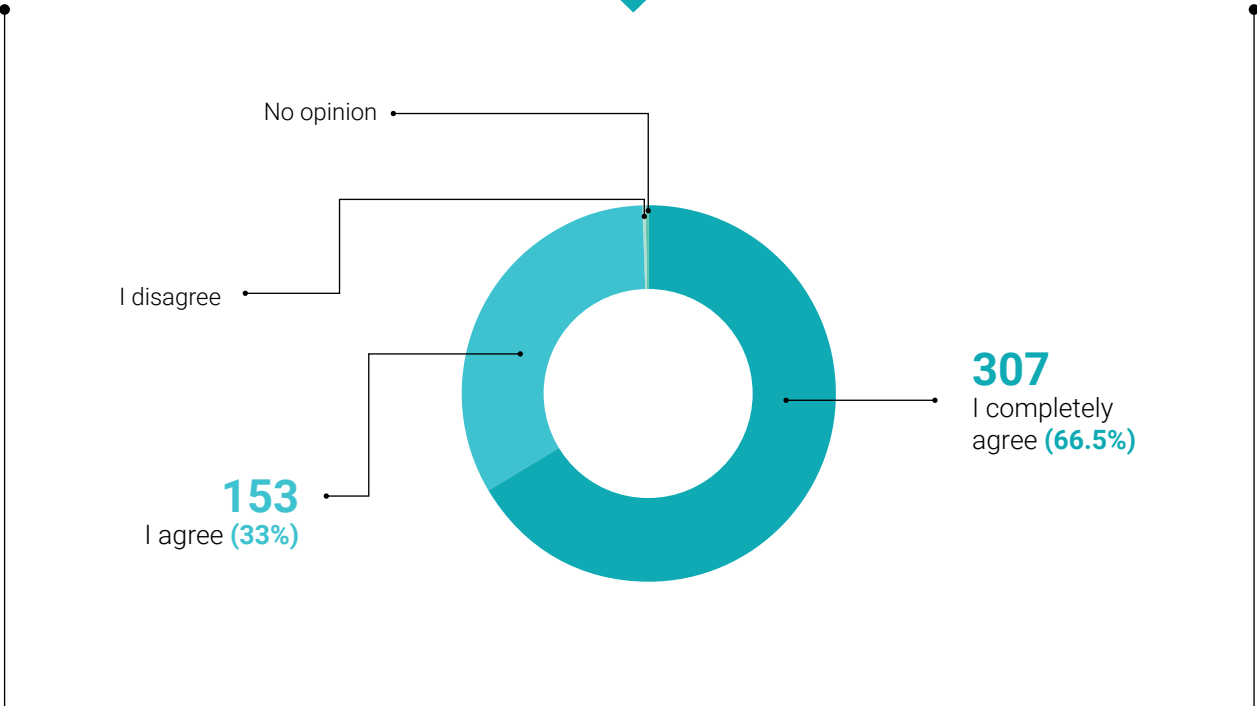
Our efforts in schools have yielded tangible results that were confirmed by the feedback we received from educators on the outcomes that they could observe. In a survey conducted in 2023 within the school communities of Karamoja where WPDI runs peace education programs, 175 educators at 16 schools provided feedback on these activities. 99% of them agreed on the affirmation that ‘the program of WPDI is effectively teaching and promoting peaceful attitudes, self-discipline, nonviolence, and other civic mindsets’. 96% of them agreed that ‘the peace education program of WPDI is a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school’. 98% of them agreed that ‘the Peace Education program of WPDI helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school’.



Do you agree with the following statement: " The program of WPDI is effectively teaching and promoting peaceful attitudes self-discipline, nonviolence, and other civic mindsets?"



Do you agree with the following statement: "The Peace Education program of WPDI helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school"



Testimonials from secondary school students



“Understanding conflict was an opportunity that has enabled me to appreciate how to handle it constructively. This training is right for the students. Before the training there were lot of conflicts among us and often forwarded to the Administration, but now, am confident my skills have improved in peace mediation and I will use these practical skills to facilitate conflict resolution among friends and school.”

Kopito Danile,

Senior One, Moroto High school, Moroto district



“Special thanks to the WPDI for CRE training to the students it has empowered them with practical life skills and knowledge compared to before, currently within school, petty conflicts are minimal implying the training is creating a great positive impact that translates into lasting solutions to achieve peace and sustainable development.”

Adiaka Consy,

Senior One, Moroto high school, Moroto district



Testimonials from primary school pupils



“Thank you WPDI for the training, I am now empowered with new knowledge and skills which has increased my self-esteem and understanding of dealing with emotions, before the CRE training I was so emotional and in trouble with my friends at school.”

Mangat Filda,

Nabilatuk Township Primary School, Nabilatuk district



“Appreciation to WPDI for the 3-month CRE training. Before the training I did not know what peacebuilding was but after going through training I have realized that peace begins with me then spreads. I have to ensure that I and my friends spread peace at home, in our community and school and collectively contribute to sustainable peace and development of the Karamoja region.”

Ekore Jorem,

Lia primary school, Moroto district



Teachers training in Conflict Resolution Education

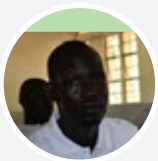
Building the capacity of teachers in peace education is the foundation of nurturing a generation of peaceful young leaders by addressing drivers that could expose them to indiscipline, drug abuse and criminal gangs at school. This year, WPDI Youth Peacemakers and Staff trained and graduated 266 teachers. The graduation was presided over by WPDI CEO, Forest Whitaker, who thanked teachers for their commitment to spreading the seeds of peace in their schools and communities. Some of the topics covered included:

- Understanding conflict
- Peace
- Violence
- Development and sustainable development
- Communication and active listening
- Conflict analysis
- Equality and diversity
- Servant leadership
- Conflict approaches
- Stages of conflict
- Emotional intelligence
- Negotiation & mediation among others



“Before joining the training, I didn’t know much on how to address conflicts either at personal level or at school. On undertaking the training I am confident I have gained a lot of knowledge and skills on successful approaches to conflict in terms of problem solving rather than confrontation when conflict arises. Thank you WPDI for the training.”

Alokith Joyce,
Moroto Parent Senior Secondary School, Moroto District



“Before the start of the CRE training, there were topics I never put emphasis on, especially diversity. But as I learned more deeply, I have realized that we are all one and diversity has played a very important role in my life and the entire community. Thank WPDI for extending the training to us teachers. I thought I knew everything.”

Logith Michael,
Nakapelimen primary school, Moroto District



Promoting access to education for vulnerable adolescent girls through scholarships

Our Scholarship Program aims to empower vulnerable girls in the Karamoja Sub-region. By facilitating education, we enable them to create brighter futures for themselves and their communities. Our focus extends beyond academics—we promote peace, sustainability, and resilience in fragile and conflict-affected areas. Unequal enrollment of girls in education remains a challenge due to traditional norms. Through our scholarship program, we strive to level the field, providing opportunities for girls to realize their

immense potential. Collaborating closely with local stakeholders, we transparently select candidates. To this effect, the program launch consisted in gathering 68 local leaders to advocate for girls' education and ensuring a fair and transparent selection of the 285 applications we had received. Since its inception in February 2023, the program has supported 75 girls, providing essential resources and mentorship. Together with district leaders, we guide these young students toward a future of positive impact.

Testimonials from the leaders

"I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative for their invaluable contributions to development activities in the Karamoja Sub-Region. Having personally monitored some of the youth projects, I am pleased to note their positive impact. These girls, often victims of conflicts in our region, deserve our unwavering support."

Lomongin Joseph,
Chief Administrative Officer, Kotido district



"WPDI's projects in the Karamoja Sub-Region are among the most practical and impactful initiatives we've seen. Education is paramount for the advancement of Karamoja, particularly girl child education, which addresses issues like malnutrition, child marriages, and insecurity. Educating girls is crucial, as it not only empowers them but also helps in curbing negative practices like cattle raids. Let us, as leaders, rally behind and support this project for its continued success."

Ahmed Fardosa,
Deputy RDC, Napak district



"I am thoroughly impressed by the commendable work undertaken by WPDI in our district. In recognition of their remarkable service to the people of Napak and Karamoja, we awarded WPDI a certificate of appreciation in 2022. As a region, we wholeheartedly embrace the scholarship project aimed at benefiting vulnerable girls by providing access to secondary education."

John Paul Kodet,
District Chairperson, Napak district



Testimonials from successful adolescent girls

“I was stressed and disheartened before receiving the scholarship, as I lacked the means to continue my secondary education after losing my father in 2017. My mother, who earns a living by breaking and quarrying stones, struggled to pay my school fees until I completed primary seven. Afterward, I stayed home for over two weeks while others resumed school. When I saw the advertisement for Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative’s scholarship, I applied with uncertainty due to limited slots. Fortunately, I was shortlisted, and despite stiff competition during interviews, I received a life-changing phone call from WPDI. I felt immense joy and gratitude, believing that my educational dreams had finally come true.”

Natee Everline,
scholarship beneficiary



“When I was at home, I felt deeply unsettled seeing my peers go to school while I remained behind. The thought of being the only one left at home was agonizing, and I even contemplated working as a house girl to escape the situation. However, my family’s financial struggles made it impossible to afford secondary education. Passing the scholarship interviews felt surreal, and I never imagined I would have the opportunity to attend Kangole Girls SSS. I am immensely grateful to your organization for the scholarship, and I am determined to work diligently to complete my education. May God bless the invaluable work of this organization.”

Koriang Sarah,
scholarship beneficiary



Impact story from Katikit primary school in Amudat District

Ever since Conflict Resolution Education was introduced to the school by WPDI, in the last two years, a lot has changed for the better. Before, there was a high rate of indiscipline among the learners, conflicts and fights were happening on a daily basis, as reported by the school head teacher.

As a result of the Conflict Resolution Education sessions delivered by the Youth Peacemakers, the school head teacher reported a positive turnaround with a drastic reduction in fights. Additionally, school performance has greatly improved. This was evident during the Monitoring and Evaluation visit to the school on the graduation day for peace education.



“Before I joined peace education I used to be a troublemaker, I was always fighting and abusing other pupils. I didn’t know that I was causing conflict. At least, not until I enrolled in the peace education in school which has positively changed me. I have made friends with many children now.”

Teko Vincet,
Primary school pupil





Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio- Economic Empowerment

A key aspect of our work in Karamoja is to help individuals and communities improve their livelihood conditions. To this effect, we strive to provide our beneficiaries with access to skills in ICT, Entrepreneurship, and Arts & Crafts that they can use to boost their career. Ensuring that our trainees have opportunities for launching or strengthening their business, we hold business plan competitions that serve to identify promising projects that we subsequently backstop to secure their development into profitable enterprises. In 2023, our livelihood program has continued to create better prospects for individuals and the communities at large, starting with the 1,514 individuals who took vocational courses. Our Business Plan Competition offered them opportunities to win capital start-up grants to develop a business, resulting in the launch of 57 new businesses that generated 532 jobs and benefits for 1,550 people in their families. In conclusion, our comprehensive livelihood program in Karamoja has contributed to enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities, fostering economic empowerment and community development in the region.

Capacity Building Courses

1,514 Total trainees in vocational courses

ICT trainees

418

Entrepreneurship trainees

752

Vulnerable women trained in business

25

Arts & Crafts trainees

319

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

In Karamoja, digital literacy skills are notably low, only 8% of the youth population use the internet yet computer knowledge is a must have skill in this digital era. Through WPDI's ICT training, we aim to bridge the digital skills gap among the population of Karamoja. This program is particularly popular and well-attended, offering two levels: basic and intermediate. Additionally, WPDI has established two classes per quarter at the CLC to accommodate the high demand and requests from the district local government. This year, WPDI trained and graduated 418 youth, children, and local government parish chiefs at the CLC across three districts: Amudat, Nakapiripirit, and Nabilatuk.

Testimonials



"I greatly appreciate what WPDI has done to me, through the computer skills acquired. After graduating, I got employed in March 2023 with R & G IT Consults as a stationery attendant and my work includes typing, printing, and scanning of documents for clients. The monthly earnings from this job has made me independent and meet the basic needs of life. Without these skills, I wouldn't be employed and earn a living."

Alupo Catherine Christine,
A former WPDI trainee



"I am glad to share a story of what transpired to me after graduating from WPDI ICT course. I did ICT for a period of three months. After acquiring these skills, I applied for a job with Compassion International Moroto CDC and I went through the interviews because the requirement was knowledge in ICT and we did a practical ICT test which I passed. Right now I work there and things are not the same as before since I am getting monthly payments to cater for my needs. I really want to appreciate the WPDI for the free scholarship to have a brighter future."

Akello Charity,
A former WPDI trainee





Business and Entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurship program of WPDI has been designed to respond to the challenges faced by local entrepreneurs. Indeed, Uganda's businesses rarely celebrate their first birthdays due to high business failure rates, the ability of a business to stay afloat depends on the knowledge and skills to manage and sustain it successfully. WPDI Business and Entrepreneurship course is designed to impart practical knowledge and skills to young men and

women right from business idea generation to overall successful business management. The course has two levels, basic and intermediate, and the successful trainees from this course qualify for business start up grants awarded through our business plan competition when they demonstrate viable business plans. Throughout the year, 752 trainees graduated from Business and Entrepreneurship courses.

"I first learned about the WPDI program from a close friend who spoke highly of its training and benefits, which piqued my interest. Before enrolling in the free vocational skilling program, I lacked essential business skills despite my involvement in the business world. Regrettably, my previous ventures ended in failure due to my limited knowledge in key areas. Since joining the business course, I've gained invaluable knowledge that has transformed my business perspective. The program equipped me with crucial skills in financial management, record keeping, risk management, idea generation, and marketing. I now comprehend the reasons behind my past failures and feel confident in my ability to succeed. With these newfound skills, I'm eager to embark on a new business venture, determined to change my life for the better. I express my heartfelt gratitude to WPDI for offering this invaluable program. It has been a life-changing experience, and I'm excited about the opportunities ahead. Thank you, Whitaker, for helping me pave a brighter future for myself."

Mark Aook Neema,
Ariamakot village



"I was introduced to the WPDI programs in Moroto by a friend and decided to enroll in the business skills training. This program significantly enhanced my understanding of business, covering essential topics such as idea generation, market research, record keeping, financial management, and customer care. With these skills, I am eager to embark on my entrepreneurial journey. I am committed to applying this newfound knowledge to establish my own business. Already, I have identified a viable business idea suitable for Moroto and am working on my business plan. I am determined to become a prominent entrepreneur in Moroto, thanks to the invaluable skills gained through this program. I extend my sincere appreciation to the donors and the entire team at WPDI for their support."

Juliet Mukoya,
Napak district



Arts and Crafts

The objective of WPDI's Arts and Crafts course is to enhance the capacity of young men and women by providing them with practical knowledge and skills, enabling them to set up self-sustaining businesses and increase their employability. Additionally, the Arts and Crafts skills training taps manufacture of local cultural artifacts that are a tourist potential and a rich Karamoja culture. In 2023, 319 trainees graduated from the Arts and Crafts course, with a majority becoming self-employed, producing artifacts for sale within Karamoja and beyond.



"After my husband connected me to the tailoring and garment cutting course at WPDI from January to March 2023, my life changed dramatically. Prior to joining, I admired tailors sewing various garments on the streets, but lacked the skills to do so myself. Thanks to WPDI, I learned everything from fiddling with the machine to sewing garments for men, women, and children. Upon completing the course, I purchased my first tailoring machine, rented a small premises at Moroto Central Market, and opened a fashion shop. Today, my business is thriving, all because of the skills I acquired from WPDI. I am grateful for the empowerment as a young woman who was previously unemployed, and now I eagerly report to my shop every morning to work."

Cherotwo Esther,
Army Barracks Moroto district North Division



"I learned about the training programs through radio adverts. Inspired by friends, I decided to join the Arts and Crafts and Tailoring course. Operating a tailoring machine proved challenging initially due to my lack of skills. However, thanks to the training provided by WPDI, I overcame this challenge. Today, I have started my small fashion shop where I sew and mend people's clothes, all thanks to the Tailoring and Garment Cutting course from WPDI."

Sagal Paul



Supporting Income-Generating Projects

2,082 Beneficiaries of all SMEs

SMEs created in 2023

57

SMEs supported by WPDI in total

130

Jobs created since 2021

670

Indirect beneficiaries of businesses

1,550

130 Total of businesses active in 2023

Businesses created since 2021

132

Survival rate of WPDI SMEs since 2021

98%

Jobs generated by type of business active in 2023 in Karamoja since 2021

Retail

325

Service

184

Wholesale

86

Manufacture

53

Farming

22

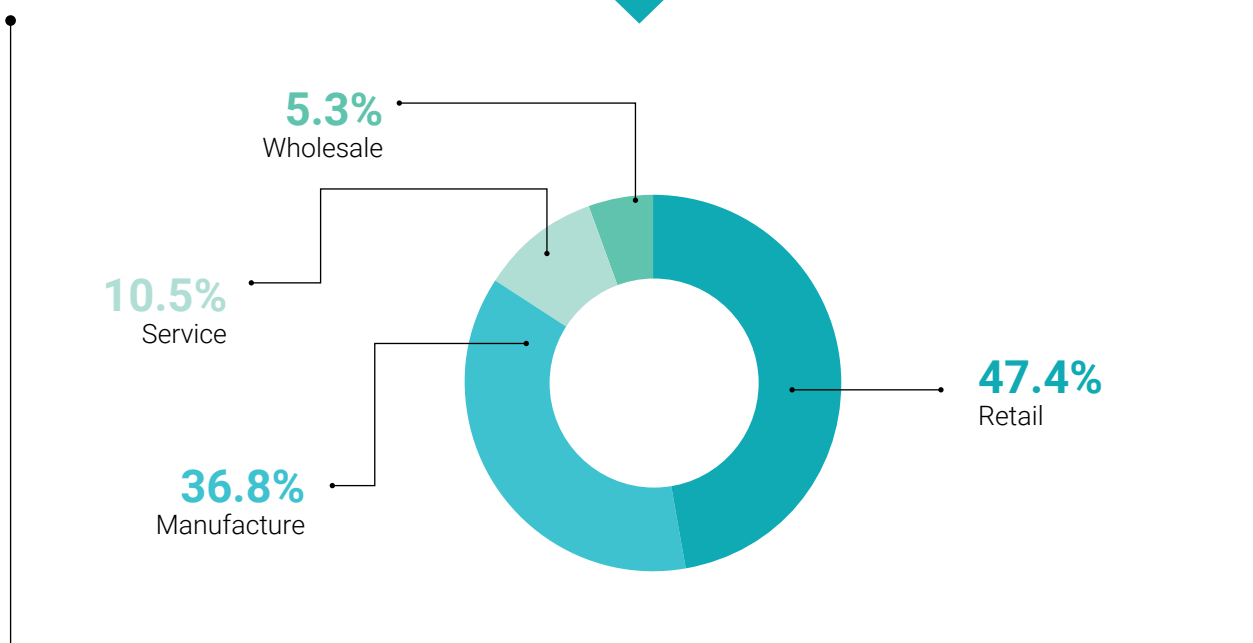


Women's Livelihood Program

In 2023, our business program also featured our women platform for economic empowerment, the Women's Livelihood Program. With the overarching goal of fostering women's empowerment through entrepreneurship, the initiative was meticulously crafted to deliver localized training in Business and Entrepreneurship. This comprehensive training aimed to equip women with the necessary skills and knowledge to conceptualize and actualize their own

business ventures, thereby enabling them to secure their livelihoods, support their families, and contribute positively to the community. In 2023, WPDI trained 25 women and supported the creation of 9 new businesses by women's groups in Karamoja, totaling 19 women-led businesses supported in the sub-region. Collectively, these businesses generated 88 jobs and provided indirect revenue to 128 beneficiaries within the households of managers and employees.

Types of the 19 Women Groups' businesses active in 2023 in Karamoja



Examples of the great work of supported SMEs

Marble City Beauty Parlor, in Moroto Central Market



We specialize in hairdressing/salon services and offer a range of cosmetic items. Before WPI initiated operations in Karamoja, we faced significant challenges within the community.

This grant has been transformative for our business, enabling us to elevate our operations and overcome financial hurdles such as rent, vendor bills, and other overhead expenses. It has significantly improved our living standards and relieved us of financial stresses. Currently, our business employs three skilled hairdressers, and we are proud to be able to provide them with stable employment. We are experiencing the tangible financial benefits of our business, with daily cash flow and a substantial profit of 4,000,000 UGX now securely stored in our bank account. Looking ahead, we have ambitious plans to expand our salon next year, creating even more employment opportunities for the community. Our goal is to hire six additional staff members who excel in hairdressing services, thereby empowering others to become self-employed.

We are filled with gratitude towards WPI and its founder for the unwavering support they have extended to us. Their assistance has been instrumental in our success, and we are excited about the promising future ahead for Marble City Beauty Parlor.



Lolemuyek Youth Millers



The impact of this support has been truly remarkable, leading to a substantial improvement in the welfare of our individual households. Through our grinding mill business, we have generated profits amounting to 200,000 UGX, which has made a significant difference in meeting our families' basic needs. With total sales reaching 500,000 UGX since the inception of our milling business in October 2023, we have ensured access to essential resources for our loved ones.

Beyond the financial benefits, engaging in this business venture has brought about a positive transformation in our community dynamics. The collaborative effort required to run the milling business has strengthened our bonds and fostered a spirit of unity and teamwork among our group members. This sense of cohesion has contributed to peaceful co-existence within our community, enhancing social harmony.

Moreover, the focus and dedication required to manage the business have diverted our attention away from potential sources of conflict or involvement in criminal activities. By empowering us to make informed decisions, the milling business has not only alleviated financial burdens but has also played a pivotal role in promoting the overall development of our community. We are profoundly grateful for the opportunity provided by the Whitaker organization, which has truly transformed our lives and uplifted our community.

“Let’s Develop” Group



”

We are immensely grateful for the transformative impact that WPDI has had on our lives. The financial support we received was truly life-changing, allowing us to establish and grow our business, provide for our families, and ensure our children’s education. With the initial support, we began our venture by selling 150 bags of maize and 100 bags of sorghum.

Over time, we have expanded our enterprise to encompass 300 bags of maize, 300 bags of sorghum, and diversified into additional areas such as farming, including chickens, ducks, turkeys, and pigs. Presently, we have successfully cultivated a stock of 15 chickens, 17 ducks, 10 turkeys, and 7 pigs, all of which will be ready for sale during the upcoming festive season, a period of heightened demand. Through our cereal banking business, initiated in July 2023, we have also realized a profit of UGX 500,000.

Beyond the monetary assistance, we are deeply appreciative of the ongoing support and monitoring visits conducted by WPDI. The knowledge and skills imparted to us have revolutionized our approach to business, equipping us with the tools needed for sustainable growth and success.



The Journey of Craft Shop Center Moroto led by youths



Craft Shop Center Moroto emerged victorious in the inaugural Business Plan Competition in May 2023. The founders were facing challenges due to limited educational opportunities stemming from their humble backgrounds. They discovered WPDI and its short vocational training courses through a local radio station. With the program's support, they established an Arts and Crafts business located at lockup 009 in the Moroto central market. Their product range includes liquid soap, bead items, and tie-dye products. The main objective of Craft Shop Center Moroto is to become key dealers for tie and dye and liquid soap making.

Young Ladies Group's Journey to Entrepreneurial Success



Young Ladies Group, composed of Nagit Valeria Mercy, Angolere Jane Godwill, and Mudong Evelyn Engole, is making strides in South Division, Moroto Municipal Council, near the central market opposite the Catholic Cathedral. They run a food produce shop.

The trio first learned about the program through Ateker FM, where WPDI advertised various free courses. Intrigued, they enrolled in the Business and Entrepreneurship course.

Pooling their resources and aspirations, the group aimed to establish a produce business, given their shared experiences of leaving school, getting married, and struggling to support their families. Despite life's challenges, they excelled, securing the second position out of twelve groups in the Business Plan Competition.

Their enterprise took off on November 10, 2023, and to date, they have generated 500,000 ugx. This success is attributed to the diverse business ideas and skills acquired through the program, enabling them to navigate the business landscape effectively.

Expressing gratitude, they shared, "We hope to achieve better standards of living through hard work and diversify our business, allowing us to run branches, generate more income for the group, and support our household needs."





Health and Wellbeing: Pathways to Inner Peace

To make peace with other people, we must first be at peace with ourselves. However, in places affected by chronic violence and poverty, too many individuals experience multifaceted forms of trauma and psychosocial suffering. In this light, our programs on health and wellbeing aim to provide dedicated services in terms of trauma healing or Sexual & Reproductive Health, and at raising the awareness of communities on the importance of these issues for individual wellbeing and collective resilience.

Delivering Trauma Healing Services in Karamoja Sub-region

Trauma healing clients

895

The Karamoja Sub-Region has experienced over the past decades a history of armed conflict, primarily due to cattle raids carried out by armed warriors. This conflict has tragically resulted in the loss of lives and property, causing immense suffering and hardship, particularly for women and children who have been widowed or orphaned. WPDI addresses these challenges through its Trauma Healing and Rehabilitation component. Under this initiative, Youth Peacemakers and WPDI Counselors work to identify and screen individuals who need psychosocial support. The identification of those in need and the counseling sessions are conducted at the community level. Follow-up home visits are also carried out within the community to assess clients' healing and recovery progress, providing additional psychosocial support where necessary.

There are various approaches employed to provide psychosocial support, such as interpersonal group therapy (IPT), one-on-one counseling, and group counseling for individuals sharing similar experiences within the community. Group counseling sessions are provided for

those who have lost loved ones due to raids, individuals affected by domestic violence, girls forced into marriage at a young age, often as early as 10 years old, and those subjected to female genital mutilation, who grapple with the profound health effects and associated stigma.

In the current year, 895 clients were serviced, comprising 225 males and 670 females. Follow-ups and home visits numbered 104 (males: 19, females: 85), with 21 referrals to health support (males: 9, females: 12). In the coming year, WPDI plans to concentrate on raising awareness about trauma healing and rehabilitation, sexual reproductive health, and mental health in communities. The goal is to educate people on how to effectively manage traumatic stress. These awareness efforts will be conducted through various channels, including radio talk shows, Community Learning Center (CLC) training, and refresher courses for Youth Peacemakers. A significant part of this initiative will involve strengthening our follow-up processes and enhancing the referral system for individuals experiencing trauma, to support their journey towards full recovery.

Testimonials



“WPDI pulled me out of the depths of sorrow and despair through their counseling and unwavering support. At one point, I had lost all faith in life after contracting HIV and being abandoned by my husband. I was devastated and even contemplated ending my life, but WPDI showed me a different path—a path filled with hope and resilience. Their counselors helped me see that I was not alone in my struggles and that there is strength in overcoming adversity. With renewed determination, I embraced life once again, abandoning alcohol and resuming my medication. Through the business training provided by WPDI, I have a newfound purpose. Today, I run my own successful business, providing for my children and sending them back to school. My life has undergone a remarkable transformation, and I am filled with gratitude for the support and guidance I received.”

Akarout Lucy





“I experienced a profound sense of liberation and joy as I embraced the counseling process and took charge of my life and the future of my children. With new determination, I requested my aunt for land to settle and cultivate. She graciously allocated my father’s land to me, where I have built my home and established a stable life for myself and my children. I am now free from the torment and harassment of my past, feeling empowered and independent. To my surprise, my husband returned, seeking forgiveness and pledging to change his ways. Today, we have reconciled, and he supports me and our children. Reclaiming my father’s land symbolizes the restoration of my life and dignity. Counseling has been instrumental in transforming my life and that of my family, and I advocate for its continued provision to all who face similar trauma.”

Chepurai Susan





Peace Through Sports

Sportive activities and events can be opportunities for starting dialogues, forging acceptance, and even ending conflicts. Our Peace Through Sports program is a vehicle for connecting children, youths and their communities through their love of sports and instill in them values of mutual respect, inclusion, and fair play, contributing to build a culture of peace rooted in the daily lives of individuals and communities.

In 2023, WPDI made significant strides by establishing eight teams across Moroto District in the sub-counties of Katikakile, Rupa, Loputuk, and Nadunget. These teams underwent weekly sports training along with courses in Business Skills, ICT, and Conflict Resolution Education. Throughout the year, all 144 players and coaches successfully completed the three courses, benefiting from a diversity of training initiatives as listed below.



Conflict Resolution Education Training:

Weekly sessions were conducted by Youth Peacemakers in the four sub-counties of Katikakile, Rupa, Loputuk, and Nadunget within Moroto District. Comprising local youths, both male and female, these teams received sports equipment and uniforms, facilitating their appropriation of the program and boosting their morale during training sessions and friendly matches.



Information and Communication Technologies (ICT):

From July to November, WPDI held an ICT skills course at the Moroto CLC, targeting team players and coaches. The training commenced in the nearest Sub-County, Katikakile, conducted twice a week. It was structured into basic and intermediate levels to accommodate all trainees effectively.



Business and Entrepreneurship Skills:

Throughout the year, team players and coaches underwent business skills training led by Youth Peacemakers at the four identified sub-counties in Moroto District. This initiative aimed to instill an entrepreneurial mindset, empowering them with valuable skills and contributing to improve their employability. The course was conducted at basic and intermediate levels, spanning three weeks per sub-county.

In addition, the eight teams participated in two friendly football matches. These matches were held during the program launch and International Youth Day celebrations, drawing the attendance of 230 community members. The football teams also mobilized community members to march during the International Day of Peace Celebrations held at Moroto Boma grounds, in collaboration with other partners and the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF). Both observances provided opportunities to raise awareness of participants from the target communities on key values and principles conducive to more peaceful and resilience attitudes among individuals and communities.

Testimonials



“Today’s friendly football match has brought us together as players from the two sub-counties of Katikakile and Rupa. Before the game, I felt scared due to the history of conflict between the two sub-counties. However, today’s gesture is a clear sign of peace. Playing together was truly enjoyable, and I hope for positive peace to prevail.”

Teko Moses,
Katikakile Sub-County, Moroto district





“Before participating in the sports for peace activities, I was not aware of many things. However, after completing the 15-day business training, I have undergone a significant transformation. I have learned valuable skills, including how to develop a successful business idea, various business structures, and effective business management strategies. I am grateful to Whitaker for bringing this training to my sub-county.”

Teko Rose Mary,
Nadorin Village, Katikekile Sub-County



Peace Engagement Days

International Peace Day Celebrations

In September 2023, WPDI actively took part in the International Day of Peace celebration held at Moroto Boma grounds, Moroto District, under the theme “Action for Peace: Our Ambition for the Global Goals.” This event brought together local communities, community leaders, security providers (UPDF), and development partners in a show of solidarity to promote peaceful values among Karimojong communities. Key messages emphasized the importance of peace and mutual protection.

The day commenced with a vibrant procession of community members and stakeholders through major centers within Moroto municipality, aimed at raising awareness and promoting peace, drawing a crowd of 500 people. The highlight of the day was a friendly football match between the teams formed by WPDI from Nadunget and Loputuk sub-counties, showcasing the power of sports in fostering respect, dignity, and peace among diverse communities. The match concluded with a 2-0 victory for the Loputuk community team.

“Peace is the cornerstone of power, knowledge, and development. As women, let us impart the message of peaceful values to our children, urging them to refrain from activities such as raids that have been detrimental to our communities.”

Nayor Dinah,
Women Peace Group,
Moroto district



“Nothing but peace! Let us embrace harmony and abstain from activities like cattle raiding and petty theft that threaten the fabric of our communities.”

Lopuwa Apalomokori,
Kraal Leader, Loputuk Sub-County,
Moroto district



Participation in Karamoja cultural event

WPDI actively participated in a cultural event at the Naarakorio ceremonial grounds in Napak District, focusing on leadership by organizing a peace dialogue, especially involving youth. Led by former warriors and trained Youth Peacemakers, the event drew over 500 youths from across Karamoja. Key resolutions emerged:



Livestock Tracking:

Community members were advised against inflating reports of stolen animals to aid security efforts.



Livelihood Diversification:

Youth were encouraged to transition from raiding to alternative livelihoods like agriculture.



Illegal Firearms Surrender:

Youth were urged to voluntarily surrender illegal firearms through official channels.



Security Deployment:

Security forces were recommended to increase presence at crossing points for prompt recovery of stolen animals.





Border Control:

The government was urged to enhance border security and intelligence to curb illegal firearms influx.



Community Cooperation:

Residents were reminded to refrain from harboring criminals, aiding law enforcement, and reporting concerns promptly.



Corruption Crackdown:

Action was requested against corrupt leaders within the community and security forces.

Testimonials from event participants at the Karamoja cultural edition Napak



“Coming together to celebrate the Karamojong culture with my brothers and sisters from other districts has made me happy and wonder why we have been killing each other, I see lasting peace for the future of the Karamoja region.”

Lokodou peter,
Panyagara Sub-County, Kotido district



“With the youth dialogue today in Napak attracting all the Ateker cluster is a sign of peace, in the past the different districts have fought each other - but today we sat together and discussed issues. We celebrated our Karimojong culture that has brought us all together.”

Lokut Mark,
Rupa Sub-County, Moroto district



“If you don’t heal from what is hurting you, you may not be at peace. Let all the communities of Karamoja forgive each other and embrace Peace.”

Teko Joseph,
Rupa Sub-County, Moroto district







Conclusion

Conclusion

In 2023, WPDI continued to strengthen its impact in Karamoja, demonstrating the relevance of its mandate and the effectiveness of its capacity for transforming vulnerable communities into secure, productive, and sustainable places. The data, analyses, and testimonials contained in this report reflect the successful implementation of this mandate, with notable successes and lessons learned that align with the organization's core principles.

Aligning with our mandate's focus on fostering peace through economic opportunities, the creation of 57 new SMEs in 2023 brought the total number of businesses launched through our program to 130. This represents a highly visible achievement that generates direct benefits for entrepreneurs as well as indirect benefits for the community by demonstrating that the dividends of peace can be very tangible.

This community-wide outcome of our work was also manifested in our peacebuilding activities, including Community Dialogues, Community Leaders' training, and Conflict Resolution in Schools, all of which were praised by stakeholders for leaving a positive imprint beyond the immediate scope of our interventions. It is indeed a strength of our model that the direct

beneficiaries will become, in turn, grassroots partners who generate a significant indirect impact.

A very promising development of 2023 has been the initiation of the Peace Through Sports activities in Karamoja, a consequence of WPDI's strategic recast that heightened the consistency and effectiveness of our action in the sub-region. The introduction of sports projects has generated a high level of interest among children, youths, parents, and the communities in general.

The trauma-related activities have been noted by local communities since the availability of such services is usually scarce in Karamoja, which testifies to WPDI's commitment to responding to underserved needs of the populations.

In conclusion, WPDI's work in Karamoja in 2023 reflected not only the relevance of our mission to empower people living in vulnerable areas but also the competence and determination of our staff to achieve positive outcomes for our target communities. In this respect, we can safely consider that the successes achieved and the lessons learned in 2023 provide a roadmap for future initiatives, reinforcing the conviction that sustainable development cannot be achieved without lasting peace, and vice versa.



Our Partners





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