

WPDI UGANDA

Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

2023 Annual Report

Table of Contents

Introduction	03
Forest Whitaker Visits the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement	04
Key Achievements	05
Survey Results	06
Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders	07
Vectors of Change	08
Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots	09
Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity	10
Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment	11
Mediation Among Community Members	13
Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace	13
Community Leaders Training	16
Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community	18
Creating Access to Skills at the Community Learning Center	18
Cinema for Peace	18
Bringing Skills and Values to Schools	20
Primary Schools	22
Secondary Schools	23
Providing Scholarship for Schoolgirls	24
Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment	26
Capacity Building Courses	27
Information and Communication Technologies	28
Arts and Crafts	29
Business and Entrepreneurship	32
Supporting Income-Generating Projects	33
Health and Wellbeing	36
Sexual and Reproductive Health	37
Trauma Healing Support	39
Sports	42
Peace through Sports	42
Peace Engagement Days	44
Conclusion	45
Partners	47

Introduction

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement is located in the Western Region of Uganda. It is a government land that has been allocated for refugee's resettlement, providing shelter for over 100,000 refugees who have come majorly from South Sudan and Sudan over the past decades – bearing in mind that the ongoing conflict within Sudan has displaced new populations and added more than 20,000 new arrivals in Kiryandongo over the year. While this influx created additional unforeseeable challenges, WPDI's team in Kiryandongo nevertheless managed to achieve our objectives in promoting peace and peaceful co-existence within and around the settlement. Our programs for refugees and host populations have remained highly sought by the populations living in the area. Our capacity to deliver has continued to be very high due to the combined presence of the Community Learning Center (CLC) that we have established in the heart of the Settlement and the cohort of Youth Peacemakers whom we mobilize to carry out our programs across and beyond the settlement. Through these assets, WPDI can effectively contribute to better lives by creating opportunities to access skills, knowledge, and resources that help local communities address conflicts and tensions, improve livelihoods and wellbeing at large. In this respect, the collaboration with settlement management authorities such as the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, Bweyale Town Council and other partners working in the settlement has remained excellent and gives us hope for program ownership and sustainability.

Featuring our achievements of 2023, this annual report contains facts, figures and testimonials that

give a comprehensive view of the activities that we carried out in Kiryandongo, which reached 37,642 beneficiaries, including 27,142 directly. Meetings and campaigns in the community and at 41 schools have helped to disseminate key values and messages, contributing to strengthening inclusion and cohesion among the groups living within and around the settlement. The civic and vocational training programs we have implemented in the areas of Conflict Resolution Education, Business and Entrepreneurship, ICT, Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), Trauma Healing, and Arts and Crafts among the local youths and women groups have brought changes in many lives, including in terms of economic development and wellbeing.

We are very proud that follow-ups of former graduates revealed that many of them are now promoting peace in their communities, experiencing improved living conditions and increased income through jobs they found or sales they made through their businesses. Such feedback is precious as it indicates that we have a long-term impact on the lives of our beneficiaries and their communities, who also benefit from the revenues generated by the 156 businesses that we currently incubate in and around Kiryandongo, including the 30 new ones created in 2023. This hallmark of our action can be found in all our programs which, in the end, are based on the assumption that people from the most vulnerable places can be empowered to spearhead change in their communities.



Forest Whitaker visits the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

In May, Forest Whitaker visited our operations at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement as part of his first post-COVID mission to Uganda, alongside The Deputy Secretary General of the Swedish Postcode Foundation, Head of Charities at the People's Postcode Lottery (UK), and the Senior Vice President of NBA Africa. The mission aimed to directly engage with partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders, and WPDI staff across the three Sub-Regions where WPDI implements programs. The visit presented a unique opportunity for advocacy on the importance of pursuing the SDGs through grassroots initiatives based on the direct participation of beneficiaries, as heralded in the work of WPDI. Among others, the key stakeholders engaged by Mr. Whitaker were representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR, who jointly manage the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement.

Overall, the mission proved instrumental in demonstrating to international partners how WPDI contributes to specific goals and targets of the SDGs, including to benefit people affected by forced displacement. Highlights of the visit included the inauguration of an IT Lab at Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, expanding the offerings of the Community Learning Center. During this visit, the Whitaker Peace Tournament was also launched, a crucial component of the Peace Through Sports initiative.



Key Achievements

37,642 Total number of beneficiaries of our program in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

31

Lead Youth Peacemakers

174

Local Youth Peacemakers

12,133

Individuals reached by Lead Peacemakers

PEACEBUILDING

518

Conflict Resolution Education trainees

4,145

Participants in Cinema for Peace

5,000

Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns

9,663

Total participants in peacebuilding at the CLC

41

Schools hosting WPDI programs

3,893

Learners and teachers trained

3,400

People reached through advocacy campaigns in schools

233

Girls and boys supported through scholarships

7,526

Total participants in school-based peacebuilding

46

Community Dialogues held

4,600

Participants in dialogues

240

Local leaders trained

4,840

Total participants in community level peacebuilding

LIVELIHOOD

486

ICT trainees

423

Entrepreneurship trainees

180

Vulnerable women trained in business

290

Arts and Crafts trainees

1,379

Total trainees in vocational courses

30

SMEs created in 2023

156

SMEs supported by WPDI in total 84 launched by vulnerable women

540

Jobs created

2,100

Indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)

2,640

Beneficiaries of all SMEs

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

2,017

Sexual & Reproductive Health participants

751

Trauma healing participants

2,768

Total Health & Wellbeing participants

PEACE THROUGH SPORTS

98

Teams managed by WPDI

1,100

Regular training participants

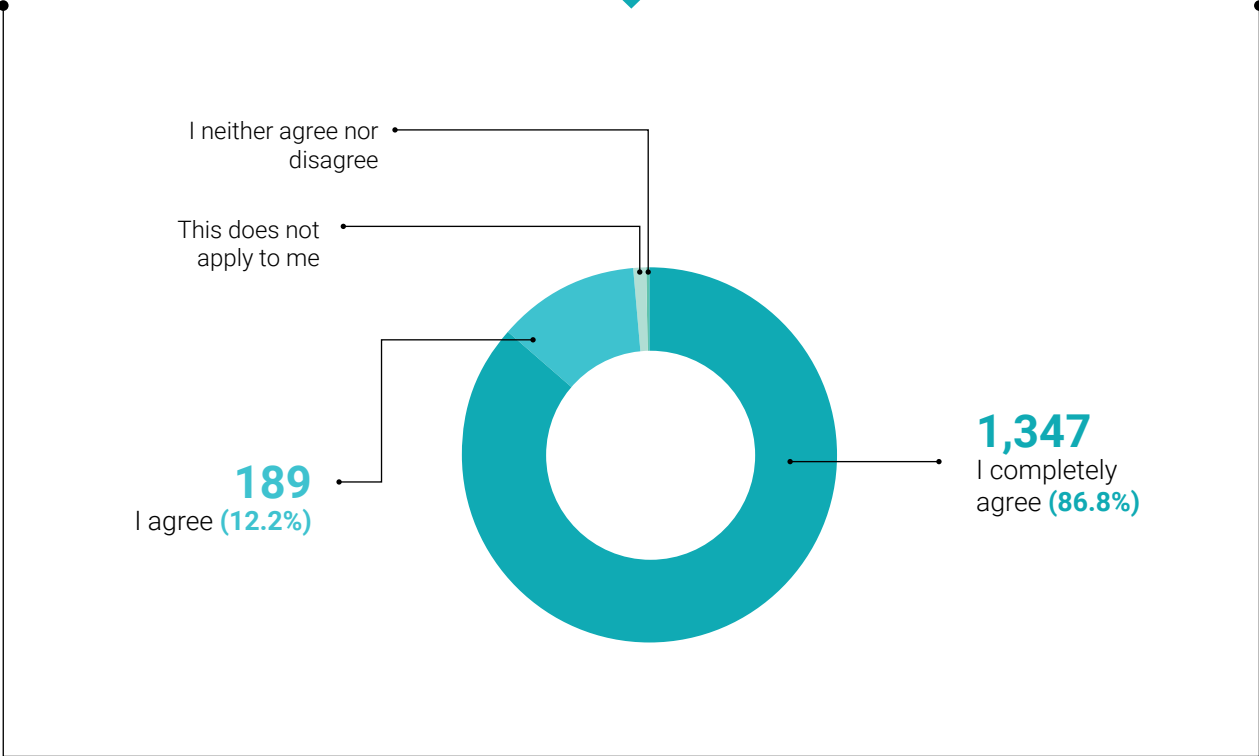
705

Participants in competitions events



Survey Results

'I have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPD in my personal or professional life' (1,551 responses from trainees of all courses)



Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders

“WPDI is one of the strongest and most visible peacebuilding partners at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. The level of commitment to championing peace and peaceful coexistence in schools and respective communities is commendable.”

Emmanuel Turyangyenda,
Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Uganda



“The approach that WPDI has used to support our persons of concern (POCs) is very excellent and I encourage other partners to learn from it. I can assure you that when you move in the settlement and host communities, the impact of WPDI’s intervention is easily seen. Their projects are visible with the presence of sign posts and testimonies from the beneficiaries are so touching that it makes you feel that some good intervention has been in place. I have been involved in most of WPDI activities because they work together with stakeholders and this is what I want to encourage other partners to follow so that when your donors come in your absence, as UNHCR and a key partner in the settlement we have some good stories to tell them.”

Adori Peter,
Livelihood Associate, UNHCR, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda





PEACE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES AT THE KINYANDONGO REFUGEE SETTLEMENT TO PROMOTE:

- PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE
- RECONCILIATION
- MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
- TOLERANCE

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Vectors of Change

Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots

Since 2017, WPDI trained and certified 31 Lead Youth Peacemakers who are now actively involved in promoting peacebuilding initiatives and Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) within the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement (KRS) and surrounding host community. These dedicated individuals have been instrumental in driving various impactful activities aimed at fostering peace and social cohesion. The Youth Peacemakers are supported by 174 local youths, equipped with essential skills to amplify our work.

12,133 Individuals reached by Lead Peacemakers

Lead Youth Peacemakers

31

Local Youth Peacemakers

174

Total Youth Peacemakers

205

In primary and secondary schools, within the settlement and surrounding host community, the Youth Peacemakers have been conducting CRE training, reaching 26 primary schools and 15 secondary schools. The feedback from school management authorities, parents, teachers associations, and learners themselves underscores the positive impact of these initiatives. Notably, there has been improvement in discipline, attitudes, and academic performance among learners, accompanied by an increase in enrollment. Besides the pupils and students, our Youth Peacemakers also train teachers and school staff which contributes to strengthening their professional development and to increasing the sustainability of the program by ensuring that such key stakeholders of the school community have the capacity to maintain the momentum created by WPDI even after the end of our intervention. In addition to their work in the classroom, Peacemakers are also leading advocacy campaigns across and around our partner schools, with the objective of promoting values of peace and human rights, including the rights of female children. These efforts have led to increased awareness,

reduced school dropout rates, and improved conflict resolution mechanisms within schools.

Weekly Cluster-level community dialogue meetings facilitated by the Youth Peacemakers have been instrumental in reducing violence incidents and strengthening mediation efforts in the Kiryandongo community.

To further amplify their outreach, Peacemakers conduct live radio talk shows, engaging with remote community members to raise awareness about peacebuilding and promote peaceful co-existence. The positive response received, including active calls and inquiries about WPDI programs, underscores the effectiveness of these communication channels.

Overall, the collective efforts of WPDI and its Youth Peacemakers have significantly contributed to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and community empowerment in Kiryandongo. Through ongoing dedication and collaboration, WPDI remains committed to fostering sustainable socio-economic development and peace within the region.



Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity



17,475 Total beneficiaries of the CLC

Visitors and computer users

1,860

Trainees from our courses

1,897

Cinema for Peace participants

4,145

Advocacy events reach

5,000

Peace Through Sports participants

1,805

Health & Wellbeing beneficiaries

2,768

The Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement Community Learning Center (CLC), situated along Camp Road, Cluster 'P', Kiryandongo District in the Midwest of Uganda, welcomes an average of 100 daily visitors, including representatives from camp management, Bweyale Town Council, Kiryandongo District Local Government, and beyond.

The center serves as a focal point for planned WPD Uganda program activities. These encompass certified short courses in Conflict Resolution, Special Human Rights, ICT, Business and Entrepreneurship, Arts and Crafts/Tailoring, Sexual Reproductive Health, Trauma Healing, and Peace through Sports. The facility also

hosts various meetings, dialogue sessions, advocacy campaigns, peace engagement day celebrations, Cinema for Peace indoor screenings, while also housing a reading corner library and a playground for children. The serene and peaceful environment at the CLC attracts community members who come to perceive it as a home away from home. Noteworthy events like the Run for Peace Marathon commence and conclude at the CLC. Additionally, the center hosts significant occasions such as Trade shows and Farmer Field Days exhibitions. Here, beneficiaries showcase their products through exhibitions, demonstrations, and sales, as well as celebrate graduations.



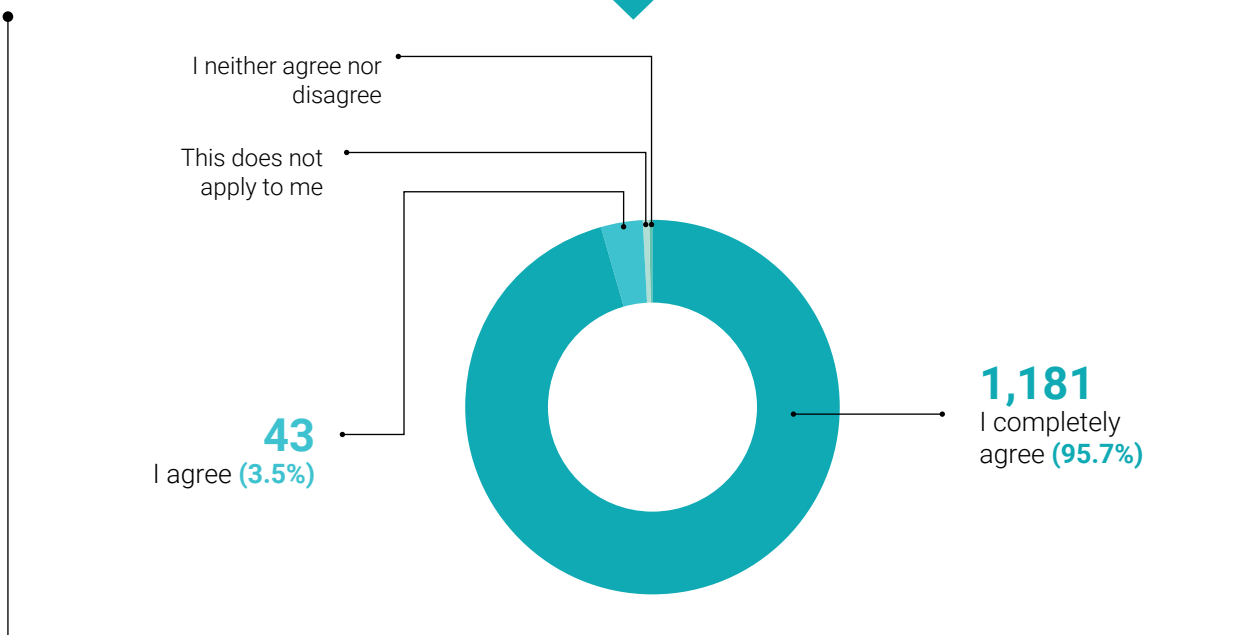


Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment

Based on our principles of grassroots empowerment and local implementation, our teams and youth leaders are supported in efforts to mediate conflicts, advocate for peace and resilience, and teach conflict resolution skills to community members at large, including local leaders and 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.

In addition to the very positive result in terms of turn out, it is important to stress the outcome of the program on the very lives of the participants, which we assess through post-training questionnaires that we circulate among beneficiaries of all the training courses that we deliver in the area of peace education, conflict resolution skills and human rights, including at the CLC, at the community level with local leaders and at schools with learners and teachers. In 2023, we conducted a survey among 1,234 former Peace Education / Conflict Resolution trainees in Kiryandongo. 99% of them declared that they had used their skills in their daily or professional lives, directly testifying to the relevance and effectiveness of the program. In addition, we sought to measure whether the trainees had appropriated the program, inquiring on different potential outcomes of the program in their lives. 94% of the respondents declared that they had both applied their skills and recommended the program to others, and, among them, 24% maintained regular contact with former course-mates, which can be considered a strong level of appropriation achieved by WPDI in this area.

I have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in my personal or professional life' (1,234 responses from participants in our peace & conflict resolution education programs in and around Kiryandongo)



Based on the feedback received from participants in the Conflict Resolution Education program at WPDI, and an analysis of more than 1,200 individual responses, the following key themes have emerged:



Skill Acquisition: Many participants reported gaining new skills that they have been able to apply outside of the context of WPDI (see chart above).



Personal Development: Participants noted an improvement in their self-esteem, emotional control, and ability to compromise. They also reported becoming more self-reliant and motivated.



Social Impact: The training seems to have fostered a sense of community among participants. They reported making friends and becoming respected figures in their communities. Some even mentioned becoming peace ambassadors.



Conflict Resolution: Participants reported a better understanding of conflict, its types, and how to resolve it. They also mentioned learning about servant leadership and how to communicate effectively in conflict situations.



Positive Attitude: Many participants expressed a positive attitude towards the training, describing it as life-changing, enjoyable, and engaging. They appreciated the quality of the training content and the trainers.



Educational Advancement: Some participants mentioned that the training and the certificate they received helped them secure jobs or further their education.

Overall, the training appears to have had a profound impact on the participants' lives, equipping them with valuable skills, fostering personal growth, and promoting peace and conflict resolution in their communities.

Mediation Among Community Members

4,840 Total participants in community level peacebuilding

Community Dialogues held

46

Participants in Dialogues

4,600

Local Leaders Trained

240

Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

The weekly community dialogue meetings of WPDI in the Kiryandongo area have become a cornerstone for fostering enduring peace within the refugee communities. These gatherings serve as dynamic platforms, empowering community leaders and members from both refugee and host communities with essential conflict resolution skills. The constructive engagement fostered by these meetings has established robust conflict prevention mechanisms and contributed to a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence across the area.

The impact of these community dialogue meetings is evident, with a notable reduction in violence incidents within the refugee Clusters. Open discussions and facilitated dialogues have addressed issues ranging from child rights abuse to tribal tensions, resulting in collaborative resolutions that promote social harmony and understanding. The engagement of stakeholders, including community leaders, government authorities, and law enforcement

agencies, underscores the collective commitment to building a peaceful and inclusive society.

Feedback from the community highlights the transformative impact of these dialogue sessions. Participants report increased awareness of their rights, improved conflict management skills, and a heightened sense of responsibility towards fostering peace within their communities. Moreover, the ripple effects of these meetings extend beyond the immediate setting, enhancing social cohesion and stability within the Kiryandongo area.

In conclusion, the weekly community dialogue meetings have emerged as catalysts for positive change, driving tangible improvements in inter-community relations and conflict resolution efforts. Moving forward, it is imperative to sustain and amplify these initiatives to ensure continued progress towards a more peaceful and inclusive society in Kiryandongo and beyond.



“The community dialogue meetings have helped many women to become emotionally strong in their households. The information shared has given hope to women and I am a living testimony in my community. I am strong today because of the useful messages I took from the dialogue meetings and I now support other vulnerable women in conflict. Long live WPDI and thank you WPDI!”

Alimocan Deborah,
Community mobilizer living in Cluster K





“The WPDI community dialogues are very powerful and bring healing to the soul. Mentally I have gone through challenges and when I started attending this dialogue meeting it transformed my thinking and way of life. I am an agent of change and I promote peace in my community. Thank you WPDI.”

Muna Abdul Saki,
Women elder living in Cluster C



“Building peace requires the continuous sensitization of community members and WPDI has been at the center of creating durable and lasting solutions together with local leaders in the refugee settlement. I am confident and empowered as a woman leader and we appreciate the work of WPDI. Thank you for standing with refugees.”

Angee Babra Obalim,
Woman Cluster Leader





Case Study: Facilitating Peaceful Resolution in Cluster G

September 20, 2023

Key Details

- Topic of Community Dialogue: Land disputes, human rights
- Number of Follow-up Dialogues: Four successful sessions
- Number of Participants: 89
- Youth Peacemaker who facilitated the event: Rajab Said Emad

Background

In 2023, a land conflict within Cluster G of the refugee community in Kiryandongo escalated to a crisis level due to unfettered self-interest and a lack of understanding regarding land rights and usage. This escalation led to hate speech, division, and ethnic hostility, severely impacting farming activities and livelihoods.

Intervention

Seeking assistance from a third-party, the two affected villages turned to the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative for support in resolving the conflict. The WPDI's peacemakers organized a mediation process and facilitated meetings among the two groups. This initiative aimed to mitigate the land conflict and reduce ethnic tensions and guide the community towards forgiveness, fostering an environment conducive to peacemaking and harmonious coexistence.

Resolutions Agreed On

- The land is government-owned and should be shared equally for farming purposes.
- Community members must show respect for one another.

- Community leaders and police will continue sensitizing members on land rights as refugees.

Testimonials

Stakeholder Feedback: *"WPDI has been instrumental in helping communities embrace nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts and promoting peace. We commend their efforts in fostering tolerant, peaceful communities."*

Community Member Testimonial: *"The WPDI community dialogue meetings have significantly impacted the refugees and host communities by strengthening the capacity of community leaders to address conflicts amicably. We appreciate WPDI's intervention in championing peace and sustainable development."*

Youth Peacemaker Perspective: *"The community dialogue meeting on land disputes was one of the most impactful gatherings involving refugee and host community members. Achieving a peaceful reconciliation through facilitative skills was my greatest achievement for 2023. Collaboration with community leaders and stakeholders is essential for meaningful dialogue."*

This case study exemplifies WPDI's approach to conducting community dialogues, showcasing the organization's commitment to fostering peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected areas. Through facilitated discussions and collaborative efforts, WPDI aims to build resilient, harmonious communities in Kiryandongo and beyond.



Community Leaders Training

The training program of community leaders is a key element in our grassroots peacebuilding strategy as it aims to strengthen the follow-up of community dialogues, notably to enhance the knowledge and understanding of community leaders in conflict management and peacebuilding processes. It also boosts their confidence in handling and addressing conflicts in both refugee and host communities. In 2023, 240 community leaders followed the training program which consisted of 12 sessions, each designed to help participants think through the concept of conflict and enhance their conflict resolution skills.

The sessions cover the following topics:

<p>Introduction to Conflict:</p> <p>Overview of conflict types, characteristics, sources, approaches, and phases</p>	<p>Communication and Active Listening:</p> <p>Techniques to improve understanding and resolution of conflicts</p>	<p>Negotiation, Perception, and Emotion:</p> <p>Strategies to increase knowledge in conflict resolution</p>	<p>Understanding Violence:</p> <p>Introduction to different types and forms of violence</p>
<p>Peace Mediation:</p> <p>Constructive methods for conducting mediation, reinforcing roles, and strengthening techniques</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity:</p> <p>Embracing diverse cultures and ideas to promote peace</p>	<p>Peacebuilding Processes:</p> <p>Reinforcement of peacebuilding strategies</p>	<p>Servant Leadership:</p> <p>Demonstrating servant leadership to support leaders in their roles within the refugee settlement</p>



“Thanks to the Conflict Resolution training, I have been able to gain valuable skills to navigate conflicts constructively and I feel more committed to helping build a harmonious environment. I am forever grateful to WPDI for empowering me to handle conflicts peacefully and make my community a better place for everyone.”

Emmanuel Okello,
Local leader in Cluster H



“The transformation I have experienced in my own life because of the training in Conflict Resolution Education has been mirrored in my community. We are now more united, compassionate and willing to work together to overcome challenges and this has promoted a culture of peace and understanding making our community to become a safe haven where individuals feel heard, valued and supported regardless of their differences.”

Amito Susan,
Refugee Welfare Council's (RWC11),
living in Cluster B





"I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the impact of Conflict Resolution training on me and my entire community. In the past, our disputes often escalated and caused lasting enmity among neighbors. However, we have developed a shared language to address our differences constructively with the knowledge and skills gained and this has instilled a sense of responsibility in each of us to contribute positively to our community's wellbeing."

Patrick Wabwire,
Leader from Gasper



Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community

9,663 Total participants in peacebuilding at the CLC

Conflict Resolution Education trainees

518

Participants in Cinema for Peace

4,145

Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns

5,000

Creating Access to Skills at the Community Learning Center

The Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) and special Human Rights training at the Community Learning Center (CLC), have significantly enhanced knowledge of applied conflict resolution and management within the community, reaching 518 trainees in 2023. Trained youths now exhibit increased employability in

community-related roles, contributing to a reduction in conflict incidents. The program has also fostered peaceful coexistence among community members. Feedback from beneficiaries highlights their strengthened ability to manage and successfully mediate conflicts.

Cinema for Peace

The Cinema for Peace program in the settlement and host community plays a vital role in resolving conflicts by bringing together different factions, particularly youth and children. Children participate in drawing competitions inspired by movie themes, youth provide feedback through evaluation forms, and adults engage in meaningful debates and discussions after movie screenings. This initiative fosters unity and understanding among different groups within the community. In communities grappling with conflict and armed violence, many minds may remain closed to ideas of reconciliation, tolerance, and forgiveness. A medium is often needed to engage and provoke individuals to confront the complexities of their experiences with conflict and violence, encouraging them to envision peace even in challenging situations. Cinema possesses a remarkable ability to engage audiences and present characters and stories that transform perceptions of people and events, shaping perspectives on the past,

present, and future. Based on a cultural medium, Cinema for Peace harnesses this power to open minds and initiate conversations to disseminate a culture of peace and reconciliation. In this light, a notable comparative advantage of the program is that by using a medium like cinema, WPDI is able to sensitize a significant number of beneficiaries in the span of a year, which was illustrated again in 2023 with the participation of 4,145 individuals, mostly children and youths.

The program is slowly engaging in efforts towards reconciliation between the two rival tribes, the Nuers and Dinkas of South Sudan, by creating an environment where all tribes can meet and interact for a good cause. Additionally, we have positively impacted the lives of people in the settlement and host community. The initiative has seen a growing demand in schools and communities, indicating its expanding influence and effectiveness.

Cinema for Peace Town Hall screenings

At the end of every year, our Cinema for Peace initiative holds a big town hall screening that targets over 100 participants with a main objective of bridging a gap between youths, adults and their community leaders. This has enabled meaningful discussions at the end of the sessions on subjects such as reconciliation and inclusion of all parties in order to achieve a common goal.

“I have developed a positive attitude to forgive and forget in order to move on from my past that was holding me back.”

Cinema for Peace participant



“The inclusiveness of both host communities and refugees in these sessions has led to behavioral change within our community. We can tolerate and work together in harmony.”

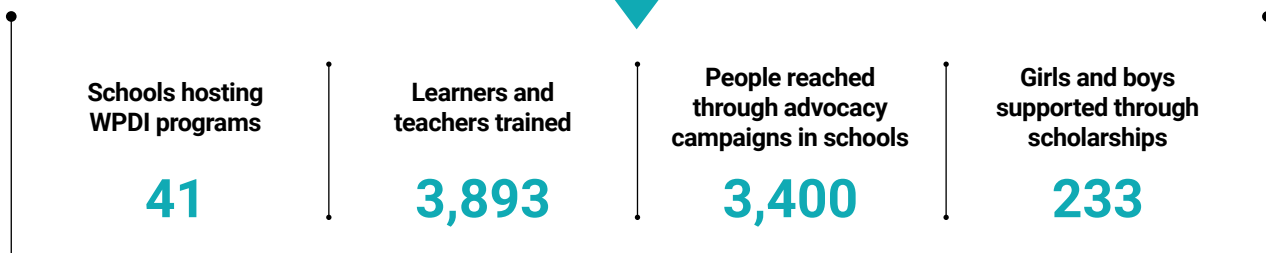
Okidi Tom,
a community-based officer from Bweyale town council, Kiryandongo district



Bringing Skills and Values to Schools



7,526 Total participants in school-based peacebuilding



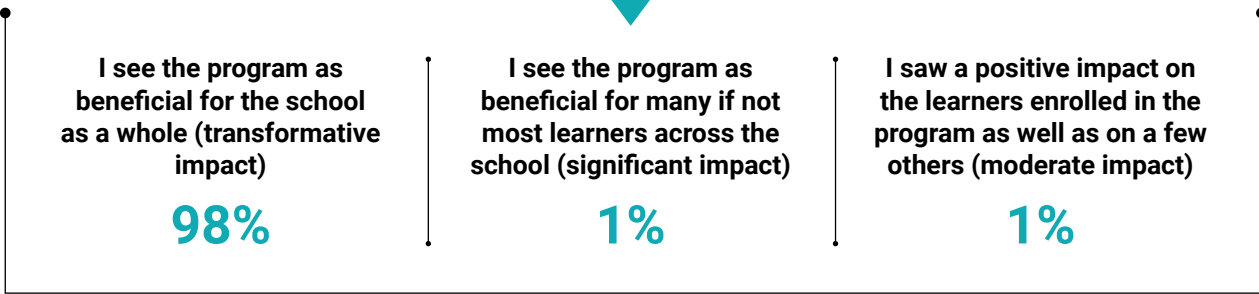
In 2023, WPDI maintained its commitment to nurturing a culture of peace, reconciliation, and dialogue among young learners, fostering a harmonious environment characterized by reduced conflicts and enhanced discipline within schools. Our efforts in schools have yielded tangible results that were confirmed by the feedback we received from educators on the outcomes that they could observe. Trained students interested in impacting their schools with their newfound CRE knowledge are supported to create Peace Clubs. Within these clubs, they convene and address ongoing issues within their schools and come up with solutions. They also brainstorm on campaign ideas.

Besides the very significant impact of the program that we have been able to implement in 41 schools, reaching out to 3,643 learners and 250 teachers, the quantitative impact of WPDI’s Conflict Resolution Education program promises not only that future citizens are being prepared for their

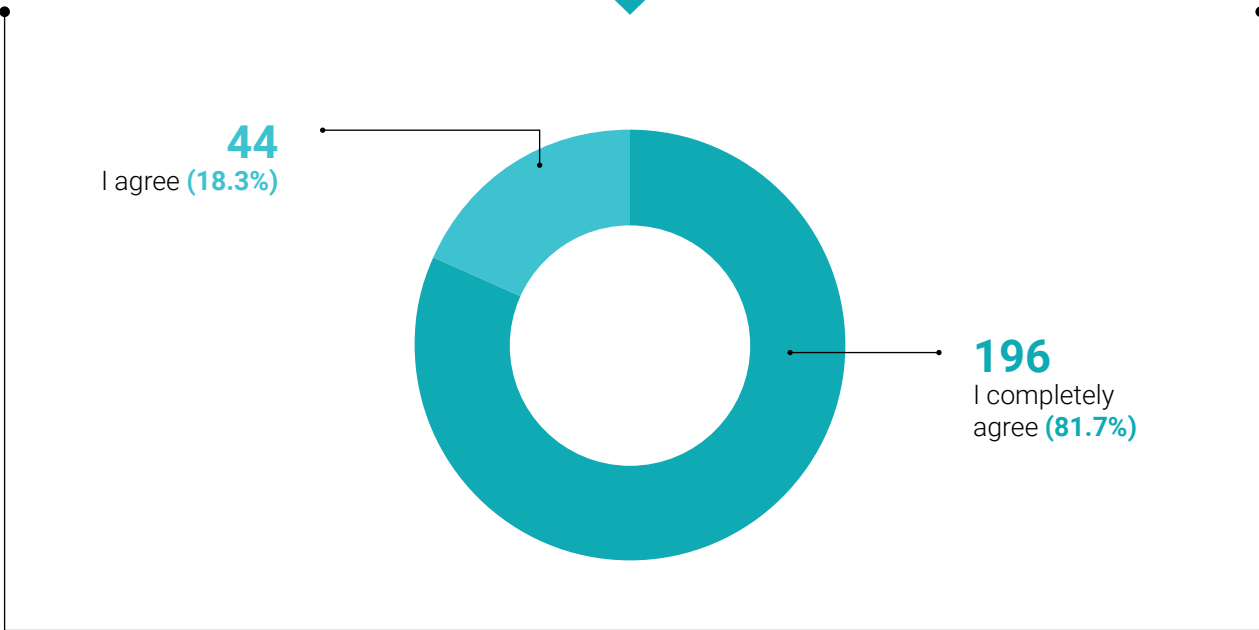
future responsibilities, but also that the present is being served through the positive outcomes that the project generates in the daily lives of the partner schools and the surrounding communities. To assess the outcomes of its Conflict Resolution Education program, WPDI conducts surveys among teachers, administrators and parents of our partner schools. In a survey conducted in 2023 within school communities of Kiryandongo where WPDI runs peace education programs, 240 educators at 12 schools provided feedback on these activities. 100% 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’. 100% 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’. 100% of them agreed that ‘the Peace Education program of WPDI helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school’.



“How do you see the impact of WPDI’s program on your school?”



“The Peace Education program of WPDI helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school” (240 responses from teachers and school staff)



Overall, the program was praised by teachers and school staff for improving pupils’ performance and transforming learners, teachers, and the community. It was recognized for fostering peace, combating school violence, and providing practical conflict management tools. Stakeholders advocated for the program’s expansion to all pupils of their schools and called for more training sessions and refresher courses. They also suggested outreach programs for neighboring communities, school dropouts, and individuals struggling with drug addiction. They suggested involving all teachers in the program

and extending it to senior community leaders, headteachers, and school management committees. Proposals were made to create more clubs, workshops, and training centers, and to increase community involvement through various activities. Stakeholders also recommended extending the program to school debates, competitions, and music and drama events. In conclusion, the feedback highlighted a consensus on the need for continuous training, community involvement, and innovative approaches to enhance the program’s effectiveness and reach.

Conflict Resolution in Primary Schools

Our Peace Education program implemented in 26 primary schools has significantly empowered learners by providing them with the understanding of conflict and peace, along with the essential tools to effectively address conflicts and actively promote peace.



"I found this training to be exceptionally beneficial as it taught me to embrace qualities such as calmness, respect, care, and peacefulness. This has not only contributed to my improved discipline but has also positively impacted my academic performance. Grateful for the experience, thank you WPDI."

Ayuen Alice Maluak,
Bidong Primary School



"This training has instilled in me a love for peace, making me one of the top pupils in my school. I am proud to be a peace ambassador thanks to this invaluable experience."

Chol Malong Choul,
Can-rom Primary School



"I want to be the light that shines brightest in my community because peace is very important in our life. The training has given me peace in my heart and I help my peers to resolve conflict and promote peace."

Alanyo Mary Josephine,
Bidong Primary School



Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools

Our Peace Education program implemented across 15 secondary schools has had a profound impact on learners, empowering them with the understanding of conflict and peace. Equipped with essential tools, students are now better equipped to address conflicts and actively promote peace within their school environments.



"The training has given me more confidence in class and I can use the skills in resolving conflict at school and my community. Thank you WPDI."

Adoch Mercy,
Blessed Mother Theresa College



"I learned a lot about peace and conflict resolution. I love peace more than anything in my life and I will use the knowledge to promote peace in my community as well. Thank You WPDI."

Mugume Derrick,
Student trainee



"The training has increased my self-esteem and I can relate well with my peers. The most interesting part of this training was peer mediation and these skills will help me help other peers in my community."

Mungucwii Annet,
Secondary school student



Providing Scholarship for 165 Schoolgirls

The scholarship program funded by WPDI has led to increased enrollment and retention of girls in school. This support has empowered them to advocate for themselves regarding issues affecting their lives. As a result, some of these girls have attained leadership positions and assumed leadership roles in both their schools and the community. Additionally, there has been a noticeable reduction in absenteeism among school-going girls. The literacy levels of these girls have also improved significantly through regular training and mentorship programs organized at schools.

Training Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

Disseminating a culture of peace in schools can be effective and meaningful only if the whole school community is involved in the effort to establish an enabling environment for the practice of values, attitudes, and behaviors conducive to improved relations among all the stakeholders of the school. To this effect, training teachers, staff and other adults is a key dimension of our program for conflict resolution, which, as indicated above, is also critical to ensure that the results of WPDI's intervention are going to be sustainable and durable. In this perspective, the 250 teachers and educators who participated in the program in 2023 have represented a significant contribution to the objectives of WPDI in their schools, including in terms of improving discipline, addressing issues such as bullying, and enhancing academic achievements.



"The training was powerful and interactive. I learned about conflict resolution, which will go a long way to addressing conflicts in schools and my community. Thank you, WPDI."

Ayesiga Recheal Mary,
Teacher at Bidong Primary School



"I gained new skills in peacebuilding and conflict management. I will integrate these skills and knowledge into my routine training plan to champion inclusive transformative leadership and constructive approaches in conflict management. Thank you, WPDI."

Okello Thomas,
Teacher at Arnold Primary School



"The training in Conflict Resolution Education by WPDI has significantly added value to my career credentials and deepened my understanding of peacebuilding processes that I will use to make the school and my community a better place to live."

Etyang Joselyne Atwani,
Head Teacher Bidong Primary School





Case Study: Bidong Primary School, a Government-Aided Mixed Day Primary School

Ongoing Issue:

The school was facing a high rate of dropouts among its pupils.

Intervention:

To address the dropout issue, advocacy efforts were implemented through Peace Clubs, Youth Peacemakers, and education partners. Pupils were informed about the importance of education and the potential consequences of dropping out. The initiatives emphasized interventions such as mentorship programs and flexible learning schedules to ensure pupil retention.

Feedback from the Headteacher:

"The implementation of Peace Education in schools played a pivotal role in addressing individual challenges and reigniting the interest of pupils who had previously dropped out. The program provided essential support for a successful return to school. Gratitude to WPDI for the impactful work." Josephine Atawi, Headteacher, Bidong Primary School

Feedback from a Youth Peacemaker:

"The collaborative efforts of WPDI, school management committees, parents' teacher association, local leaders, and different education partners and families have made it possible to address the various underlying causes of school dropout, fostering a peaceful environment conducive to the pupils' return to school." Emad Rajab, Peacemaker from WPDI, Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement



Livelihood: Opportunities for Socio- Economic Empowerment

WPDI provides beneficiaries with access to vocational skills and entrepreneurial opportunities. Firstly, the certified courses we offer for free in ICT, Entrepreneurship, and Arts and Crafts can be used by participants to boost their career. They can also decide to start a business, a life-changing endeavor in which we assist a selection of our trainees. To this effect, we hold Business Plan Competitions (BPC) that serve to identify promising projects that we fund and 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 1,379 individuals who took vocational courses.

Our Business Plan Competition offers our Business graduates opportunities to win capital start-up grants to develop a business, resulting in the launch of 30 new businesses in 2023. By the end of the year, the number of businesses incubated by WPDI reached a total of 156, which have generated 540 jobs and benefits for 2,100 persons in the households of managers and employees. New entrepreneurs trained by WPDI are currently implementing their business projects in a sustainable manner. Monitoring visits indicated that the groups' projects align with WPDI objectives, showing promise and being on track. We are particularly proud of the Youth Peacemakers who, in addition to their peacebuilding work, have been successfully implementing 16 businesses of their own. Youth testimonials reveal that their lives have been transformed thanks to the launch of these projects.

Capacity Building Courses

1,379 Total trainees in vocational courses

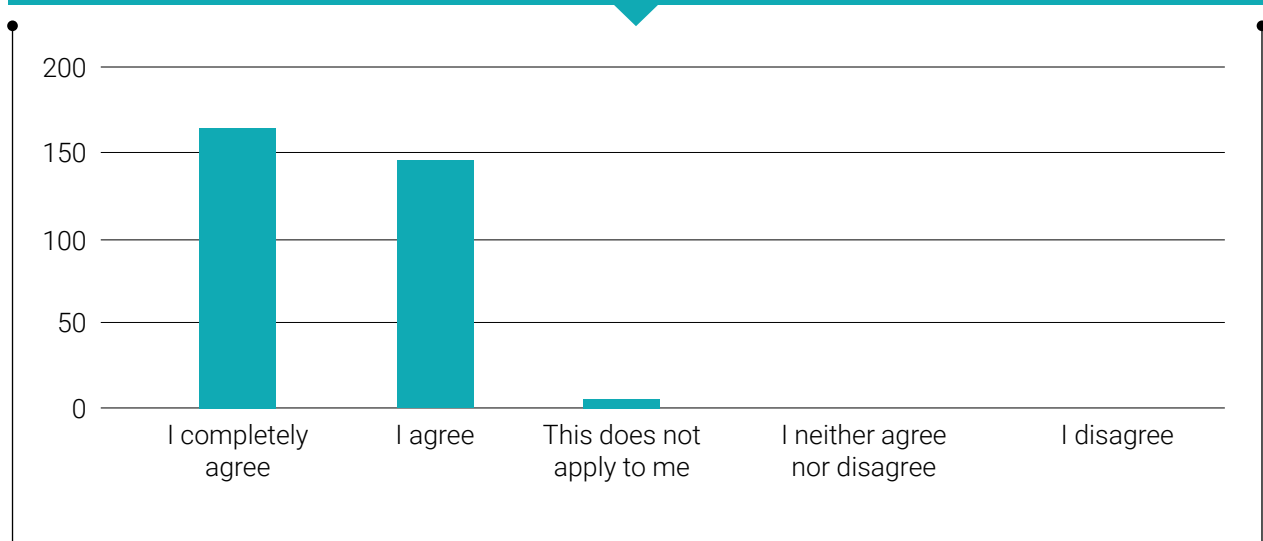


The vocational courses offered by WPDI in ICT, Entrepreneurship and Arts and Crafts have continued to provide residents of the Settlement as well as Ugandan nationals from neighboring communities with free access to skills that they can directly use to improve their economic prospects. Indeed, while some of them will join our business incubation program, many others do use their certified skills as a means to better their employability in general.

The impact of the vocational training program on the beneficiaries can be observed through the surveys that we conduct each year among them six months after courses are completed. In 2023, 930 former trainees of Uganda responded to our questionnaire, 99% of whom declared that they

had used their skills in their daily or professional lives. 74% of them reported experiencing positive economic outcomes, with 19% stating 'I found a job', 26% stating 'My income increased', and 28% stating 'I created a business'. It should be noted that 574 or 62% of them who had a history of unemployment reported positive career outcomes with 23% stating 'I found a job', 19% stating 'My income increased', and 37% stating 'I created a business'. Noting that 95% had both applied their skills and recommended the program to others, and that, among them, 38% maintained regular contact with former course-mates, we can conclude that the program had a very strong level of appropriation among beneficiaries in this area.

I have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in my personal or professional life' - 317 responses from vocational trainees, Kiryandongo (2023)



Information and Communication Technologies

The ICT certified basic, intermediate, and advanced level short courses, offered at the CLC have empowered 486 beneficiaries with knowledge and skills. This has significantly enhanced the use of technology for communication among graduates, leading to positive changes in their lives. Participants can now actively engage in modern communication, exchange ideas, and partake in online studies, accessing information essential for personal development. Through WPDI's partnership with Princeton University, some refugee youths are pursuing online courses in the Global History Lab Cohort enrolled in 2022. A recent survey of former trainees revealed that ICT training increased employability, income, and facilitated some to open businesses or pursue further studies using our certificates.

One year after a much-anticipated launch, 143 trainees have successfully completed their courses in the IT Lab



- ICT: 51 trainees
- Business and Entrepreneurship: 48 trainees
- Conflict Resolution Education: 44 trainees

Over the past year, we expanded our ICT offerings by establishing an IT Lab in the Refugee Settlement of Kiryandongo. These additions have broadened our reach, engaging more users and creating additional avenues for personal development. This initiative, made possible through collaboration with MIT ReACT and the R2 Digital Agency, created a unique e-learning platform funded by the Western Union Foundation.

The IT Lab offers flexible and reliable training, enabling individuals to access online courses independently. An extension of our Community Learning Center in Kiryandongo, equipped with 25 laptops, serves as the hub for this initiative.

The e-learning platform, accessible at itlab-uganda.wpdi.org, provides free registration for trainees, offering courses in Conflict Resolution Education, Business & Entrepreneurship, and ICT at Basic, Intermediate, or Advanced levels. Materials are presented in video and PDF formats, with quizzes and a final test leading to certification.

To cater to varying preferences, modules are available both online and offline. The offline version accommodates those less comfortable with computers or preferring a classroom experience with in-person interaction. Indeed, support is available both in-person, where WPDI staff guide trainees through content, and self-paced, allowing independent learning.



“Online courses were very convenient. It is the self-paced learning that I enjoyed as I was able to navigate through the content at my own speed and gained more knowledge in conflict management without stepping in a classroom. I have taken my time to understand the full course, topic by topic, so as to replicate it out in my community.

Thanks WPDI for such a wonderful initiative we can now access all the courses anywhere at our fingertips.”

Debele Cyrus,
Trainee from Gulu



“I am so grateful that WPDI uploaded their training sessions online. I have enjoyed attending the sessions with guidance from Elias (ICT trainer). At first, I found it hard to register and log in since it was my first time however, I received assistance, and logged in. Currently I have completed the business basic level training and obtained my certificate. I intend to resume at an intermediate level. I am now better equipped with the knowledge and skills to operate a business.”

Lagu James,
a South Sudanese aged 27 years from cluster K in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement



Arts and Crafts

Trainees express enthusiasm for the training sessions at the CLC, appreciating the free opportunities that provide them with a sense of livelihood and self-reliance through marketing their finished products. Tailoring courses, in particular, have been widely embraced, with a substantial number of trainees registered and actively committed to the training sessions.

The course in Arts and Crafts has continued to demonstrate that the Community Learning Center (CLC) is a vibrant hub of activity, fostering unity and social transformation through its practical, hands-on vocational skills training, particularly in tailoring and garment construction, which not only equips individuals with marketable skills but also promotes collaboration among community members. The

CLC’s commitment extends beyond the classroom, empowering youth, women, and other interested individuals. This is something that we have sought to assess by investigating whether trainees had appropriated the program and querying them on different potential outcomes of the program in their lives. 100% of the 50 respondents declared that they had both applied their skills and recommended the program to others, and, among them, 10% maintained regular contact with former course-mates, which can be considered a significant level of appropriation achieved by WPDI in this area. In essence, the course has, through the 290 individuals trained in 2023, served as a platform for disseminating local craftsmanship, thereby contributing to cultural education and community empowerment within and around the Settlement.



Impact Story: Interview with Aber Joarea Keggi

What is your background?

"My name is Aber Joarea Keggi, I am 21 years old and currently living in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. I come from a family of six, consisting of two boys and four girls, and I am the second born. After my father's death and with my mother being elderly and weak, my elder brother and I had to assume the responsibility of taking care of our siblings. Due to the ongoing war in South Sudan, I was forced to drop out of school and lost hope for my future."

How did you hear about the program?

"I learned about the program during a community dialogue meeting at Kichwabugingo Trading Center. A youth peacemaker at the meeting informed us about the various programs offered by WPDI."

What were your challenges?

"My primary challenges include taking care of my family and providing for their basic needs in a foreign country where I have no relatives or job opportunities."

How did WPDI help?

"WPDI enrolled me in their tailoring and arts and crafts classes, offering free training. Through this program, I gained numerous new skills and had the opportunity to interact with many people and other trainees from diverse backgrounds. The trainers were friendly and supportive, helping me overcome life's challenges and live a trauma-free life through their counseling and guidance during our sessions."



"The tailoring Arts and Crafts program has significantly impacted my life. It has equipped me with new skills and ideas, allowing me to focus on both the present and the future for a better living. Additionally, I have formed new friendships with people from different communities, and we now live together in harmony, happiness, freedom, and unity. I urge the Arts and Crafts department to continue their support and training, as it is a life-changing activity implemented by WPDI. This program has truly had a positive impact on my life. Thank you."

Stella,
21, a refugee living in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement



"I am very much excited for the opportunity that WPDI gave me to train in the tailoring and cutting garment course offered at the CLC. It was my dream to learn how to sew clothes which I could not afford to pay for the training cost and something my family could not afford but WPDI gave me an opportunity to enroll and learn for free and this supported me so much to build my career in tailoring. I can now sew clothes in Bweyale market for sale which is helping me earn a living from it. Thank you WPDI for building my career."

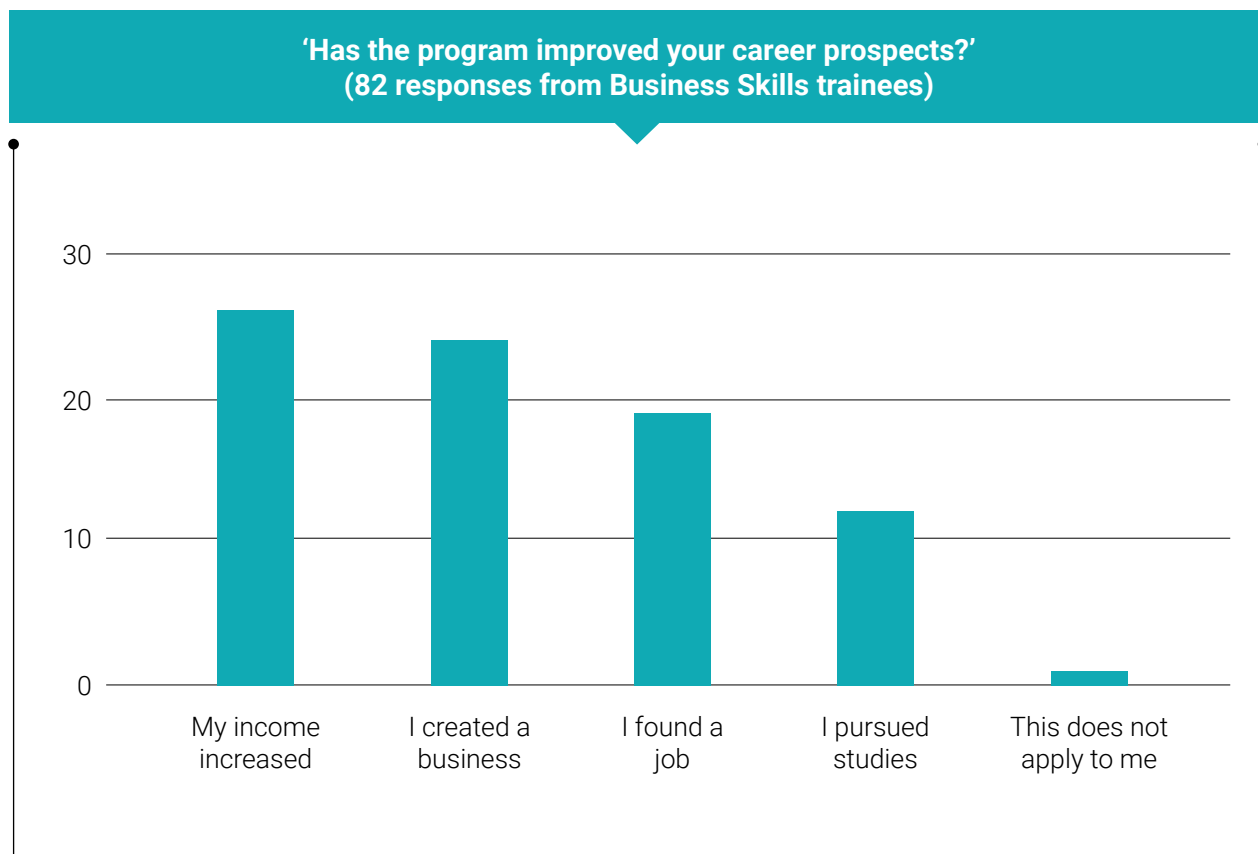
Lamara Prossy Lucy,
Living in the host community





Business and Entrepreneurship

Business skills training sessions have fostered entrepreneurial capacity among beneficiaries, including youth and women, resulting in increased self-reliance and household income. The effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship training program is evident from the annual surveys we carry out among the beneficiaries, six months post completion of their courses. In the year 2023, we received responses from 82 individuals who had undergone our Business and Entrepreneurship training in Kiryandongo. It was heartening to note that all of them reported having applied the skills they acquired in their everyday or professional activities.

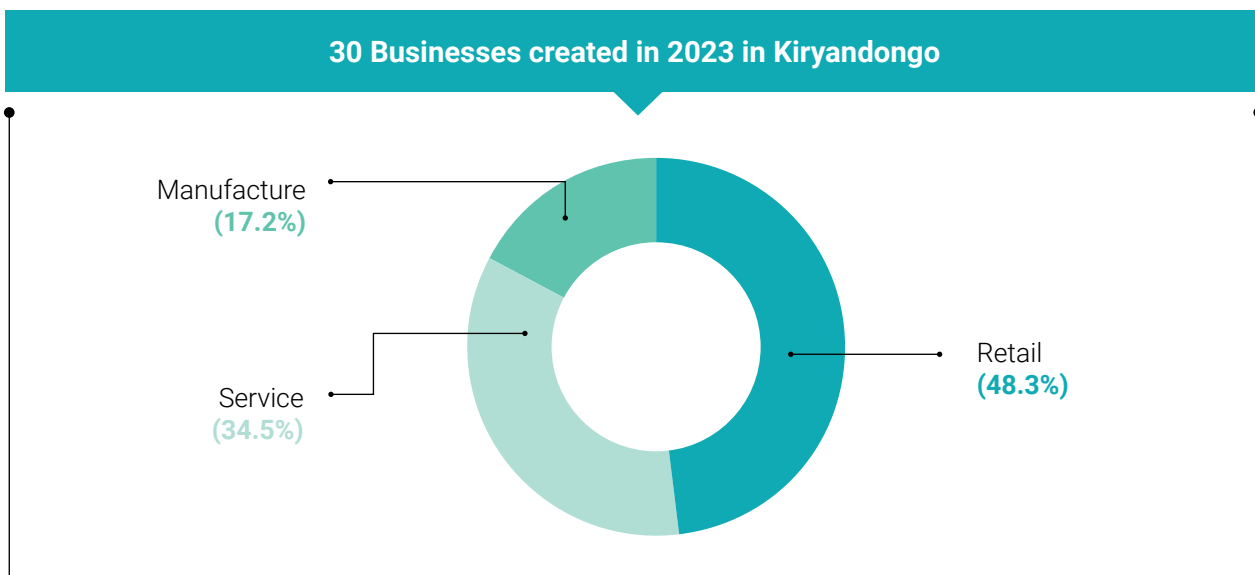


Supporting Income-Generating Projects

SMEs created in 2023	SMEs supported by WPDI in total	Jobs created
30	156	540
Indirect beneficiaries of businesses (families)	Beneficiaries of all SMEs	Businesses launched by vulnerable women in 2023
2,100	2,640	8

In 2023, WPDI continued its mission to empower young men and women in Kiryandongo as entrepreneurs, which positions WPDI as an effective grassroots organization for implementing the Ugandan government's strategic plan, the national youth policy, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since the inception of the program, 176 businesses were launched with WPDI's support. This includes the 30 new income-generating projects launched in 2023. Among the 156 active businesses in 2023, 46% were in retail, 22% in farming, and 19% in service. These businesses have generated 540 jobs and provided indirect revenue to 2,100 beneficiaries within the households of managers and employees.



WPDI and its partners invested \$110,000 in creating 30 new businesses in Kiryandongo. 156 businesses incubated by WPDI have generated total sales of \$700,000, with over \$900,000 invested in their development. The survival rate of these businesses stands at 88%.

These projects also complement the government's strategic plan, supporting citizens and refugees while pursuing the SDGs to make the world a better place. In 2023, WPDI supported the creation of 8 women's social cooperative projects.



Impact story: Elizabeth Yaluak, from Women first group, a business led by 15 women

Name of the business

Our group is called Women First Women's Group, located in Cluster 'N' in the Kiryandongo refugee settlement.

What is their background?

Women first is a group formed in 2022 from Cluster N. The group comprises 15 members all from South Sudan. The main objective of the group formation is to come up with a solution to the pressing needs in their communities in the settlement so that they can become self-reliant. The group was vetted by the oversight committee to be trained by WPDI in 2023. This year the group completed its six months training in June and later wrote its business plan which was screened and approved for support. Currently the group is making one year in existence with the support from WPDI, it is operating an events management social cooperative group project.

How did they hear about the program?

The group heard about the program after attending community dialogues which are usually conducted in the different Clusters. In addition, they also attended the vetting exercise which was conducted previously and they took interest to sell their ideas to the oversight committee on how it addresses the current problems in their communities.

Why did they want to join the program?

The group wanted to join the program following the testimonies heard from previous beneficiaries how the program has transformed their lives. They took interest to follow the same example.

What is their age?

I am 28 years old and a member of Women first women's group.

In our communities there are so many challenges which include:

1. Lack of access to financial support to meet the day-to-day needs
2. Lack of food since what is distributed by the World Food Program is not enough so you have to supplement the little food given to complete the whole month
3. There is also a high level of unemployment among youth who sometimes end up in criminal activities like defilement and theft mostly
4. We also lack enough water in our area which makes life very difficult
5. We have a problem of illiteracy and access to quality education
6. There is poverty among many refugees who can't afford the basic needs

How does WPDI help?

WPDI has helped in so many ways. First of all, we have been able to access information about the available opportunities to receive certain free services like having informal training in business, ICT and CRE which is a great advantage for us the persons of concern. In addition, WPDI has provided some of our children who perform well in school with scholarships which is a big support to give them a chance for them to study again. WPDI has supported young men and women with seed grants after their completion of their training at the CLC so that they can contribute to solving the pressing needs in their communities through implementation of these social cooperative projects.



"I am very happy to share my happiness with WPDI. Now I am so proud to tell you people that through the grants given to us, the groups have bought events management items and equipment. Now school fees are not a problem because we are always making money from the profits we get from the group project. The training has widened my knowledge on wants and needs, this is helping me on what to spend money on as a way of saving.

The training has also empowered me with skills and knowledge in communication and customer care and this knowledge I got I will pass it to other members in my community. Thanks to WPDI.

Women first women's group is one of the groups that was supported in September 2023. After receiving the training from WPDI the group started with group saving among the members while they waited for the grants from WPDI. They also bought two chairs as their capital contribution to start their operation. By September 2023, the group had raised some small savings from their business and group contributions. The group later embarked on adding more equipment that would help in events management. Currently, the group has added up to 200 chairs, music system and one tent. The group also does savings every week on Sundays to accumulate more capital that will support future expansion plans. Aside from the group business, members also operate their own individual self-help projects which adds income to afford basic needs in the households like food, health care, clothing, shelter, among others."





Health and Wellbeing

Peacemakers and other youth beneficiaries have gained essential knowledge and skills for implementing trauma healing and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) awareness activities within the settlement. This has resulted in a noticeable decrease in stigma and discrimination towards trauma survivors in the community. Survivors now enjoy an improved quality of life in terms of safety, reduced violence, daily tasks, and access to financial and medical support compared to the period before WPDI intervention. This progress has further facilitated their integration into the community.

2,768 Total Health & Wellbeing participants

Sexual & Reproductive
Health participants

2,017

Trauma Healing
participants

751

Sexual and Reproductive Health

In Uganda, sexual reproductive health information is paramount, impacting public health, gender equality, and socioeconomic development. Challenges such as high maternal mortality and teenage pregnancies underscore the necessity for comprehensive education. Accurate information empowers individuals to make informed decisions, facilitating responsible family planning and reducing risks. Promoting sexual reproductive health education particularly empowers women, fostering gender equality and dismantling societal barriers. Given Uganda's youthful population, this education is crucial for fostering healthy relationships, preventing infections, and contributing to sustainable development and improved wellbeing.

In light of this, the WPD I SRH program aims to enhance access and utilization of SRH services, including contraception. Additionally, there's a focus on strengthening the capacity of institutions such as schools, Government Health Facilities, and private sector actors to deliver quality Family Planning (FP) and Reproductive Health (RH) services.

At the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, SRH activities are pivotal in addressing the specific needs and challenges encountered by the displaced population. The SRH certified short course offered at CLC has played a significant role in empowering youth to deliver essential services within the

settlement. This empowerment has notably contributed to increased school enrollment post-COVID through the "Go Back to School" campaign. Furthermore, this initiative has resulted in the enhanced delivery of Youth Friendly Services by local health workers. Rachael, a midwife at Nyakadot Health Centre II, emphasized the positive impact of the close collaboration with WPD I: "Our partnership made it easier for us to engage with young people and foster connections between the health facility and the youth."

These activities encompass a wide array of services aimed at promoting reproductive wellbeing. They include access to family planning resources, maternal and antenatal care, prevention and management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and education on sexual health. WPD I frequently collaborates with local health authorities to conduct awareness campaigns, provide contraceptive information, deliver reproductive health education, and offer counseling services. Given the vulnerable nature of the refugee population, with many individuals having experienced trauma and displacement, these efforts in Kiryandongo are vital in ensuring that residents, particularly women and adolescents, are equipped with the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Ultimately, this contributes to the overall wellbeing of the community.



"Participating in the Sexual Reproductive Health training was a game-changer for me. The training sessions fostered an inclusive and supportive environment where diverse perspectives were not only welcomed but celebrated. The emphasis on human rights and the intersectionality of SRH issues provided a holistic understanding of the challenges and opportunities in this field. The testimonies and strategies shared during the training have empowered me to contribute more effectively to community-based initiatives. What sets this training apart is its ability to inspire change not only on an individual level but also within communities, promoting a healthier and more informed approach to sexual and reproductive wellbeing."

Asimwe Immaculate,
Teacher, Ubuntu Model Primary School





“My experience with the Sexual Reproductive Health training was transformative. The comprehensive curriculum covered a wide range of topics, from family planning to gender equality, and the trainers were not only knowledgeable but also passionate about the subject matter. The interactive sessions and case studies made the learning experience engaging and applicable to real-world scenarios. Personally, I’ve seen a positive shift in my approach to reproductive health issues, and the skills gained have been invaluable in my work. I highly recommend this training to anyone looking to deepen their understanding of SRH and make a positive impact in their community.”

Brian Gonzaga,
Staff Global Refugee Initiative



“I appreciate the practical approach of the Sexual Reproductive Health training. It not only educated me about various aspects of reproductive health but also equipped me with tools to make informed decisions for a healthier lifestyle.”

Susan Kuku,
23yrs, SRH Student



Trauma Healing Support

The implementation of trauma healing activities in KRS has been crucial in providing support and aiding the recovery processes of survivors. WPDI's trauma healing initiatives at KRS encompass a variety of approaches, including psychoeducation workshops, art and expressive therapies, group counseling sessions, cognitive-behavioral therapy, narrative exposure therapy, trauma-informed yoga, life skills training, community-building events, awareness sessions, and the establishment of a peer support network.

Uganda has hosted a significant number of refugees, primarily from neighboring countries like South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and

Somalia. Many of these individuals have endured experiences involving violence, displacement, and loss, highlighting the urgent need for trauma healing interventions to bolster their mental health and overall wellbeing. WPDI's Trauma Healing objectives at the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement are specifically tailored to address the unique challenges faced by displaced populations who have undergone various forms of trauma. These objectives are designed to enhance mental health, foster resilience, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of individuals and communities.

In 2023, our key actions for trauma healing included:



Psychosocial Support:

We provided immediate and ongoing psychosocial support to refugees, helping them cope with the emotional and psychological impacts of displacement, loss, and exposure to violence.



Individual Counseling:

We offered individual counseling services tailored to the specific needs and experiences of refugees, enabling them to express their feelings, process trauma, and develop effective coping strategies.



Group Therapy:

We facilitated group therapy sessions, such as "Journey of Life" sessions, creating a supportive environment for refugees to share experiences, validate each other's feelings, and foster a sense of community.



Cultural Sensitivity:

We tailored our trauma healing interventions to be culturally sensitive, recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs within the refugee population. This included providing training and involving cultural leaders in our trauma healing interventions.



Capacity Building:

We enhanced the capabilities of local community leaders, teachers, healthcare workers, and support staff by providing training in basic counseling skills and mental health or psychological first aid.



Child-Focused Interventions:

We implemented specialized trauma healing programs for children to address their distinct needs, especially those who may have experienced violence, loss of family, or displacement.





Women-Focused Support:

We created gender-specific trauma healing initiatives targeting the unique challenges faced by refugee women, including issues such as gender-based violence, maternal health concerns, and the impact of displacement on family dynamics.



Community Engagement:

We engaged the community in designing and implementing our trauma healing programs to ensure cultural appropriateness and responsiveness to the specific needs of the refugee population.



Skills Development:

We provided training and skill development opportunities as part of the healing process, empowering refugees to rebuild their lives and contribute to the economic and social development of the settlement.



Integration with Existing Services:

We integrated our trauma healing interventions with existing health, education, and social services for a comprehensive approach to refugee wellbeing.



Preventative Education:

We offered education and awareness programs on trauma, mental health, and coping mechanisms to empower refugees with knowledge and skills to identify and address their mental health needs.



Referral System:

We established effective referral systems to connect individuals in need of specialized mental health services with appropriate resources, ensuring a continuum of care.

By pursuing these objectives, trauma healing initiatives in KRS will play a pivotal role in fostering resilience, promoting mental health, and supporting the overall recovery and integration of both refugees and host communities.



“For a long time, my joy felt mysterious because of what I went through during the war in South Sudan. The WPDI psychosocial support therapy has helped me to discharge the layer of pain, and as I did, I started rediscovering the simple joys in life. Today, I find happiness in moments that used to terrify me. Healing isn't direct, but it's worth it for the moment of sincere joy. Thank you WPDI for the trauma healing program that has made me rediscover my joy.”

Nyawaraga Rebecca,
Refugee from South Sudan living at the
Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement





"I never imagined I could be a source of support for others who went through similar experiences. Through the trauma healing program at WPDI, I discovered a passion for helping fellow survivors. Being there for others through the WPDI trauma healing group has given my pain a purpose."

Tap Yak Dayiem,
South Sudanese living at the Kiryandongo
Refugee Settlement



"My name is Obale Robert, 30, a Youth Peacemaker at the WPDI Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. Since 2018, I have been on an assignment to guide individuals through the challenging but transformative process of healing from trauma. My own journey into this field started with my personal experience that forever changed my perception on the power of resilience and recovery. As I explore into the field of trauma healing, I became a WPDI certified trainer, mixing my personal perception with evidence-based practices. Every time I facilitate a trauma healing session, I witness the incredible resilience that exists in each participant. It's so exciting to see individuals transform their pain into strength, using their experiences as a promoter for personal growth. Thank you WPDI for empowering me and my fellow youth to become advocates for trauma healing in the community."

Obale Robert,
A Youth Peacemaker at the WPDI Kiryandongo
Refugee Settlement.





Peace Through Sports

The Peace Through Sports program engages 1,650 youths (1,100 males and 550 females), organized into 36 teams (20 male and 16 female) across various age categories. Participants actively engage in classroom sessions, daily training activities, mini-championships, friendly matches, outreaches, competitions, and tournaments at the Community Learning Center (CLC). This program significantly contributes to community mobilization and raises awareness of our initiatives within the settlement.

Youths actively participated in classroom sessions where peacebuilding messages, such as unity, togetherness, and peaceful coexistence, were conveyed. They also engaged in daily training sessions, mini-championships, friendly matches, competitions, and tournaments. The Peace Through Sports program has significantly contributed to mobilizing community members and raising awareness of our programs within the settlement.

The 9th Edition of the Whitaker Peace Cup

One of the major activities this year at the CLC was the 9th Edition of the Whitaker Peace Cup. This tournament is a compelling event that promotes peace, tolerance, and understanding by bringing together people across boundaries, cultures, and religions. Values such as teamwork, fairness, discipline, and respect are universally understood and can advance solidarity and cohesion. The tournament bridges ethnic differences, cultural diversities, and religious divides, fostering inclusiveness for all participants, regardless of age, disability, gender, or nationality. It provides a platform for mental recreation and physical wellbeing.

This year’s event was particularly vibrant and colorful, with minimal emotional conflicts during games. This improvement is attributed to the enrollment of many soccer players in conflict resolution education classes. As a result, many participants have been transformed.

Highlight on a player: Gatdoar Ruot Gatkek, 13 years old

“I am the fourth of nine children born to nationals of South Sudan from Fangak district. I was told by the coaches to join the program, and that’s when I came to the Community Learning Center (CLC). The program has taught me how to live with people from different cultures, regions, and tribes. It has helped me interact and play together as a team. I enjoy playing in competitions and tournaments every time they are organized because I get to meet many people who come to participate and cheer for their teams.”



Peace Engagement Days

These events brought together 4,600 community members from diverse ethnic backgrounds. These gatherings showcased cultural diversity through music, dance, drama, traditional item exhibitions, and shared values. Sporting activities, such as mini-championships, were also part of the events. These activities focused on sports and fostering unity, peace, love, and tolerance among conflicting tribes in the refugee settlement and host community. The events contributed to the happiness and peaceful coexistence of camp residents.

There were 10 Peace Engagement Day celebrations held in the refugee settlement, including:

- International Women’s Day
- World Refugee Day
- Human Rights Day
- Nelson Mandela Day
- 16 Days of Activism
- World AIDS Day
- Day of the African Child
- International Teachers Day

The themes covered during the Peace Engagement Day celebrations include:

- Run for Peace
- Body, Mind, and Health
- Better Together
- Unity in Diversity
- Peace is a Right
- Celebrating Diversity



“As an active youth leader, the Peace Engagement Day celebration is a model of peaceful coexistence for youth in my Cluster. We embrace unity and tolerance as we dance together and help each other release the stress of being a refugee and facing other challenges. Thank you, WPDI, for supporting the youths.”

Poni Grace Alere,
Youth Coordinator, Cluster F, Kiryandongo Settlement



“The Peace Engagement Day celebration is therapy for most of us women in the Kiryandongo settlement. The cultural dances and unity expressed in tolerance and love for each other as refugees set an example for the younger generation to embrace peace. Keep up the good work. Thank you, WPDI.”

Alum Secondina,
Child Protection Committee, Kiryandongo Settlement.”
Adonga Richard Oluka, Cluster S Leader, Kiryandongo Settlement





Conclusion

Conclusion

In 2023, WPDI continued its mission to promote peace and community development within and around Kiryandongo, a context transformed by the influx of new refugees. This unforeseen situation did not catch the WPDI teams off guard, as they have been operating in the area since the inception of KRS in 2017. Moreover, our delivery capacity has been streamlined by the restructuring of our strategic framework into four pillars in 2023 - fostering peace, promoting livelihoods, enhancing mental health, and encouraging sports – which has enhanced our overall coherence and sharpened our focus on our objectives.

The combination of these efforts enabled us to directly reach 27,142 individuals and indirectly impact an additional 10,500, bringing the total number of people touched by our work to 37,642. This broad reach underscores the depth and breadth of our commitment to the KRS community. We achieved these results despite several challenges, including societal stigma surrounding mental health issues, cultural barriers among refugees and host communities, and communication problems due to language diversity. Despite these obstacles, we remained steadfast in our commitment to the community, continually adapting our approach to meet their unique needs. We implemented school-based interventions and utilized art therapy to help refugees process their traumas and build a sense of community belonging, highlighting the importance of intensifying our efforts in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

As we implemented our programs, we also learned valuable lessons that we will incorporate into our actions in the coming years. These included the need to improve community involvement in designing and implementing trauma healing programs, which still face the stigma attached to mental health issues.

Despite these obstacles and because of them, actually, we strongly believe in the importance of reinforcing these programs as they contribute to the resilience of individuals and their communities. Resilience is indeed a key dimension of peace, embodying the capacity of communities to address challenges in an autonomous and sustainable manner. In this light, community dialogues have been instrumental in healing and transforming the lives of many individuals, promoting peace and unity within the community. This rekindling of the community is also central to our livelihoods program and the 176 businesses supported up to 2023. We have been particularly satisfied with the progress of this program not only because it generates direct and indirect benefits for the business owners and their families, but also because each new business demonstrates that dedicated efforts to learn can yield tangible results and that there are indeed dividends of peace.

These dividends are perceived by the communities, as expressed in the very positive feedback we have received from stakeholders, reflecting the transformative impact of the WPDI programs. These community leaders, teachers, students, and individuals from both the refugee and host communities, have expressed their gratitude for the various initiatives. They have particularly appreciated the inclusiveness of the programs, which have fostered a sense of unity and harmony among diverse groups. In a nutshell, the feedback we received from the stakeholders in 2023 underscores the success of the WPDI programs in transforming lives and communities, vindicating our belief that trust in people is the key to lasting peace and sustainable development anywhere, starting with the most underprivileged members of the most underprivileged communities.

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