



WPDI SOUTH SUDAN

2023 Annual Report

PEACE IS CONTAGIOUS

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Introduction

WPDI in South Sudan implements its project interventions under its flagship program in the country, the Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN). Under the YPN, WPDI operates in the three states of the Equatoria region, namely; Eastern Equatoria State (EES), Central Equatoria State (CES) and Western Equatoria State (WES). In EES, WPDI operates in five of the eight counties, i.e Torit, Lafon, Ikwoto, Magwi and Budi. While in CES, WPDI has interventions in all of the six counties, i.e Terekeka, Juba, Lainya, Yei, Morobo and Kajo-Keji. And finally in WES, WPDI operates in all of the ten counties, namely Mundi East, Mundri West, Mvolo, Maridi, Ibba, Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, Tambura and Nagero.

The YPN program intervention in South Sudan is premised on our overarching goal to empower people living in vulnerable and fragile areas - underprivileged youths and women in priority - to help their communities become more resilient, peaceful and secure, productive, and sustainable. Thereafter, project activities are then geared towards attainment of community cohesion in general, building significantly on the power of education to foster sustainable societal transformation. The activities are implemented along four main strategic pillars, namely Peacebuilding, Livelihood, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Sports, and cover: Training of youth leaders, local youths, teachers and community member leaders in Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Business and Entrepreneurship, Community Dialogues, Human Rights, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Arts and Crafts, Cinema for Peace, and Peace Through Sports.

All these activities express WPDI's multi-pronged approach to effect our theory of change which aims to achieve social change by empowering women, youths and other groups at the grassroots to enact change. This locally-rooted strategy allows us to tailor our programs, ensuring that we can help communities of the Equatorias as they face issues ranging from inter and intra communal conflicts, early marriages, high rate of school drop-outs, massive youth unemployment, armed groups attacks, cattle herders – farmers conflict, lack of skills for basic services provision, land disputes, reintegration of IDPs and refugees back into their communities, revival of local markets, and scaling up of food production among many other issues that WPDI is working around in these communities.

Against this background, 2023 is undoubtedly a critical year for WPDI in South Sudan as our teams and Youth Peacemakers were able to take full advantage of both the experience accrued over the years and a critical mass of partnerships, a combination that has led to an impressive increase of our results. Indeed, while we had reached a grand total of around 45,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries in 2022, this figure is at 120,920 for 2023. As revealed in this yearly report, this result was achieved based on the dedication of our teams, the trust of our partners and the commitment of the communities for whom and with whom we work everyday to put their dreams on orbit for a future of resilience, peace and sustainability.



WPDI CEO on Mission to South Sudan

In May, Forest Whitaker led a field visit to South Sudan, engaging directly with beneficiaries and officials to assess achievements of WPDI programs in Juba. The visit allowed for direct engagement with beneficiaries, stakeholders, and staff, assessing the impact of WPDI initiatives.

Meetings with stakeholders involved discussions on the future of WPDI projects and peacebuilding in South Sudan. At a special event organized by the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, Mr. Whitaker had the opportunity to present his work as a platform for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including UNESCO's relevant contributions. On this occasion, he exchanged with the Minister of Peacebuilding in South Sudan Hon. Stephen Par Kuol, the SRSG and Head of UNMISS in South Sudan Nicholas Haysom, UNICEF South Sudan Representative Hamida Lasseko, representatives from the US Embassy in South Sudan as well as the World Bank, and the team from our partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM). With respect to sports in particular, he met with former NBA basketball player Luol Deng to explore how their respective organizations could mobilize sports to improve conditions for lasting peace in South Sudan.

Another notable advocacy opportunity was the launch of the WPDI Peace Tournament, a highlight of the Peace Through Sports program backed by the Swedish Postcode Foundation, bringing together 24 football teams. Whitaker's personal connection to the program began during his visit to a UN Protection of Civilians site, where he recognized sports' power in fostering peace among displaced youth.

The visit included a tour of the WPDI Community Learning Center in Juba, a hub for educational and entrepreneurial projects as well as awareness-raising events. The UNESCO Special Envoy met local artists and visited some women-led and youth-led businesses supported by WPDI.



Key Achievements



**Grand Total
for People
Reached**

CES
74,440

EES
29,279

WES
17,201

TOTAL
120,920



837 Youth
Peacemakers

95 Lead Youth
Peacemakers

742 Local Youth
Peacemakers

66,146
Individuals reached by
Lead Peacemakers



PEACEBUILDING

- 19,412 Total participants in CLC-based peacebuilding activities
- 1,388 Conflict Resolution Education trainees
- 4,795 Participants in Cinema for Peace
- 13,229 Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns

PEACE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

- 62,550 Total participants in school-based peacebuilding activities
- 117 Schools hosting WPDI programs
- 10,201 Learners and teachers trained
- 52,349 People reached through advocacy campaigns in schools

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

- 32 Community Dialogues held
- 3,175 Participants in dialogues
- 421 Local leaders trained



LIVELIHOOD

- 3,238 Total trainees in vocational courses
- 2,183 ICT trainees
- 1,019 Entrepreneurship trainees
- 36 Arts and Crafts trainees

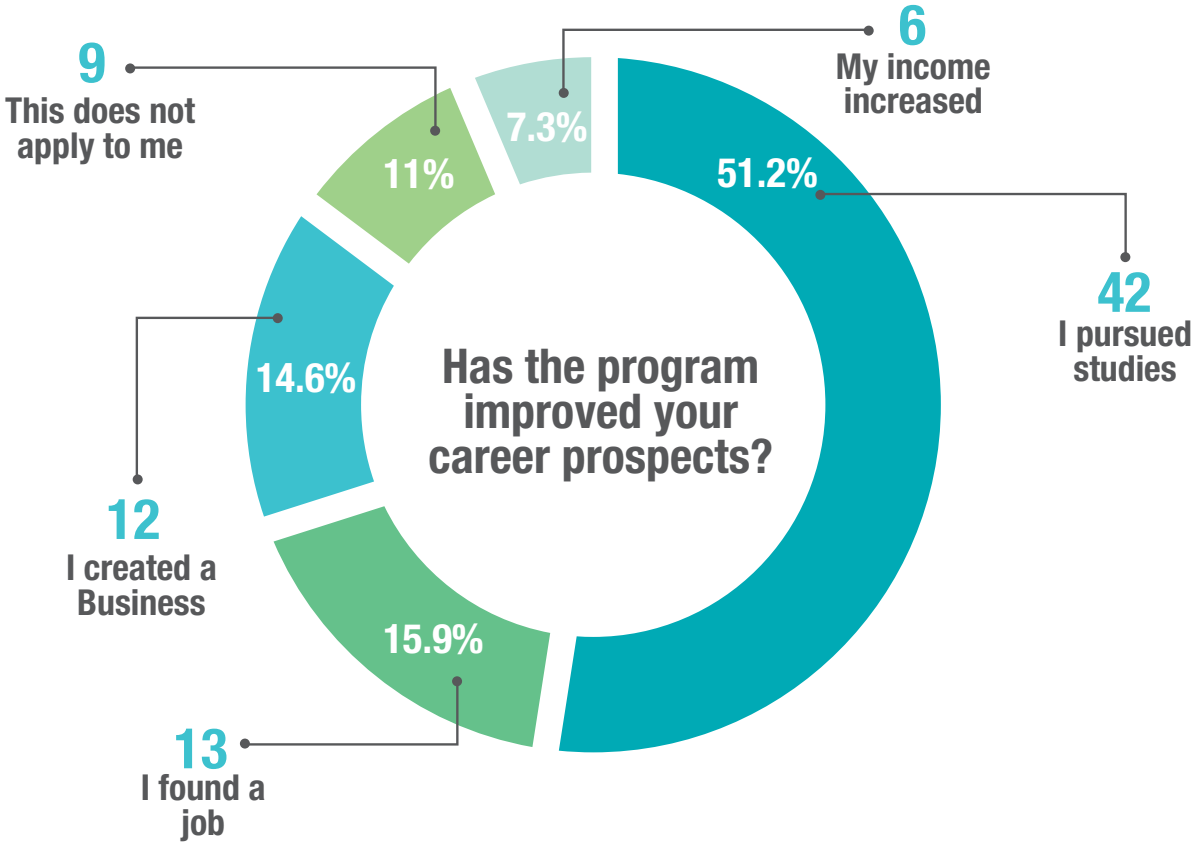
- 2,652 Beneficiaries of all SMEs
- 113 SMEs created in 2023
- 167 SMEs supported by WPDI in total
- 607 Jobs created
- 2,045 Indirect beneficiaries of businesses



PEACE THROUGH SPORTS

- 30,023 Participants in all sportive activities
- 72 Teams managed by WPDI
- 1,388 Regular training participants
- 28,635 Participants in competitions and events

Survey Results



Feedback from Local & National Stakeholders

“

As government, we are very thankful to WPDI and to Forest Whitaker for advancing the agenda of peace through empowering young people with skills and knowledge to resolve conflicts, mediate issues and improve their communication, negotiation and leadership skills. For South Sudan to have a bright future, peacebuilding partners like WPDI and the government have to work collaboratively together to plant the seeds of peace and development.

WPDI has proven to be a great partner in helping South Sudan in realizing the dream of having a prosperous and peaceful nation, by bringing up these children and youth in a good way. I have observed a lot of improvement in their communication skills, confidence and ability to resolve issues as a result of WPDI's engagement. We are optimistic as a government that there is a bright future ahead and that we'll be passing on the button of leadership to these highly informed, educated and capacitated young leaders ready to do more than what we have achieved in our time.

”

Hon. Cirisio Zacharia

Minister for General Education and Instruction,
Central Equatoria State

“

I am happy that WPDI supports the IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in the POC in Juba with the “Peace through Sport” activities. We are very proud of the work of WPDI with us here because, with the training received, some of the players are now playing for the national teams and are able to raise funds to support youth in the POC. One player who trained for WPDI got an opportunity to play for a South Korean Football club. I therefore believe that this new project is going to build on the previous activities and achieve more unity, more peace and more socio-economic and health development.

”

Lam Jok

Community Leader at Juba POC III

Vectors for Change

In order to generate meaningful impact on the ground, at the closest to our target populations, we implement our activities through so-called vectors of change that allow us to be positioned at the community-level.

We have two such vectors, that is, cohorts of young leaders, the Youth Lead Peacemakers, and also our Community Learning Centers. The Youth Lead Peacemakers act as a relay in their communities to build capacity for peacebuilding and reduce conflict.

Mobilizing Youth Leaders to Drive Change at the Grassroots



837 Youth Peacemakers	95 Lead Youth Peacemakers	66,146 Individuals reached by Youth Peacemakers
	742 Local Youth Peacemakers	

In Eastern Equatoria State (EES), Central Equatoria State (CES), and Western Equatoria State (WES) of South Sudan, WPDI collaborates with Youth Peacemakers to advance peacebuilding initiatives. The process starts with taking them through a comprehensive one-year training program, equipping them with skills in Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Trauma Healing and Business. Once trained, they play a vital role in implementing various community activities, promoting values of accountability, nonviolence, and tolerance.

Throughout 2023, Youth Peacemakers actively engaged in fostering peace and reconciliation in their communities. They facilitated Community Dialogues, reconciliation events, and mediations, promoting cohesion and understanding.

Operating in schools on behalf of WPDI, they established Peace clubs, delivering Conflict Resolution Education to students, and organized advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of various issues that affect the communities in which they live and work.

Additionally, Youth Peacemakers demonstrated their knowledge and skills to Members of Parliament in EES and WES, emphasizing Conflict Resolution concepts, human rights, and advocacy. Their participation in workshops, such as the one organized by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, focusing on "Non-Violent Communication," further enhanced their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The impact of Youth Peacemakers extends beyond the immediate communities they serve, contributing to the broader goal of sustainable peace and development in South Sudan. Their dedication and efforts exemplify the transformative potential of youth-led initiatives in conflict-affected regions.



“

I would like to thank WPDI’s revolution for peace in the world. I know challenges are everywhere, but given the knowledge and skills that I have acquired from the training program, as well as the experience of implementing the program, I plan to always be at the forefront to organize peace events in my community, to sensitize my people on peacebuilding and advocate against forced and early marriages. I would like to thank the WPDI team in South Sudan for remaining strong amidst challenges in making sure that the vision of this organization is not diverted or failed.

”

Albino Dieri

Youth Peacemaker from Terekeka county, CES



“

I am grateful to WPDI for having empowered me with the skills of initiating peace, not only in my community, but also beyond. The refresher training and advocacy training programs in Juba and in Gulu have given me more momentum in my peacebuilding efforts in the community. On my return home, I made a great effort to reconcile groups and individuals. Recently I reconciled two families (an instance of cattle keepers that destroyed the crops of a farming family). Before my intervention, it was a matter of life and death between the two conflicting families, but today they are living in a peaceful coexistence.

”

Josephine Dominic Onorio

Youth Peacemaker from Ezo county, WES



“

Before I joined WPDI’s YPN Program, I had limited knowledge and skills in peacebuilding, entrepreneurship, or ICT. The training has greatly impacted my life. After I completed the training, I got a job with the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO-Yei Based) as a peacebuilding training facilitator. Based on the skills I have acquired in mediation, I have conducted mediation work between youth-groups.

”

James Yata Ambrose

Youth Peacemaker from Yei River County, CES

Improving Local Access to Skills, Knowledge and Connectivity

	CES	EES	WES	Total
Community Learning Centers	1	5	2	8
CRE trainees	641	379	368	1,388
Participants in Cinema for Peace	1,916	2,313	566	4,795
Participants in advocacy campaigns in CLC	9,853	3,376		13,229
ICT trainees	551	1,151	481	2,183
Entrepreneurship trainees	183	475	361	1,019
Arts & Craft trainees	36			36
Total participants in CLC-based activities and training	13,180	7,694	1,776	22,650

CLC Visitors

37,600

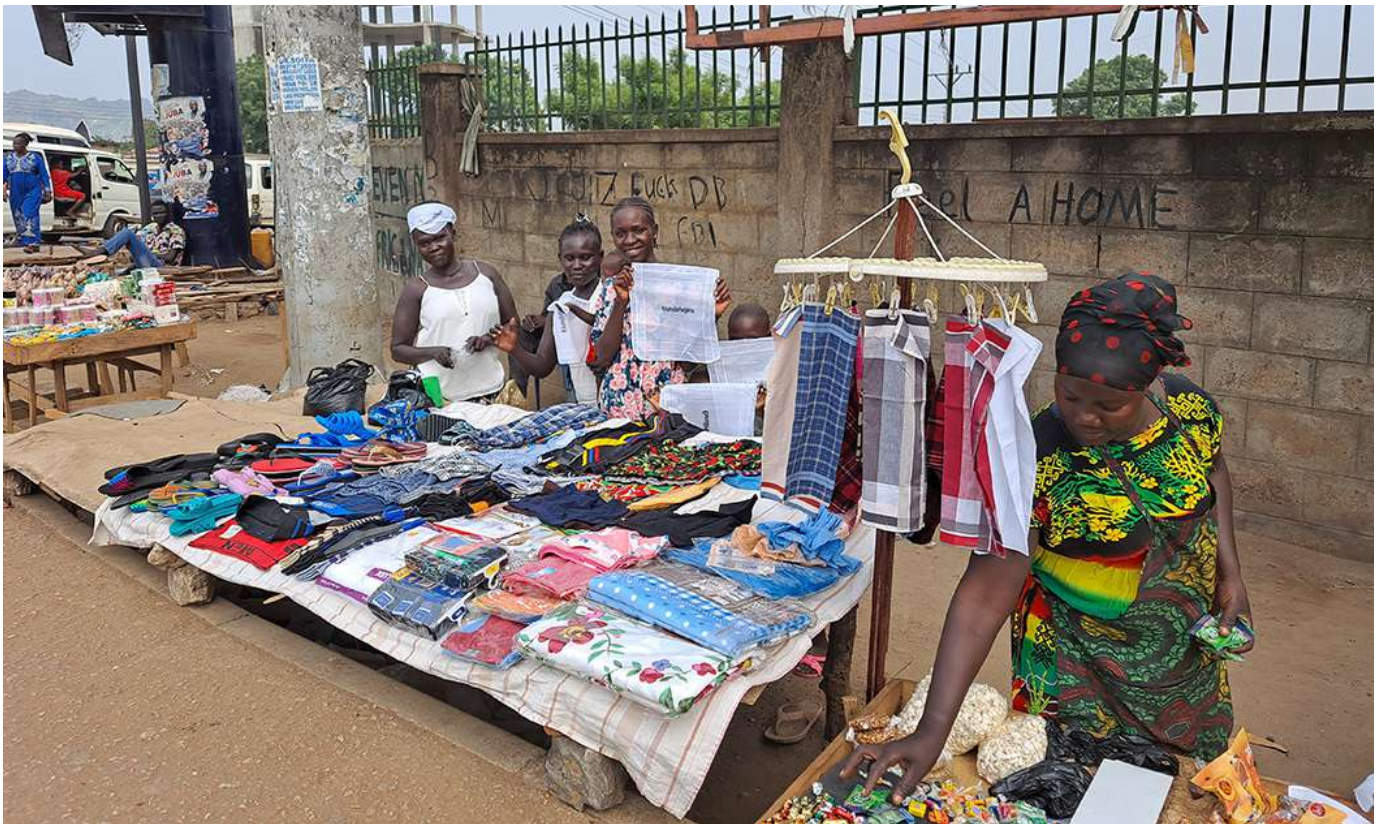
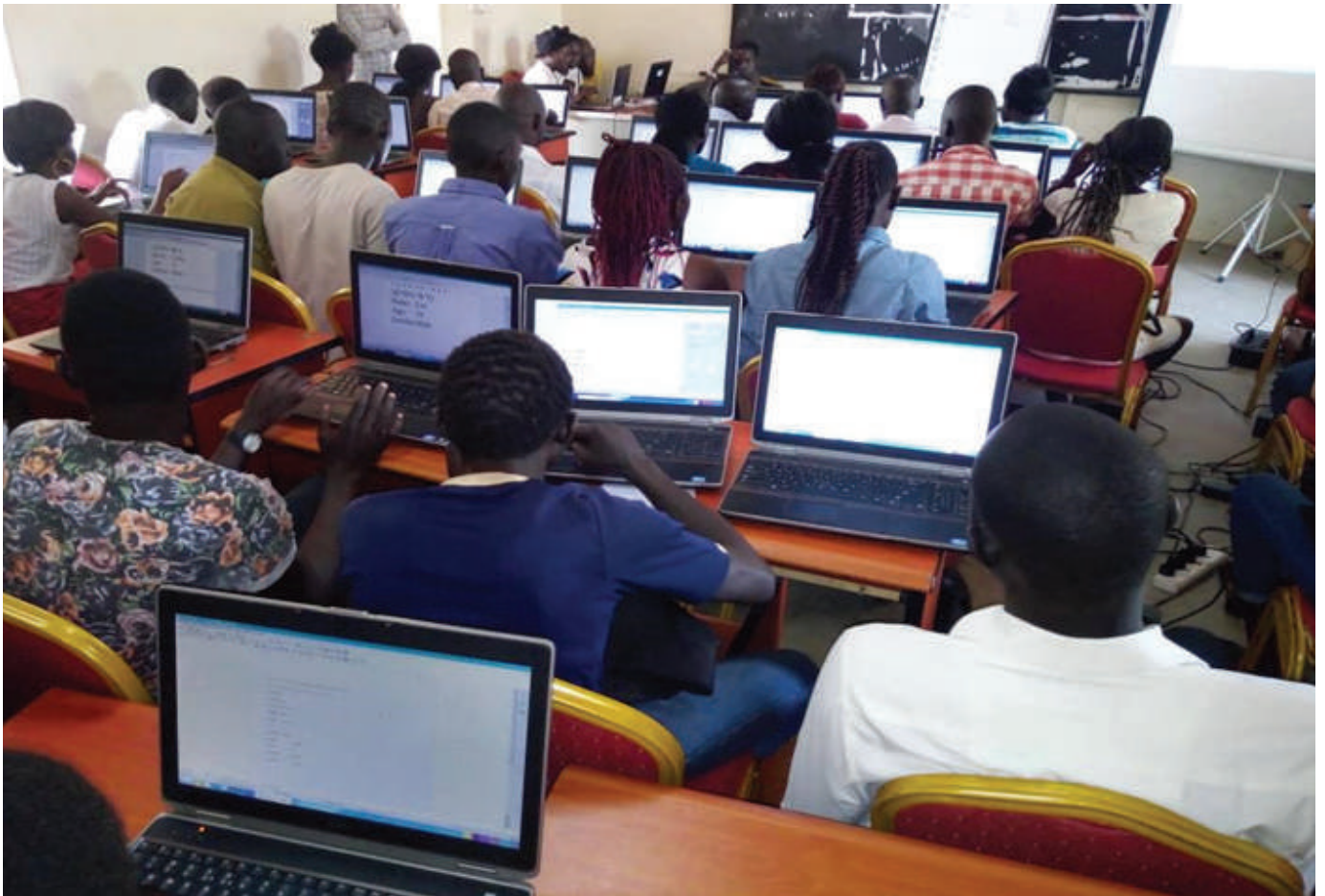
WPDI operates in South Sudan a network of eight Community Learning Centers (CLCs) strategically located across the Equatoria region, encompassing EES, CES, and WES states. In EES, the five CLCs are situated in Lafon, Torit, Magwi (Nimule), Iwkoto, and Budi counties. CES hosts one CLC in the heart of Juba County, while WES accommodates two CLCs in Maridi and Yambio counties. These CLCs serve as dynamic hubs, offering more than just free internet connectivity; they provide a range of courses in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Conflict Resolution Education (CRE), Business and Entrepreneurship, and Arts and Crafts.

The training programs, except for Arts and Crafts, follow a three-month cycle, culminating in participants receiving certifications upon successful completion of the final exam. Graduates of the Business and Entrepreneurship course have the opportunity to apply for the 'Business Boot Camp' (BBC) initiative and subsequently participate in Business Plan Competitions, where seed funding and support are awarded to winners to implement their income-generating projects.

Participants, whether aspiring entrepreneurs, peacebuilding advocates, or job seekers, view CLCs as invaluable resources, addressing skill and knowledge gaps related to the YPN Program interventions. Beyond training, CLCs host various events such as peace engagement days, advocacy campaigns, and sports activities throughout the year, aimed at raising awareness about specific community issues.

Advocacy campaigns play a crucial role in creating awareness among the general public about pressing community concerns, engaging stakeholders such as parents, teachers, Ministry of Education personnel, community leaders, and civil society organizations. These campaigns tackle issues like human rights promotion, HIV/AIDS prevention, climate change mitigation, and early or forced marriage prevention.

CLCs serve not only as educational hubs but also as vital communication channels, particularly in remote areas like Lafon County, EES, where the absence of a telephone network makes CLC internet connectivity the sole means of external communication. Through training and activities, CLCs empower locals with knowledge and skills, contributing to employment initiatives, livelihood enhancement, and peacebuilding efforts within communities. The impact of CLCs on local communities is profound, fulfilling their intended purpose and often surpassing expectations.



Peacebuilding as Grassroots Empowerment

	CES	EES	WES	Total
Community Dialogues held	25	1	6	32
Participants in dialogues	2,575	61	539	3,175
Local leaders trained	105	107	209	421
Total participants in community level peacebuilding activities	2,680	168	748	3,596

Community Dialogues for Sowing Seeds of Peace

In the heart of South Sudan, WPDI orchestrated a series of impactful Community Dialogues, bringing together diverse communities to address pressing issues and forge pathways to peace and reconciliation. These dialogues, convened by trained youth peacemakers, serve as vital platforms for open discussion and resolution.

For example, in Nimule, Magwi County, EES, the Intra-Ma'di Community Dialogue tackled complex challenges including leadership conflicts, misinformation, and cultural erosion. The dialogue resulted in concrete resolutions such as the restoration of the Madi Community Council (MCC) office and coordination of Ma'di diaspora support, overseen by a dedicated taskforce.

Similarly, in CES across Limuro Boma, Wuji Payam, and Lainya County, a dialogue between returnees and host-community members addressed issues of division, unfair labeling, and land disputes, leading to resolutions centered on forgiveness, reconciliation, and monitored by an Area Reference Group (ARG).

Across Tambura County, WES, the Azande - Balanda Consultative Dialogue navigated conflict impact and reconciliation, culminating in commitments to peace and unity, monitored by local chiefs and commissioners.

These dialogues extended to Mundri West County, WES, where the Peaceful Coexistence Dialogue addressed challenges like cattle influx and cultural disrespect, resulting in the establishment of a joint committee for resolution implementation. Each dialogue, from Dolo Boma, Kuda Payam, Juba County, to Gulumbi Payam, Morobo County, and beyond, represented a concerted effort to foster understanding, promote reconciliation, and build a sustainable peace for all communities involved. Through these dialogues, WPDI empowered local leaders, encouraged grassroots participation, and laid the groundwork for lasting peace and prosperity in South Sudan.



Delegates of the Dolo Community Dialogue in Dolo Boma, Juba County, CES

A delegate giving a testimonial after the dialogue in Gulumbi payam, Morobo county, CES:

“

WPDI has strengthened us by providing this conducive space to discuss the issues of conflict facing us. I am very thankful for the organizers for considering the voices and contributions of people with disabilities. I don't have legs but my brain is useful in contributing to solutions of our local problems. The two-day dialogue has helped us to rebuild the broken trust and confidence, especially the people who participated in the dialogue. With more dialogues, reconciliation and social cohesion shall be realized in Morobo County. Thanks to WPDI and consortium members.

”

Grace Aba Elia

Representative of people with disabilities

WPDI Provides Platform for Resolution of Cattle Farmer Conflict in The Greater Mundri Community, South Sudan



For accountability, follow-up and follow-through, WPDI organized follow-up dialogues to ensure the resolutions were being implemented and to continue to track progress. The main outcomes are that (i) the communities involved work to foster a platform to maintain conversations and continue to resolve ongoing conflicts; and (ii) the participants agreed to work collaboratively for socio-economic development in Lirya Payam.

“

I want to thank WPDI and the community leaders for initiating this dialogue. There was a lot of fear in the hearts of the people of Greater Mundri that the cattle herders would cause insecurity or destroy their farms, but today the issue of fear has been settled and we have agreed to remove the cattle from farmlands within 30 days. We shall continue with the spirit of dialogue whenever there is an issue because WPDI has shown us the peaceful way to resolve issues.

”

Marial Achuei
Chief of the Tali Payam

Following floods and water shortages as well as internal conflicts among themselves, herders from Tali, Terekeka County, Central Equatoria State, were forced to migrate through the counties of Juba, Lainya, Yei and Mundri, causing widespread disruption to regional agricultural activities. As the influx of cattle into the Greater Mundri community threatened to escalate into a full out conflict, WPDI, in collaboration with local authorities, community leaders and stakeholders, organized a Community Dialogue at the end of March focused on resolving the dispute in a peaceful manner.

Resolutions initially agreed upon by participants of the dialogue:

- Implement government cattle return directives
- Allow temporary stay for Tali cattle herders
- Set a deadline for Tali herders' relocation
- Raise awareness and deter criminal activities
- Establish joint court for legal matters
- Engage CES/WES governments for conflict resolution
- Advocate for Tali water reservoir construction
- Form joint committee for resolution implementation



Gulumbi community dialogue in Gulumbi payam, Morobo county, CES

Training Community Leaders to Cultivate Peace

In its dedication to fostering sustainable peace and development in South Sudan, WPDI offers comprehensive training to 421 Community Leaders, equipping them with essential skills and knowledge to enhance peacebuilding efforts within their communities. The training covers a wide array of topics including Human Rights, Gender Mainstreaming, Conflict Understanding, Mediation, Leadership, Development, and Advocacy. The inclusion of these subjects aims to empower community leaders to grasp the intricacies of these issues comprehensively. Here's a summary of the key concepts covered in the training:

Human Rights

Focuses on understanding Human Rights articles and promoting positive changes in cultural and social practices within communities.

Gender Mainstreaming

Highlights the importance of inclusive leadership, equal participation of women, and equity in resource allocations.

Conflict Understanding

Analyzes the types and sources of conflicts and explores various approaches to resolution.

Mediation

Equips leaders with nonviolent conflict resolution skills through dialogue and mediation.

Leadership

Explores different leadership concepts, emphasizing equitable service to mitigate discontent and societal conflict.

Development

Introduces leaders to sustainable development goals and their roles in community development.

Advocacy

Trains leaders to identify community issues, launch campaigns, and lobby for resources and development.

In the Equatoria region where WPDI operates, challenges like conflict, ethnic tensions, and political unrest hinder social cohesion and development. The training of Community Leaders is pivotal in addressing these issues and fostering stability, which is essential for progress and prosperity in South Sudan.

“

Indeed, this training has positively impacted my life, as it touches my daily engagements with the community as people’s representative and has called for personal control of emotions while addressing and reacting to issues.

”

Mr. Severino Maria Januge

Right Honorable Speaker

“

I am so happy for WPDI’s tireless effort and support towards peacebuilding in Terekeka county, CES. This training is the first of its kind bringing leaders and chiefs who command immense influence in their respective areas. These are the right people who can preach peace because the youth in cattle camps listen to them.

”

Mama Asunta Paul

Women Chairperson

“

This training has helped me understand why violence exists in my community. After learning about the violence triangle, I came to know that violence in my community is caused by cultural and structural violence that is embedded in my culture and community’s leadership. With this training, I am going to embark on sensitizing my community to know its causes, while he urges the participants to take such training as an opportunity because they will encounter issues like cultural and structural violence that contribute to direct violence and conflict at large.

”

Mr. Ohisa Joseph

Community Leader from Ikwoto County, EES

WPDI Leads Training Workshop For Over 100 Members Of Parliament On Leadership, Peace & Human Rights



Eastern Equatoria State in South Sudan, like much of the country, grapples with ongoing conflict and instability. Persistent ethnic tensions and political unrest hinder social cohesion and impede development, exacerbating displacement and a fragile security environment. Urgent attention and concerted efforts are needed to address these underlying issues for lasting peace and stability.

In response to these challenges, WPDI believes in coordinated and mutually reinforcing efforts toward lasting peace and sustainable development. Stability fosters an environment conducive to education, healthcare, and economic growth, enabling communities to thrive and contribute to South Sudan's progress.

To mainstream this approach, WPDI recently conducted a capacity-building training workshop on leadership, peace, and human rights for honorable members of the Eastern Equatoria State Legislature Assembly (EESLA) and local organizations. The theme, "Peace for Sustainable Development," brought together participants from eight counties of Eastern Equatoria.

The five-day program, attended by over 100 individuals, including the Speaker of the parliament and committee chairpersons, aimed to promote good governance, respect for human rights, and grassroots peacebuilding. It fostered a spirit of alliance and networking among parliamentarians, emphasizing collaboration, dialogue, tolerance, and inclusion.

In his closing remarks, the Right Honourable Speaker, Mr. Severino Maria Januge, highlighted the transformative impact of the training on himself and stressed the importance of working closely with grassroots partners to address local issues and act as agents of peace.

Feedback from participants, such as Honorable Kokol Michael MP, underscored the value of the training in enhancing leadership and conflict resolution skills, with tangible benefits in resolving disputes and promoting peace within communities.

Bringing Skills and Values for Peace Into Schools

	CES	EES	WES	Total
Schools hosting WPDI programs	49	28	40	117
Learners and teachers trained	6,322	2,349	1,530	10,201
People reached through advocacy campaigns in schools	25,100	17,224	10,025	52,349
Total participants in school-based peacebuilding activities	31,422	19,573	11,555	62,550

Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) in schools is one of the activities implemented by WPDI across all intervention areas. The objective of this initiative is to nurture and cultivate seeds of peace in schools while also fostering the development of the new generation of peacebuilders in the country. The CRE training is indeed opening up new opportunities for pupils and students in primary and secondary schools. In South Sudan, the program reached a total of 117 schools across the Equatoria region in 2023. The Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) program in secondary schools, much like in primary schools, aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote positive social life skills and attitudes. This approach is designed to cultivate a culture of non-violence and foster social cohesion. The second objective of the program is to nurture a new generation of peacebuilders in the country.

Comprising of 14 modules, the program spans six months, distributed across three semesters in a calendar year. This empowering process seeks to bring about positive change by developing personal non-violent capacities and adopts a multicultural approach to encourage positive thinking within both individuals and their communities. The CRE training not only contributes to reducing conflict issues in schools and communities but also significantly improves the academic performance, confidence, and self-esteem of the participants.



Before joining the Peace Club at my school, I was a problem causer. I used to like fighting and bullying my friends because I was stubborn and I did not have skills to manage my emotions. Many friends abandoned me, but since I joined the Peace Club, I have changed. I can smile with my friends, control my emotions and use the skills of mediation and negotiation to resolve conflict. My friends and parents could not believe the great change in my behavior because I have become so peaceful and those friends that left me have now returned. I have learned to say sorry and to forgive those who wrong me. Thank you WPDI for the change you have brought to my life.

Rita Azo

A pupil at Green Hill, Juba

“

The Peace education program in Juba Girls Secondary School has positively changed my behaviors because I used to be short tempered and violent. After attending the Peace Club activities, particularly the sessions on emotions and conflict styles; I realized a change in my life. All the things the Youth Peacemakers were teaching were directly challenging my behaviors resulting in a real transformation in my life. I have learned to control my temper, forgive those that hurt me and make peace among my friends and family members.

”

Jennifer Keji

Student at Juba Girls Secondary School

“

I used to be violent at school before the coming of the peace club but when WPDI introduced a Peace Education program at our school, I learned conflict resolution styles, mediation skills and how to find inner peace. These teachings have positively changed my life from that of violence to that of peace.

”

Lorna Kulang

Student at Juba Girls Secondary School

Training School Teachers in Conflict Resolution Education

351 Teachers trained in schools



In line with the program's engagement in schools and to ensure sustainability, WPDI also delivers Conflict Resolution Education to teachers. This involves conducting specialized training sessions for selected teachers in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

All participating schools in the CRE program benefit from this engagement of teachers. The aim is to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to carry forward the program and integrate these skills as they teach students so as to improve conflict mitigation.

“

It's my first time attending Conflict Resolution training. In my community we have a lot of conflicts that sometimes become violent. There is so much hatred and division among community members. Desires for revenge are commonplace. WPDI has really come at the right time to provide this knowledge and these skills, which I personally had no understanding of before. I have understood the meaning of conflict and how to resolve conflicts constructively. Going forward, I am going to ensure that corporal punishment does not happen at the school and that teachers will be able to show the values of peace and professionalism in handling their duties.

”

Kenyi Albino

Teacher, CES

“

I am grateful to WPDI and its partners for having taken me through a training in peacebuilding. From henceforth I will be working for peace and reconciliation in both my school and the wider community. The training has given me the opportunity to know the crystal fact that all of us should be agents of peace, hence development becomes inevitable. Let us all have a bottom-up approach to having sustainable peace, not only in our community but in South Sudan at large. With the knowledge and skills I have now acquired, I am better positioned to advocate for and work for peace.

”

Ms. Anthonina Anthony Kurapkio

Deputy Head Teacher, Renzi Nursery & Primary School, Tambura County, WES



Pupils during a session of the CRE in Magwi county, EES



Impact Story

Green Hill Nursery and Primary School



Between 2022 and 2023, Green Hill Nursery and Primary School grappled with rising cases of indiscipline, characterized by student disrespect towards teachers and frequent fights among peers. Instances of conflicts often escalated, leading to teacher interventions and administrative actions, including suspensions and dismissals. However, existing disciplinary measures proved inadequate, with teachers lacking the necessary skills to address conflicts effectively. In response, WPDI introduced a peace club to proactively address these challenges and foster a more harmonious learning environment.

In 2023, WPDI established a peace club at Green Hill Nursery and Primary School, comprising 75 enrolled members who underwent training in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding. The club actively engaged in advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about community issues and played a pivotal role in conflict resolution within the school. Equipped with new skills, club members mediated conflicts, offered counseling and peer support, resulting in a notable reduction in disciplinary cases. This collaborative effort cultivated an atmosphere of respect among students and towards teachers, significantly improving the overall learning environment and promoting peaceful coexistence within the school community.

“The introduction of the Peace Education program by WPDI has created positive change in our school because the children who have learned Conflict Resolution Education are now able to resolve conflicts alone without teachers. They are the ones who mediate issues, giving teachers ample time to prepare for lessons. Cases of fighting in the school have also reduced drastically as a result of the peace education program. What WPDI has done is so great in the lives of the learners, the school and the communities.”

Nelson Ocen
Teacher at Green Hill Nursery and Primary School,
Juba CES

“My engagement in teaching Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) in schools did not only help in imparting knowledge and skills in the lives of the learners but personally I have realized a significant change in my life through my engagement with the pupils and students. I have learned a lot from them as I interact with them in the sessions making me more confident, knowledgeable and experienced. A number of learners have shared their testimonials with me on how they are using the skills to resolve conflicts in the schools and in their communities, which made me proud of the results of my work with them. Such motivations are what keep me doing my work as a Youth Peacemaker. I have mastered most of the topics in both primary and secondary peace education manuals. The incentive WPDI offers me has also enabled me to pay for the school fees of my children and cater for my family needs. The status of my family has greatly changed when I became a Youth Peacemaker with WPDI. I am very thankful to WPDI for the opportunity.”

Joseph Dusuman
Youth Peacemaker, Juba, CES



Evaluating the outcomes of WPDI's action in Schools

In 2023, we piloted a new series of surveys to assess the outcomes of the Conflict Resolution program in schools, for which we received 45 responses covering 11 of the 117 schools that participated in the program. The survey responses reveal a remarkably positive stance towards WPDI's conflict resolution education program. Stakeholders commended the program for its transformative impact on students and the broader school community.

The program is recognized for fostering a culture of peace, understanding, and responsible conflict resolution within the school community and beyond. Stakeholders expressed a unanimous desire for the program's expansion and improvement. Recommendations include extending the program to more schools, creating networks of peace clubs, supplying learning materials, and organizing more workshops, advocacy campaigns, and inter-school sports and debates.

Program Impact on Peaceful Attitudes and Civic Mindsets

All respondents agreed that WPDI's program effectively teaches and promotes peaceful attitudes, self-discipline, nonviolence, and other civic mindsets, with 56% completely agreeing and 44% agreeing.

Program Contribution to Conflict and Violence Prevention

The program was unanimously seen as a useful contribution for preventing or addressing bullying and other forms of conflict and violence in school, with 56% completely agreeing and 44% agreeing.

Improvement of Learning Conditions

The majority of respondents (100%) agreed that WPDI's Peace Education program helps to improve learning conditions for the learners of the school, with 40% completely agreeing and 60% agreeing.

Program Impact on Schools

The program was seen as having a positive impact on the schools, with 18% seeing a narrow impact, 29% observing a moderate impact, 24% noting a significant impact, and 29% witnessing a transformative impact on the whole of their schools.

Overall, the feedback on the program is highly positive, attesting the relevance of empowering pupils and students with soft skills as agents of peace in their schools and, beyond, in the community.

The involvement of teachers in the program is also a key aspect of the program as it ensures that the schools will have the capacity to maintain the momentum for peace for years to come.

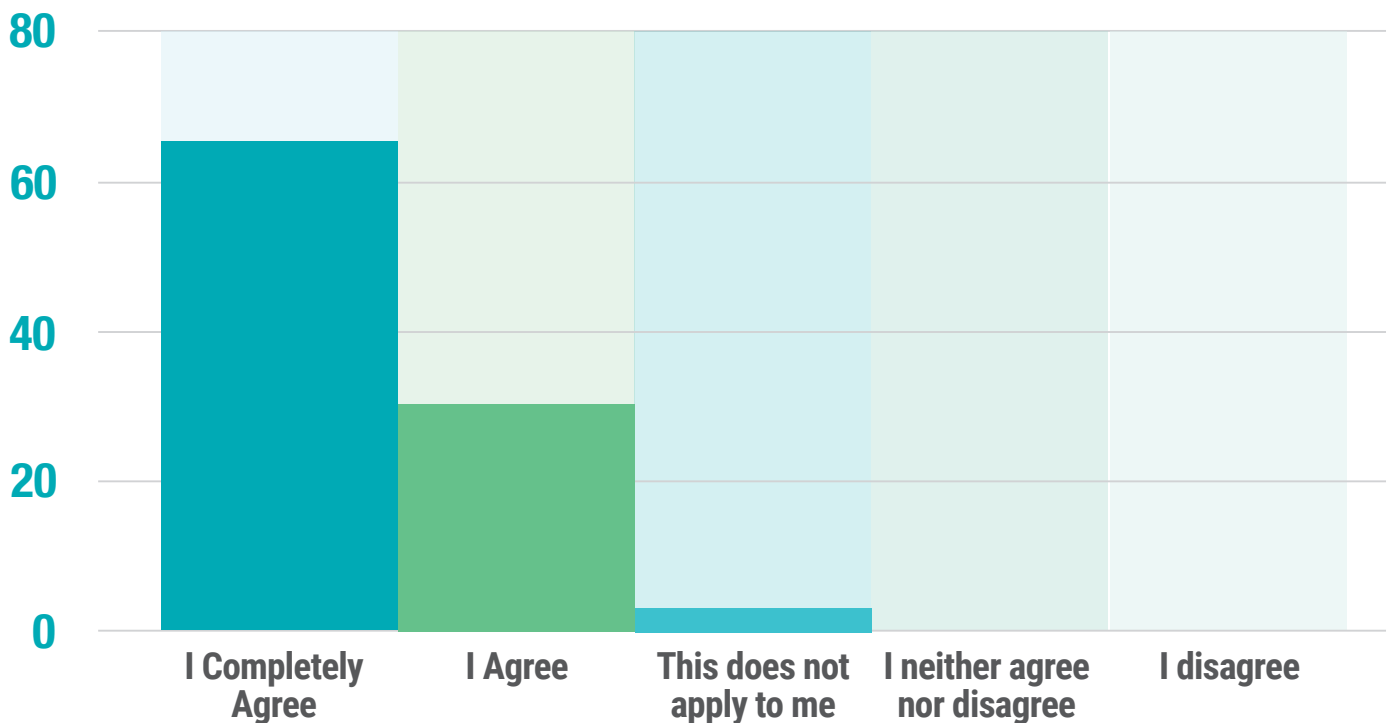
Conflict Resolution Skills for Everyone in the Community

	CES	EES	WES	Total
CRE trainees	641	379	368	1,388
Participants in Cinema for Peace	1,916	2,313	566	4,795
Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns	9,853	3,376	0	13,229
Total	12,410	6,068	934	19,412

At the CLCs, Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) training sessions are conducted for youths, local community leaders, and members of the general public.

The primary objective of these training sessions is to enhance participants' personal capacity in mediation skills and knowledge, promoting the values of peace.

“I have been able to apply the knowledge and skills learned from WPDI in my personal or professional life” (99 responses from CRE trainees)



Advocacy Campaigns to Give Peace a Voice

	CES	EES	WES	Total
Participants in CLC Advocacy campaigns	9,853	3,376	0	13,229
People reached through advocacy campaigns in schools	25,100	17,224	10,025	52,349

The advocacy campaigns are implemented in a two-pronged format: at the CLCs and in schools.

Advocacy Campaigns at the CLCs

As part of the objectives to cascade the YPN Program reach out to the general public, Advocacy Campaigns are organized periodically across Community Learning Centers (CLCs) that WPDI runs in South Sudan. In 2023, these activities were conducted in six CLCs – five in EES and one in CES. These advocacy campaigns focus on key issues that affect the communities and require highlighting and awareness to alleviate them. They include issues such as effects of negative culture on girl-child education; positive masculinity; Gender-Based Violence; promotion of gender equality; youth unemployment; environmental impact due to effects of climate change, etc. The advocacy campaigns are usually graced by stakeholders from the government, Parents-teachers' Associations (PTA), students, key community leaders, and members of the general public.

Advocacy Campaigns in Schools

Advocacy campaigns were also conducted in all the 117 primary and secondary schools engaged in 2023 reaching at least an average of 300 pupils/students per school throughout the year. Addressing fellow pupils, students, teachers, parents and community members, our peace club members disseminated messages of human rights and peace reaching over four hundred people per event.

In all the schools in the counties of our interventions in EES, CES, and WES, the advocacy campaigns focused on increasing the enrollment of girls in schools, increment of teachers' salaries to enhance the quality of education, promoting of human rights, sexual reproductive health awareness and information on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and fighting climate change as well as early marriages/forced marriages in the communities.

Students and Pupils used debates, poems, songs, speeches, drawings and marching in streets to advocate for the desired changes. In total, 52,349 pupils and students were engaged directly and over 760,000 listeners were estimated to have been reached through radio talk shows and broadcast of pre-recorded programs on both radios and TVs. Newspapers also published some of the stories to reach a wider audience.





Impact Story

King's College Advocacy Campaigns on School Fees



WPDI, in its strategic approach to project implementation focuses on women and youths. We therefore work in partnership with schools to provide capacity building in Conflict Resolution Education and advocacy. The objective is to empower them to become agents of change for their community. It is in this context that several students who attended an advocacy campaign program at the King's College expressed their views on the issue of high fees in their school.

One female student said: "I had to work in a garden to pay for my school fees. The campaign by the program will lead to a reduction in fees next year."

Another male student, who had previously struggled to pay his fees, had this to say: "I urge the government and school administration to lower the fees to make it more affordable for students like me to continue attending school."

A parent also expressed her concern over the high fees, saying: "Due to high costs, some children cannot attend school. The government should reduce fees for the upcoming year."

A government official who attended the program stated: "We will reduce fees for primary and secondary schools, whether public or private."



The introduction of the peace education program by WPDI has created a positive change in our school because the children who have learned the conflict resolution education are now able to resolve conflict issues alone without teachers. They are the ones who mediate conflict issues, giving teachers ample time to prepare for lessons. Cases of fighting in the school have also reduced drastically as a result of the peace education. What WPDI has done is so great in the lives of the learners, the school and the communities.



Nelson Ocen

A teacher from Green Hill Nursery and Primary School, Juba CES



The Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative has done a lot for our learners and also for us teachers. As teachers we have challenges because sometimes, we can get annoyed and we don't have control over our emotions. The session on emotions has taught us strategies to manage conflicts. Cases of gangs known as 'Niggas' involving our school children have reduced because of the peace education program.



Adong Stella

A teacher, CES

Cinema for Peace

	CES	EES	WES	Total
Participants in Cinema for Peace	1,916	2,313	566	4,795

The Cinema for Peace, a key program component employed by WPDI, serves a dual purpose in supporting social cohesion and fostering critical debate among participants. This initiative aims to equip individuals with the skills necessary to address the challenges they face while concurrently providing a platform to support their psychosocial and mental health wellbeing.

To advance social cohesion and intercultural interaction among a wide array of audiences, the program is implemented in Community Learning Centers (CLCs), selected communities, and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Juba through mobile screening methods. The films screened are selected with an educational purpose, focusing on issues that resonate with the audience's experiences.

Following each screening, a Focus Group Discussion is organized to delve into the themes of the movies. This ensures that the films remain relevant to the challenges communities are grappling with, allowing them to draw valuable lessons applicable to their own situations. By combining education and dialogue, the Cinema for Peace program becomes a powerful tool for empowering communities and promoting a shared understanding of their circumstances.



Livelihood

Opportunities for Socio-Economic Empowerment

	CES	EES	WES	Total
SMEs created in 2023	104	9	0	113
SMEs supported by WPDI in total	126	24	17	167
Jobs created	336	138	133	607
Indirect beneficiaries of businesses	1,000	545	500	2,045

A key aspect of our work in South Sudan 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 and 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 3,238 individuals who took vocational courses.

Thanks to key partnerships coming to fruition this year, our Business incubation platform significantly expanded its scope, resulting in the launch of 113 new businesses, bearing in mind that we had 57 businesses in the program by the end of 2022. All in all, the 167 SMEs that WPDI now supports have generated 607 jobs and benefits for 2,045 family members.

In conclusion, our comprehensive livelihood program in South Sudan has contributed to enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities, fostering economic empowerment and community development in the region.



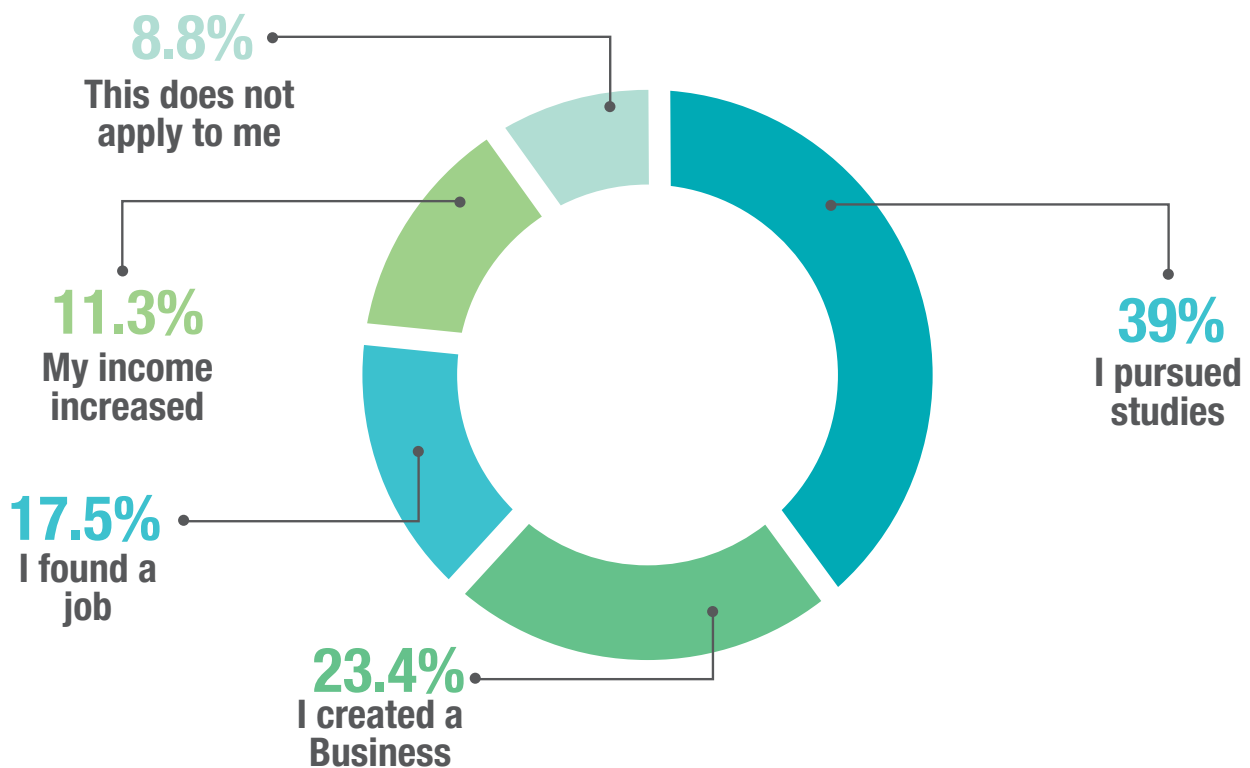
Vocational Skills for Personal and Career Development

	CES	EES	WES	Total
ICT trainees	551	1,151	481	2,183
Entrepreneurship trainees	183	475	361	1,019
Arts and Crafts trainees	36	0	0	36
Total trainees in vocational courses	770	1,626	842	3,238

Besides the fact that, as mentioned above, 3,238 individuals attended our vocational courses throughout 2023, gaining skills and knowledge that they will be able to use for many years to come, the impact of the vocational training program on the beneficiaries can also be observed through the surveys that we conduct each year among them six months after courses are completed.

We should stress that their positive outcomes (see below) reflect the overall trends of the program as recorded over the past years through the surveys that we conduct among former trainees (see graphic below).

From 2021 to 2023, 521 former vocational trainees of South Sudan responded to our survey on the outcome of their training



Business and Entrepreneurship

Our Business and Entrepreneurship courses are geared towards the acquisition of the skills that are indispensable to create and manage a small business. Participants partake in a 3-month training program focused on business management and entrepreneurship headed by WPDI trainers. At the end of each course, graduates can enter Business Plan Competitions to submit business projects that are examined by our jury composed of WPDI experts and local representatives. Winners in this process gain access to WPDI funding and guidance to help get their business projects off the ground.

In 2023, with funding support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the UN Multi-partners Trust Fund for Area-Based Programming in Reconciliation, Stabilization, and Resilience (RSRTF – ABP), WPDI conducted numerous business management and entrepreneurial skills training sessions in EES, CES, and WES. This initiative empowered youth, women, and men with business skills for self-reliance and sustainable development within their respective communities and the country at large. Under SDC funding, the trainings occur at community training centers, open to youth, women, and men from various bomas and payams surrounding the CLCs.

100% of 29

Business and Entrepreneurship trainees surveyed in 2023 reported using their skills in their personal and professional lives

Information and Communication Technologies

WPDI conducts ICT training in Community Learning Centers (CLCs) to bridge the digital divide gap in the country, preparing participants for employment in the sector or empowering them to establish their own businesses. The primary aim of the ICT course is to enhance the digital literacy skills of young people and communities in remote areas with limited access to ICT services. Recognizing the increasing importance of ICT skills for employability, WPDI, through its CLC courses, provides opportunities in areas that may face challenges in accessing such resources.

98% of 53

ICT trainees surveyed in 2023 reported using their skills in their personal and professional lives

The courses offer participants the chance to learn how to use computers for accessing knowledge and connecting with the wider world. Trainees are instructed on different hardware and software components of a computer, various interfaces of operating systems, and essential skills such as designing and formatting documents using word processors, creating spreadsheets and performing calculations, making presentations using PowerPoint, and utilizing the internet for communication and connectivity. WPDI's ICT training plays a crucial role in empowering individuals in remote areas, opening doors to digital opportunities and facilitating their integration into the broader digital landscape.

“

As a student of geology and mining at the University of Juba, I used to spend a lot of money on people typing my assignments because of my lack of computer skills. But after joining the ICT class at WPDI Community Learning Center, I can now type my work on and save money for my tuition fee. I used to pay 300 SSP for typing and printing of one page only but after attending the training I type my work and only pay 30 SSP for printing.

”

Anthony Lado
ICT trainee from CES

Arts and Crafts

The Arts and Crafts training component is conducted at the Juba CLC, aimed at training and nurturing the talents of youth and community members interested in furthering their artistic pursuits. The objective of WPDI’s Arts and Crafts course is to enhance the capacity of young men and women through the provision of practical knowledge and skills that can enable them to set up self sustaining businesses and also increase their employability.

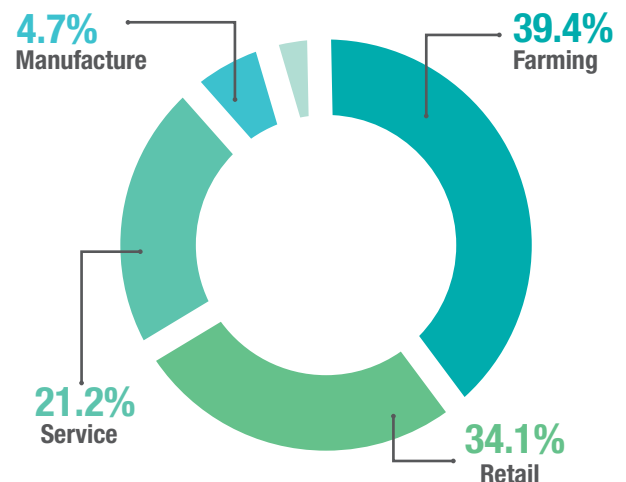
The training typically spans a six-month cycle, during which participants are expected to gain proficiency in various areas of the subject, including painting, drawing, sculpting, knitting, and more. This component is characterized by its high-level and niche focus, providing participants with a comprehensive skill set in the diverse and creative world of arts and crafts.



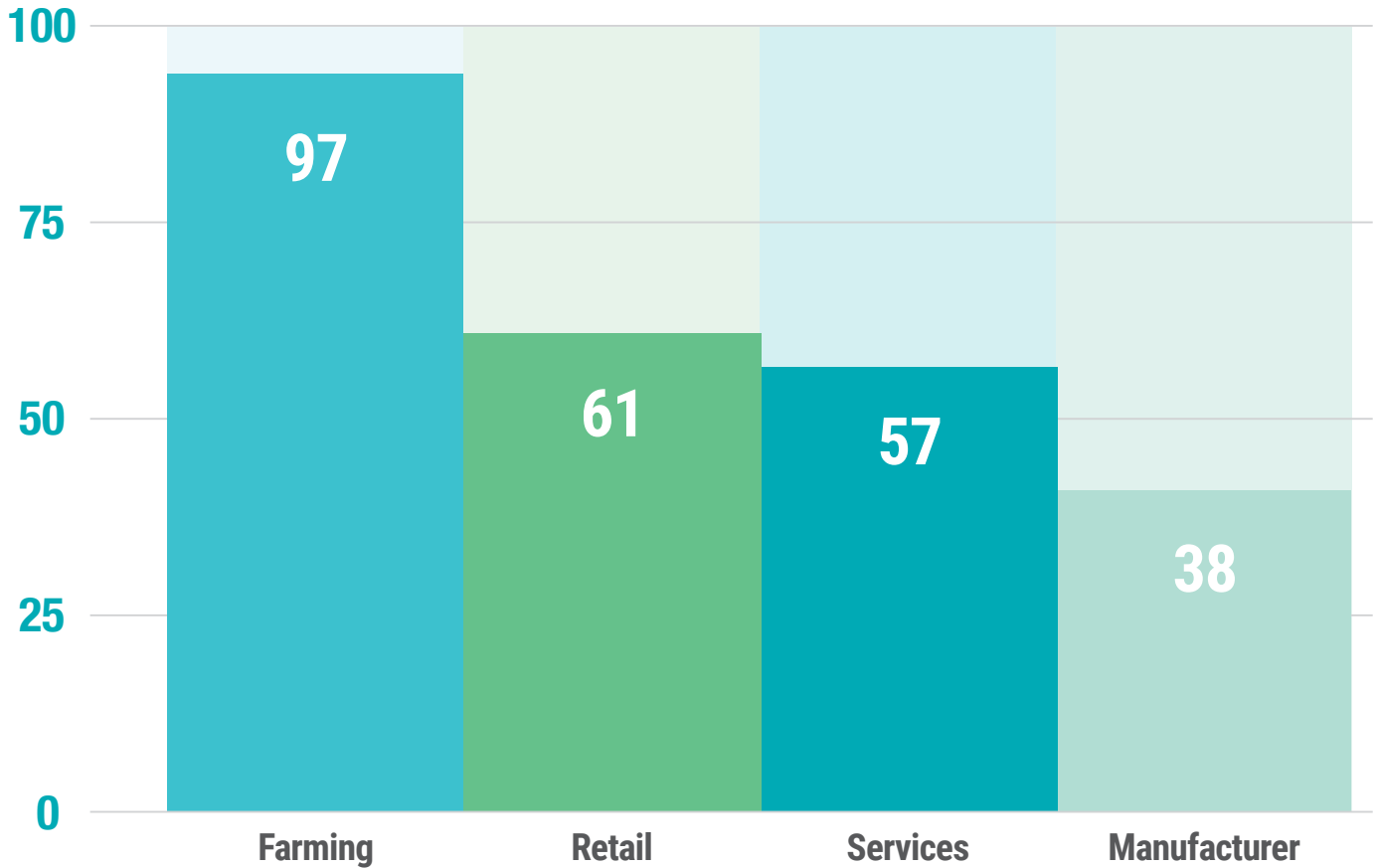
Supporting Income-Generating Projects

In 2023, WPDI supported 170 businesses in South Sudan, including 113 newly launched this year, to be compared to 57 active in 2022, with 19 businesses launched. Among the 170 businesses active in 2023, 39% are in farming, 21% in service, and 34% in retail. Since their launch, the 170 active businesses supported by WPDI have generated 253 jobs. The survival rate of the businesses supported by WPDI since 2018 is at 97%.

Types of the WPDI-supported Businesses active in 2023 in South Sudan



Jobs generated by WPDI-supported businesses active in 2023 in South Sudan (by type of business)



“

Where I live, we don't have a grinding mill in the area, so people would travel long distances (at least 3 miles) in search of grinding mills. When I brought the grinding mill to the area, people were happy. As a result, I am now capable of providing for myself all the basic needs and paying for my children's school fees. The program should continue such that other colleagues will be in the position of receiving the same support.

”

Sarah Jokudu

Former business trainee,
owner of Mama Sarah grinding mill





Impact Story

Betty Monday's Beekeeping Business

Betty Monday, a resident of Mugwo Payam in Yei River County, had been practicing beekeeping using locally made beehives, limiting her production capacity to approximately 5 to 10 liters of honey every three months. Despite facing challenges such as insecurity and limited job opportunities in her community, Betty remained committed to her beekeeping venture, recognizing its potential for economic empowerment.

WPDI Support and Business Expansion: With support from the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, Betty transitioned from traditional to modern beekeeping practices by adopting advanced beehives. This transition enabled her to expand her beekeeping operation from 10 to 50 hives, signifying her commitment to increasing honey production and improving her economic prospects.



Betty emerged as one of the top three candidates during the competition that followed the WPDI business bootcamp she attended in 2023 in Yei county of Central Equatoria State. Motivated to enhance her beekeeping enterprise, Betty eagerly joined the program to acquire essential skills and knowledge for business growth and development.

In Betty's community, issues of insecurity and poor transportation infrastructure contribute to the existing economic hardships. Limited job opportunities further exacerbate the socio-economic challenges faced by residents, necessitating innovative approaches to income generation and livelihood improvement.

“

With the support of Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, I am currently running a modern beekeeping business in Jombu Boma of Mugwo Payam. Before receiving the support from the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, I was practicing the traditional way of beekeeping and on a small scale because I could not afford to purchase the modern beehives. However, I am now doing modern beekeeping using modern beehives on a large scale.

This support has enabled me to realize my dream of being the best producer of quality honey for both international and local supplies and consumption. I am now very happy for the support because once I harvest my honey, I will sell it and use the money for paying my children's school fees and my life and that of my family can be changed. Once again I want to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative for supporting my business.

”

Betty Monday



Betty Monday in her farm with improved beehives in November 2023



Impact Story

Woodland Workshop

Jomari Benet, a resident of Liwolo Payam in Kajo-Keji County, previously operated his own woodland workshop but faced challenges due to the lack of basic equipment. Operating on a small scale limited Jomari's income and hindered his ability to produce high-quality products, impacting his livelihood and family's well-being.

Upon learning about the WPDI Business Bootcamp program through his area chief, Jomari seized the opportunity to enhance his business management and entrepreneurship skills. Recognizing the potential for business growth and improvement, Jomari eagerly enrolled in the program to acquire essential knowledge and expertise.

In Jomari's community, the absence of quality carpentry workshops poses challenges for community members seeking home and office furniture. Many individuals must travel long distances to access basic furniture items such as desks, beds, tables, and chairs, highlighting the need for accessible and reliable carpentry services.

Jomari Benet from Kajo-Keji attended WPDI business training and participated in the business plan competition organized by WPDI in Kajo-Keji in 2023. Jomari was one of the beneficiaries who emerged a winner. He was awarded funds to improve his carpentry workshop which was struggling. With the support from the Whitaker Peace & Development Initiative, Jomari's woodworking enterprise underwent a transformation. Financial assistance provided by WPDI enabled Jomari to acquire essential equipment, significantly expanding his workshop's capacity and product range. This growth allowed him to employ community members and increase his profits, alleviating financial strain and improving his family's quality of life.

“

I am grateful for WPDl's support, I would like to emphasize the positive impact on my business and family. I now have enhanced capabilities and increased income. I plan to enroll my children in better schools and expand my workshop's reach within Kajo-Keji County. I wholeheartedly recommend the program from WPDl to empower individuals and foster economic development in the community.

”

Jomari

Entrepreneur trained with WPDl



Peace Through Sports



30,023

Participants in all sportive activities

72

Teams managed by WPDI

1,388

Regular training participants

28,635

Participants in competitions and events

Recognizing the potential of sports as a catalyst for transformation among children and youth affected by conflict, poverty, or gang violence, this initiative offers a platform for inclusion in constructive activities and shields against negative influences. Sports serve as a vehicle for personal growth, fostering a sense of community, healing, and holistic development.

Through collaboration with key stakeholders such as the South Sudan Football Association (SSFA), the Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, Juba City Council, and County authorities in Juba, Maridi, Torit, and Budi, WPDI seeks to harness the universal appeal of sports. The Peace Through Sports program prioritizes health and wellbeing, education, cultural exchange, human interaction, and community cohesion. By integrating values such as dignity, mutual respect, and fair play into sporting activities, participants are encouraged to cultivate a positive ethos conducive to peace and nonviolence in a nation grappling with prolonged conflict.

The Peace Through Sports program adopts a comprehensive approach, combining sports activities with competitions and dedicated awareness and educational sessions on conflict resolution and human rights, thus embedding a peacebuilding dimension. Beyond sports, participants are invited to engage in other WPDI initiatives, particularly those offered at the Community Learning Centers (CLCs). These encompass vocational training programs in ICT and Entrepreneurship, as well as interventions focused on trauma healing and Sexual and Reproductive Health. Through this integrated strategy, WPDI aims to empower and positively impact the lives of young people across targeted regions.





Impact Story

Nahla Haram and Fodofodo FC



Nahla Haram, a football player with Fodofodo FC in Torit County, shares her journey of resilience and empowerment. Raised by a single mother in the aftermath of conflict, Nahla's upbringing was marked by adversity. Yet, her discovery of football in 2019 ignited a passion that would change her life trajectory. Despite societal norms opposing girls' participation in sports, Nahla's dedication to football proved transformative, offering her opportunities for personal and educational growth.

Nahla first encountered WPDI's program while residing in the Beyale refugee settlement in Uganda, where the organization supported her school by providing Conflict Resolution Education training. Upon returning to Torit in South Sudan, she discovered WPDI's sports support in the county, motivating her to form a football team. As a coach, Nahla trained 17 players with WPDI's backing, recognizing the program's multifaceted impact on her life and community.

Challenging cultural norms, Nahla advocates for the inclusion of women in football, highlighting its empowering effects. Through football, she experienced personal growth, securing financial support for education and fostering a sense of unity within her community. Nahla's journey underscores the transformative power of sports in overcoming obstacles and promoting social change.

Football's holistic benefits extend beyond physical fitness, contributing to personal well-being and community cohesion. The sport facilitates friendships across diverse backgrounds, fostering unity and healing in divided communities. Tournaments serve as platforms for reconciliation and camaraderie, transcending individual differences and promoting social harmony.

Nahla's story exemplifies the impact of WPDI's Peace through Sports program, empowering youth like her to overcome adversity, foster community cohesion, and champion positive change.



These programs have already provided significant benefits to many youths, especially the younger age groups. The most important aspect is that it has brought the youth together, enabling them to know each other and interact positively. It has played a crucial role in fostering peaceful conduct among them. This transformative effect is particularly evident in the positive change in their attitudes, shifting from being potentially violent and notorious to peacefully coexisting. This is the most valuable contribution that these programs have brought to us here, and we truly appreciate it.



Martin Oting Saturlino

Secretary
Local Football Association and a community leader



Peace Engagement Days

An essential component of the "Peace through Sports" program is the "Peace Engagement Day," significant events designed to bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds to witness the various activities under the program. These events showcase a range of activities, including sporting tournaments, community dialogues, traditional dances, cultural exhibitions, and award presentations, fostering vibrancy, celebration, and joy among participants, community members, partners, and stakeholders.

In Eastern Equatoria State (EES), two Peace Engagement Days were held in Torit County, structured to address harmful cultural practices hindering girls' access to education and perpetuating issues like forced and child marriages. These events aimed to sensitize communities on critical issues, with activities starting with football games involving both girls and boys, followed by traditional performances and interactive sessions between school girls, community leaders, and local government officials. Key messages focused on combating early and forced marriages, seeking justice for sexually abused girls and women, and implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve gender equality.

Two other Peace Engagement Days were conducted in Chukudum payam, Budi County. These events emphasized unity among local leaders, women, and youth in eliminating violence from schools, communities, and workplaces. Key messages included promoting peace and equality, zero tolerance for bullying and corporal punishment in schools, and the prevention of child labor.

In Central Equatoria State (CES), six Peace Engagement Days were held concurrently in Juba County and the Protection of Civilians site. These events contributed to reducing youth violence by providing platforms for sporting activities, cultural initiatives, and Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) sessions. Themes covered included understanding the causes of conflict among team members, promoting peace values in sports, and learning how to control emotions during sports activities. These themes aimed to foster harmony and peace within the society, addressing conflict-related challenges effectively.

Highlight - Peace Engagement Days in Juba County and the Protection of Civilians site



“

The return of WPDI to support IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) through sports activities brings joy and optimism. During the funding gap, the community sustained sporting activities at the PoC through contributions and support from players previously trained by WPDI. Some players have even advanced to play for national teams, using their success to give back to the youth at the PoC. One player trained under the WPDI program now plays for a South Korean football club. This success reinforces the belief that the new project will build on past achievements, fostering unity, peace, and socio-economic development within the PoC. WPDI's return is anticipated to significantly contribute to the well-being and progress of the community.

”

Lam Jok

Community Leader at PoC 3

“

As the team captain, I am truly appreciative of WPDI's Peace Through Sports initiative, which has united us in peace and harmony. Through this program, we come together to share our football talents and build meaningful connections. My message to fellow players, fans, and the community is clear: we must collaborate in peace and unity to contribute to the development of our country through sports. Sports has the unique ability to bring large numbers of people together, fostering a space where positive ideas can be shared and cultivated. I extend my gratitude to WPDI and encourage them to continue supporting us until we achieve our sports goals. Together, we can make a lasting impact through unity and teamwork.

”

Joice Stephen

Team Captain Al-Salam FC

“

As a proud female footballer and university student, my journey has been shaped by WPDI's sports activities. Growing up in a financially struggling family, accessing education seemed daunting. However, joining WPDI's sports activities in Uganda (as a refugee in the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement) changed everything. There, I not only honed my football skills but also learned the art of peaceful living. Returning to South Sudan, my talent caught the attention of local football clubs, eventually leading me to the national team.

Representing my country in various international tournaments funded my education, and today, I'm just one semester away from completing my studies. I share my story to inspire fellow girls in South Sudan. Despite societal challenges, I believe in the transformative power of sports. It promotes physical health, flexibility, and exposes one to different cultures. Yes, obstacles exist, but perseverance is key. To all the girls out there, remember, progress is progress, no matter how slow. Stay strong, always!

”

Esther Kide

Female Footballer and Coach

Conclusion

In 2023, WPDI's Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) Program in South Sudan made significant strides, directly benefiting over 120,000 individuals, and reaching a total of 182,682 people since 2021. This increase partly reflects the expansion of our geographical scope to areas of the Equatoria region where WPDI previously had limited presence, including Kajo-Keji and Morobo. By venturing into new and sometimes challenging frontiers, WPDI continued to make positive strides, empowering communities with the skills and tools needed for self-reliance initiatives.

Despite challenges such as project delays, access difficulties during the rainy season, security issues, and inflation, WPDI expanded its reach in the Equatoria region, and solidified its position as a key player in peacebuilding and community development. Our programs gained widespread recognition and support from various stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels, who noted our capacity to address high-profile issues, including community violence, conflicts between cattle herders and farmers, and the training of government officials such as Members of Parliament (MPs) and community leaders.

The year saw WPDI forging new partnerships and successfully implementing key projects. Notable successes include the launch of 113 small businesses, among which the collaboration with Skinny Dipped empowered young female entrepreneurs to take a major turn in their lives.

The initiation of a trauma healing project has also been a groundbreaking expansion of our programs, bringing a service that remains nearly nonexistent for most of the population, especially in remote areas. WPDI's interventions led to a tangible reduction in insecurity incidents and improved inter-communal relations. The engagement of the Balanda and Azande tribes in dialogues reduced tensions and set the stage for a comprehensive conference in 2024.

In conclusion, despite its challenges, 2023 represents a year of significant progress for WPDI in South Sudan. In this respect, we shall stress that the year proved special also as it marked the first field mission in South Sudan of our CEO and Founder, Forest Whitaker, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This visit allowed him to engage with beneficiaries and stakeholders, strengthen partnerships, and to witness firsthand the changes that had happened in the places where WPDI has been active for the past years. This created a unique opportunity to reflect on new ways to pursue our mission in the years to come. Peace and sustainability are indeed moving targets for which we constantly need to rethink how we aim at them – notably in a context where climate and environmental issues increasingly challenge the resilience capacity of communities, which is at the core of our mandate.



Partners



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Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
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التعليم
فوق
الجميع | education
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