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2020 was a difficult year for all as nobody had expected and prepared themselves to face the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic. It was a challenging year that made people adapt to new realities and it was no exception for Restless Development Nepal. We stayed strong, designed and adopted new methods and protocols to continue our work—serving the communities.

Despite the challenge, we continued to keep close collaboration with our partners and young people and continued to operate our programs applying new strategies mostly virtually. From evacuating the international and national volunteers safely to making project amendments and arrangements to remote working; we adapted quickly to the changes. This was possible due to the dedicated staff and motivated young volunteers/alumni at Restless Development Nepal.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, our young leaders stepped up to address the problems raised as a result of the pandemic. Through Alumni Engagement Committee (AEC) and Youth Take the Lead (YTL), our active volunteers created digital content to promote safe hygiene practices; Covid–19 Do’s and Don’ts; called out widespread COVID–19 myths; conducted workshops, webinars; national dialogues and discussions with young people who were involved in the fight against the pandemic. Some of the successful events organized during the pandemic includes workshops on “Role of young people to reduce stigma and misinformation during COVID-19”, “Safe Abortion and Family Planning Services Information Accessibility during COVID–19”, “Mental Health and Well-being” and “Advocacy Capacitating Restless Development Alumni”. All these events directly helped the wider community to receive correct information on COVID 19. In the midst of a pandemic and nationwide lockdown, we managed to provide medical, food and psychosocial support to some of the marginalized and affected populations.

Similarly, in 2020 we successfully concluded our Colours of Rainbow (COR) project and International Citizen Services (ICS) which was launched with the support of Amplify Change and UK respectively. These unique programs were effective in capacitating and engaging young people to identify local problems and pin down the right solutions to counter such problems.

Even though we faced difficult situations, as it is said “Out of Adversity Comes Opportunity”, we were able to attain many learnings. These tough times taught us how we can conduct low–cost but high–impact events and programmes closely with our stakeholders if not in–person then through the optimum use of technology.

It has become evident that these unprecedented times have demanded more use of technology and working remotely. Despite the current escalation, we hope to continue our work maintaining strong relations and collaboration with our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, alumni, partners, and donors. At Restless Development Nepal, we believe that the current situation is also an opportunity for us to design our program differently and provide more space for young people to equip them technically. Despite the precarious situation, we see hope. Let’s keep our self-confidence and our energy high as always.
STORY OF RESILIENCE

“I wish the day will come where all individuals are treated the same way and work together to achieve the transformative and lasting change of the society”

Jeena Rana, a 30 year old permanent resident of Udaipur has been advocating for LGBTQI rights since five years. Having grown up in a traditional Terai community where gender minorities were bullied and misbehaved, Jeena has witnessed the brutality faced by LGBTQI people in her community. Currently, she is working for ‘Saptarangi Nepal’ - an organization supporting LGBTQI community as a Program Coordinator. As a LGBTQI herself, she is proud to support many others like her. She shared her family abandoned her after her gender identity was revealed. Lack of family support and constant bullying from friends and teachers resulted in Jeena dropping out of college.

For her livelihood Jeena struggled immensely. With very limited options she had to move to a different place for job opportunities. However, at work she and her colleagues were misbehaved, harassed and sexually abused. According to her, the owner never supported and protected Jeena and her other colleagues from those harassments.

“When we were harassed and abused, we went to the police station. Unfortunately no action were taken”

Jeena came in contact with “Naulo Bihani ,, an organization for LGBTQI and it was only then she came to know about LGBTQI. Later, through Blue Diamond Society (BDS) she started attending BDS programs and gradually became more aware about her rights, policies and actions.

“Finding work for a living is still a huge challenge for the LGBTQI community. So, many of us choose dancing to earn our living (dancing is the only option for many of them due to lack of acceptance and illiteracy)”

In recent time, COVID-19 has also added more challenges in their lives. She says, the struggle is real.

We are struggling to earn and have been forced to leave our rented flat/house as we can’t pay for our accommodation. She added, “You can’t fight for your rights with an empty stomach. First, you need to be alive and then you can think of fighting for rights”

While working with Saptarangi Nepal, she attended a workshop delivered by Restless Development Nepal. After getting training from Restless Development, her documentation became strong and her confidences was also enhanced. She gained the knowledge and skills to coordinate with the municipality and ward to submit proposals and run the projects benefiting LGBTQI community. Additionally, the program activities of Colors of Rainbow project provided her platform for access to information and exposure learning more about budget allocation for LGBTQI in the ward and municipality level.

Despite the difficulties, during the initial phase of the lockdown, Jeena was able to write and submit proposals for two municipalities. The objective was to receive grants to provide relief support to the LGBTQI community members. Lack of citizenship and other government authorized ID cards created a hindrance while submitting the proposal to the local government, however, she was able to leverage the budget from the municipality for 75 individuals of her community.

“I wish the day will come where all individuals are treated the same way and work together to achieve the transformative and lasting change of the society”.

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Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, ICS alumni from Restless Development Nepal—Alisha Thapa, Nishu Acharya, Subina Basnet, and Sona Shahi came together to work under the Alumni Engagement Committee (AEC), a committee that was created to mobilize young leaders to address the various concerns brought about by the pandemic with innovative and inspiring solutions. The committee offered “Young people as Superheroes” to take leadership in slowing the spread of the pandemic; to be connected, empowered and optimistic, and to work with communities to make it resilient in the light of the pandemic. These young girls been relentlessly reaching out to the community for support in response to the outbreak of the pandemic by fighting misinformation and empowering young people to act and lead the battle against the ongoing crisis. They are active in creating digital content to promote safe hygiene practices and call out widespread myths regarding the virus. They have been sharing powerful stories of youth working in the frontlines to inspire and create a strong sense of solidarity among young people. They have also been holding workshops and focus group discussions with young people who have been involved in the fight against the pandemic, to gather ideas and suggestions pertaining to youth mobilization and leadership in the face of the present or any upcoming crisis. These ideas are collected with an intent to document into reports that would be disseminated to relevant stakeholders for future emergencies.

The AEC organised a seminar on “Stress Management during and after the Pandemic”. With the recognition that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused extensive stress among people, this workshop was organized with an objective to create awareness regarding stress management. The lockdown period was hard on all of us; it severely disrupted the course of our lives and left us with a feeling of irritability, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. At the same time, fear and worry regarding the virus have been naturally affecting our mental health. With due consideration, the webinar was an effort by the Alumni Engagement Committee to reach out to the young people and help them to cope up with these tiring times.

“AEC activities have kept me engaged, my mind occupied during these stressful times. When everything is uncertain, there is something to look forward to and work on and that really helps. This experience is also valuable to me professionally; as a public health student, the experiences that I am gaining working amidst a public health emergency is definitely a great learning opportunity for me.” – Subina

The programme was advertised via various social media platforms and was open to all. The number of people attending the webinar was above 40. The general feedback received from the audience was positive; they expressed having found the programme quite helpful and effective. It was thus largely successful and AEC believed that had created an overall positive impact in our community through the webinar.
GIVING BACK TO SOCIETY

Sushma Bista, a dedicated activist from Nepal, is passionate about creating social change through the empowerment of young people. As a young individual herself, Sushma recognizes that young people have the power to solve global issues and make a positive and lasting difference in the world. Through the Youth Take the Lead exchange (YTL) program, Sushma participated as a NOREC exchange volunteer in Tanzania. There she not only got a close insight into some of the challenges experienced by the Tanzanian youth and communities, but she also learned about the innovative, youth-led solutions used to address the young people’s issues.

“In order to get better clarity regarding my career goals and future plans I wanted to explore what ICS and Restless Development would bring. I believed that this experience would definitely give me a wider perspective to look forward into my career”.

During her time in Tanzania, Sushma and her counterpart assessed CSOs in various regions of the country and developed recommendations for how these CSOs could improve and better engage with the youth and community. They also surveyed alumni of Restless Development Tanzania in order to understand how the hub can support and empower them through Alumni engagement. Based on the survey, the team compiled and shared impact stories of young leaders. Sushma feels that her time in Tanzania was a meaningful experience through which she was able to gain valuable life-long skills.

Adaptability, cross-cultural communication, effective planning and setting timely goals are just some of the skills that Sushma will apply back into the work she does in Nepal.

“I think all these lessons and insights I have gained from the Tanzania hub will enhance my performance and enable me to work efficiently and effectively. Also, it has inspired me to take action and initiate as a young person”.

Currently working back in Nepal with the Restless Development team, Sushma and her colleague are training and mobilizing young people through various workshops. They have delivered workshops on advocacy and leadership which aimed to “empower young people to raise their voice and take necessary action in their communities”. They have also conducted an online advocacy workshop for the alumni and are planning to deliver more. Sushma believes that her work through the YTL program has made a positive influence on the communities that she has engaged with.

“I feel like we were able to make significant impacts through our work. Sharing the stories of the young leaders in both the host country and home country has motivated and inspired young people to take action and create change”.

The exchange experience has been one of Sushma’s “most interesting and exciting journeys so far”. It has not only given her clarity in her future goals but also allowed her to step outside her comfort zone and gain new perspectives.
YOUTHS ENGAGEMENT IN EVENTS AND PROGRAMS
VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ICS II Pivot COVID-19 Response

"I am glad to have a discussion about this issue with community volunteers like you. In this situation, we need togetherness and support more than ever. I will do my part for not spreading hatred behavior." – Kalpana KC, Community member, Chhampi ward no.9, Godawari Municipality

Alumni Engagement Committee

"AEC activities have kept me busy. I myself have got an opportunity to understand about mental health issues; and I have done things I’ve previously not done before. I’m learning new things." – Subina, AEC Volunteer

Colours of Rainbow

"I was having shortages of food due to lockdown, I couldn’t travel to my home district and now I am stuck in Kathmandu. My cash and food has finished, so I was wondering how to live. In contact with my LGBTIQ friends, I was provided food as relief. Hopefully I will be able to sustain for more days now." – Pradip Khadka, Relief beneficiary from Blue Diamond Society (BDS), Student.

Alumni Celebration Event

“This was a highly successful event and I think we must continue it annually.” – ICS volunteer

Youth Take the Lead

“The most important thing that is affecting during this pandemic is mental health. Though I will be in quarantine for safety reasons, I will be involved in different programs via online, through organisations conducting various sorts of programs. So we can use this time to do some productive stuff.” – Rumi

“Traveling to different places and getting to interact with people you’ve never met before, getting to interact in other languages you’ve never heard before, it’s a big challenge for me but I was ready to accept the challenge.” – Inuja Pradhan, YTL volunteer.
**Alumni Celebration Event**

Restless Development Nepal hosted an Alumni Celebration event on 4th January 2020 at Kathmandu. We organized this event following the recommendations advanced in the Alumni Engagement Guideline 2019. It aimed to bring together Restless Development Alumni from across all programs and offer them a quality experience of reuniting as a community and sharing their experiences, as well as offer them the opportunity to continue learning on topics that are of vital importance in the present day to their personal and professional growth.

We also awarded ICS volunteer returnees with certificates, appreciating their efforts and hard-work on stage. The event was attended by 118 alumni: 93 former volunteers and 25 former staff and guests invited for the occasion. The event was a huge success and alumni showed interest in having such events in the future days.

**International Citizen Service (ICS)**

111 national and international volunteers as a part of ICS Q20, started their placement from 7th and 14th February 2020 respectively. Though the placement was abruptly halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the volunteers were able to engage in various communities activities during their placement such as an orientation about saving management; IT classes for students in schools; awareness on women empowerment; awareness-raising event on safe motherhood; and COVID-19 awareness programs. The program was latter pivoted as 'ICS II Pivot'.

ICS II Pivot program supported young people to lead in the response to combat the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. ‘ICS II Pivot’ witnessed young people of the communities, who have emerged as the local youth leaders, taking leadership to prevent and respond to the pandemic.

Young leaders led the campaign to build resilience within their communities during and after the pandemic, including 10 community volunteers in Godawari, Dakshinkali, and Mahankal Rural Municipalities and 13 Alumni Engagement Committee (AEC) members. These youths played a crucial role in conducting online and offline activities to access and disseminate credible information related to COVID-19, and these local leaders in the community conducted activities that included (i) WASH Materials Support; and (ii) Stress Management and Psychosocial Support. Similarly, in order to address the various concerns brought about by the pandemic with innovative and inspiring solutions, the AEC members conducted virtual workshops, training, and survey reaching more than 191 young people directly and 13,017 people indirectly.

The program was led by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and funded by the UK Government which has officially come to an end in Dec 2020.
Colours of Rainbow (COR)

In partnership with Amplify Change and the Federation for Sexual and Gender Minorities Nepal (FSGMN), Restless Development launched the ‘Colours of Rainbow’ project from May 2018 to October 2020. The project aimed to create an enabling environment for LGBTQI people in Nepal so they can fully claim their sexual and reproductive health and rights and live in a stigma-free society. The major objectives of the project were:

1) strengthening the LGBTQI network in Nepal by building the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that are focusing on LGBTQI issues at the community level;
2) strengthening the nationwide advocacy efforts of the LGBTQI CSO network in the country; and
3) building the capacity of LGBTQI youth, enabling them to lead evidence-based advocacy to ensure their SRHR are effectively recognized and provided for.

The “Colours of Rainbow” project was implemented in 34 out of 77 districts of Nepal. Restless Development Nepal worked together with the FSGMN to support 52 district-based Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Through the Youth-led model, Restless Development Nepal led the process of capacitating the CSOs working for LGBTQI health and rights to meaningfully engage young LGBTQI people in their programmes, with a specific focus on advocacy. Through Colours of Rainbow, Restless Development Nepal has reached 4778 LGBTQI (LGBTQI – 420 & Non-LGBTQI – 4358) people by providing training on LGBTQI awareness and issues from May 2018 to October 2020. Altogether 80 CSOs were benefited through the Organisational Development Toolkit which contains major components to capacitate CSOs to improve and develop organizational strategies, structures and processes.

Supporting the LGBTQI Community

The pandemic and nationwide lockdown posed many challenges to the health and livelihood of the LGBTQI community. Considering the problem, in support of OutRight International Action, Restless Development Nepal together with the Federation of Sexual and Gender Minority Nepal, worked to support the community. 359 LGBTQI community members, including people living with HIV and AIDS, received food support in and outside of Kathmandu valley. To ensure the mental well-being of LGBTQI people, we conducted two groups of virtual psychosocial support sessions for 60 LGBTQI participants. The counselor provided further 45 individual support sessions through telephone, Viber, and Whatsapp to 16 LGBTQI clients.
Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, many participants from YTL’s 2nd cycle were compelled to change their plans. CSO assessments were completed remotely and homecoming activities were adapted to be online. In response to the pandemic, participants from Restless Development Nepal organized an online Global Dialogue. The event brought together young speakers from around the world to discuss the challenges of COVID-19 and the initiatives of young people. In Tanzania, YTL participants designed a two-day event to share their experience on youth advocacy, leadership and rights. The event was online and promoted youth taking action in response to the global pandemic.

Youth Take the Lead (NOREC)

Youth Take the Lead (YTL) is a 6 months exchange project led by Restless Development Nepal in partnership with the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC). The program focuses on enhancing youth leadership across three Restless Development Hubs: Nepal, Tanzania, and South Africa. It provides youth with a platform to demonstrate leadership skills and create a positive impact within the organization and in their communities.

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NOREC volunteers also organized 3 workshops on Advocacy Capacitating Restless Development Alumni. 37 alumni participated in the workshop and devised 5 action plans. Among them, 14 alumni delivered 3 different advocacy plans on COVID-19 response. These included, workshops on “Mental Health and Well-being”, dialogues on “Safe Abortion and Family Planning Services During Pandemic” and webinar on “Role of Young People to Reduce Stigma and Misinformation on COVID-19” reaching 140 youths.
OUR IMPACT

**Reaching out to more communities.**
Our programmes reached 60,411 young people across Nepal.

**Recognizing young leaders.**
Over 50 volunteers played a key role to conduct various activities to respond to COVID-19 pandemic.

**Connecting to listen, learn, and make change.**
We worked closely with 34 youth-led organizations and 5 international organizations to deliver programs including 2 international universities.

**Reaching our goals**

- **3,403 young people** participated in programmes to ensure young people’s voices are heard and considered, influencing decision makers and informing policies affecting their lives.

- **1,000 young people** participated in programmes to build the skills needed to make a living and succeed in life.

- **682 young people** participated in programmes to ensure they have ownership of the decisions affecting their bodies, health, wellbeing, and sexual rights.

- **16,040 young people** participated in programmes designed to build strong communities, ensure their voices are heard, have the skills to make a successful living, and own the decisions impacting their health and wellbeing.

**WITH THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS**

- Amplify Change
- Dance4Life
- Macquarie University
- Ministry of Youth and Sports
- National Youth Council
- Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA)
- Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC)
- Right Here, Right Now (RHRN)
- VSO
- UK AID
- UNFPA
- UNICEF
- UN Women
- USAID
- University of Tasmania
GLIMPSE OF RESTLESS’S FINANCE

Donor wise Expenses FY 2019-20

Income Vs Expenses FY 2019-20
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Donor wise Income FY 2019-20

Expenses allocation FY 2019-20

- Admin: 6.53%
- Program: 93.47%