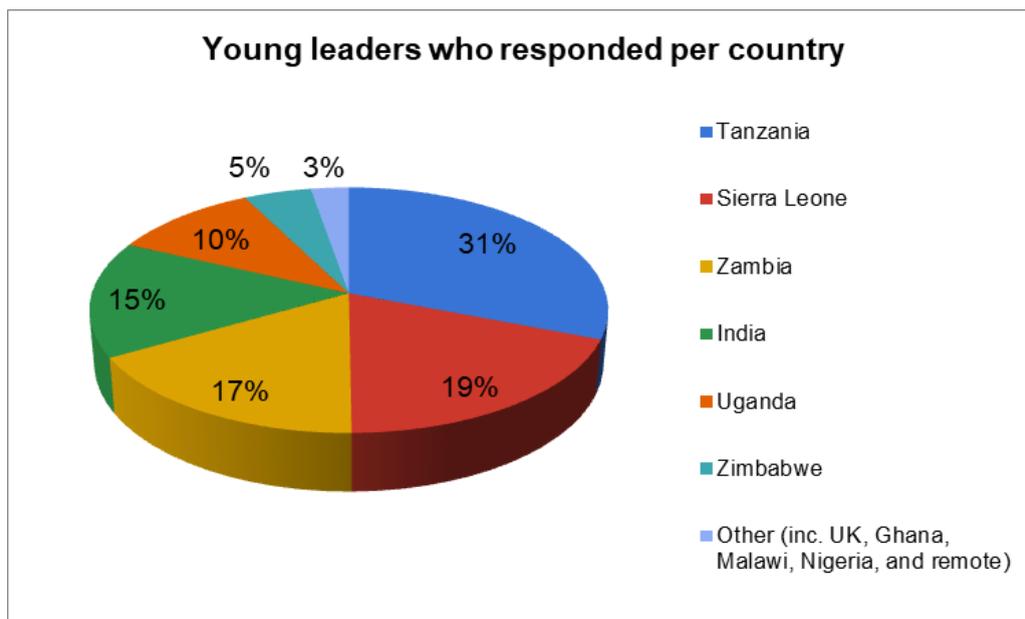


## Annual Young Leaders Survey, 2021: What are young people saying?

Restless Development's Annual Young Leaders Survey is conducted every year to gain feedback from our young leaders on their experience with us. The Annual Young Leaders survey 2021 had 333 responses from both current and alumni volunteers<sup>1</sup>, and was completed by all types of young leaders, from peer educators delivering activities in communities to advocates, researchers, campaigners, mobilisers, monitors and reporters. This summary document is intended to provide an overview of how young leaders across the agency have experienced working with Restless Development and outlines some actionable suggestions and recommendations to improve their engagement in the future.



### How do young leaders feel about working with Restless Development?

The most popular motivation for young leaders to volunteer with Restless Development is to lead change and have an impact (80%), followed by the desire to increase their knowledge and understanding of development work (73%), to gain new skills (70%), and to develop as a leader (62%) and get a job (29%).

Here is a snapshot of how young leaders feel about their engagement with Restless Development, compared between 2019-2021<sup>2</sup>, which has been used to frame recommendations for future action:

- **Support received whilst volunteering with Restless Development:** Young leaders have consistently maintained that the training provided and communication by

<sup>1</sup> Young leaders belonged to India, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda. There were no responses from the USA and Nepal, which is understandable given the nature of programmes run in the USA and the limited programme portfolio under Nepal.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that 558 volunteers responded to the survey in 2019; 627 responded in 2020 and 333 responded in 2021. Refer to Annexure 1 for a graphical comparison of how young leaders feel with respect to the support they received, how valued they feel and what their impact of volunteering has been, both personally and on communities.

Restless Development is excellent or good. The proportions have shown an upward trend between 2019 and 2020, with a minimal decrease in 2021 which can be attributed to our shift to digital models of training as well as limited in-person interactions. However, priority needs to be provided to ensuring that young leaders feel safe whilst working with Restless Development.

- **Do young leaders feel valued?** Young leaders feel proud to volunteer with Restless Development and feel that their contributions are recognised and valued. There has also been a minimal decrease in the proportion that feels Restless Development welcomes and values diversity at its workplace and programmes.
- **Impact of volunteering with Restless Development:** It is worth noting that the proportion of young leaders who wished to stay engaged with Restless Development once they finished volunteering has decreased from 2019, when the survey was first launched. There have also been minimal reductions in the proportion of young leaders who feel that they have been supported to become a leader and that their volunteering has had a positive impact on communities.

## Recommendations and suggestions

Below are some of the suggestions and recommendations that have come out of the experiences of young leaders with Restless Development. These are not intended to be prescriptive; rather hubs are encouraged to adapt these recommendations keeping in mind the context of their operations and activities.

- **A need to ensure continued commitment to [increasing inclusivity in programmes](#)**  
Of the 333 young leaders, only 3.6% identified themselves as Persons with Disabilities, which is a seven percentage point fall from 2020. This indicates an urgent need to improve the inclusivity of our programmes. This can be done by training staff on working with Persons with Disabilities; allocating a specific percentage of programme reach for Persons with Disabilities; actively pursuing and cultivating opportunities that will allow us to work in disability programming; and investing to make our hiring processes and infrastructure amenable for Persons with Disabilities.

- **Restless Development needs to prioritise the safety of its young leaders during their volunteering with the agency.**

A slight fall in the proportion of young leaders who have always felt safe working with Restless Development, from the past year indicates that safety and safeguarding is a priority area. Investing time in quarterly safeguarding trainings with staff and young leaders and conducting regular welfare checks with volunteers to understand what makes them feel safe or unsafe would be an important exercise. It is equally important to ensure that there is clear communication on how and who to report to in the event of an incident. Finally, brainstorming on how we can move towards safety, security and safeguarding systems which are more youth-led is another way through which we can prioritise their safety.

- **Adequate compensation has been identified as the most important support that Restless Development can offer its young leaders.**

Adequate and fair compensation to young people for their time is important to ensure that they feel valued for the work they do. What constitutes fair compensation is contingent and it would be useful for hubs to identify what that might mean for their contexts so that they are able to ensure adequate compensation to young people for their time.

- **According to our young leaders, raising awareness and mobilising communities, and developing the skills of other young people have been the most effective ways for them to create change.**

This can be a useful insight to adapt during the programme design and inception phases, where hubs can decide to allocate sufficient budget and activities for an extensive community engagement phase to enable awareness generation and peer to peer learning that can ultimately shift attitudes and behaviours. It is equally important to build relevant partnerships and influencing decision makers through evidence-based advocacy and our programmes need to build in these components to focus youth power.

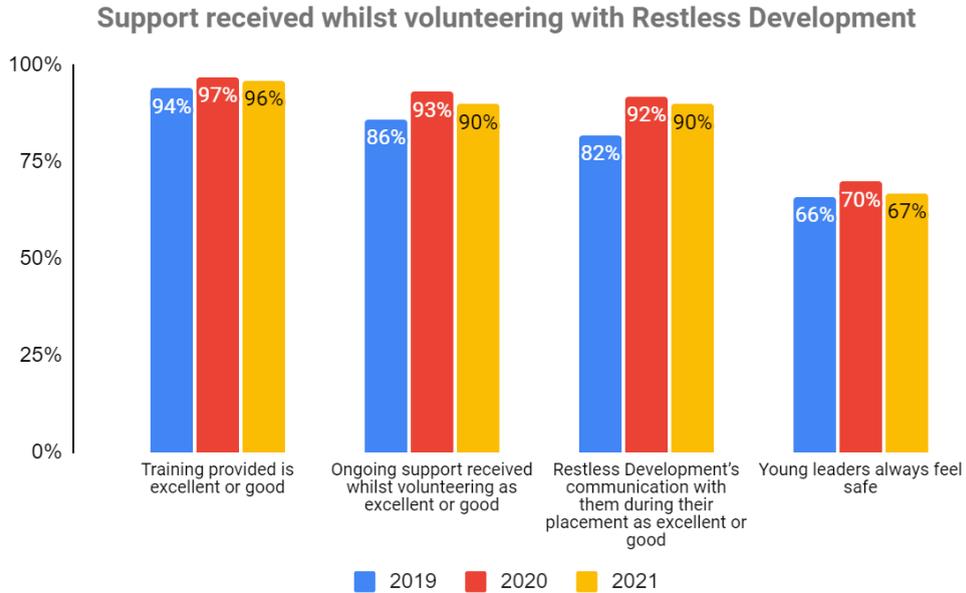
- **It is important for Restless Development to give more responsibility to young leaders to support them in their leadership journey.**

This is indicative of the fact that young people are willing to take on more responsibility; have leadership roles and decision-making responsibility; be listened to by decision makers; be visible on influential platforms; and have full autonomy to make decisions. How this translates for every hub is something worth doing a deeper dive.

## Annexure 1

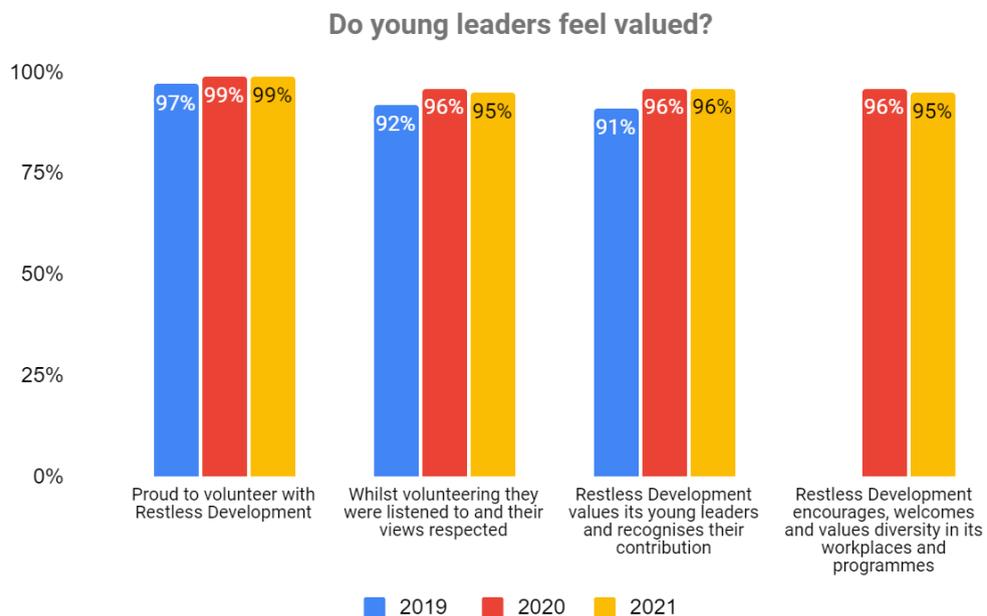
Responses given by young leaders have been grouped into three themes and compared across 2019 (n=558), 2020 (n=627) and 2021 (n=333):

- Support received whilst volunteering with Restless Development**



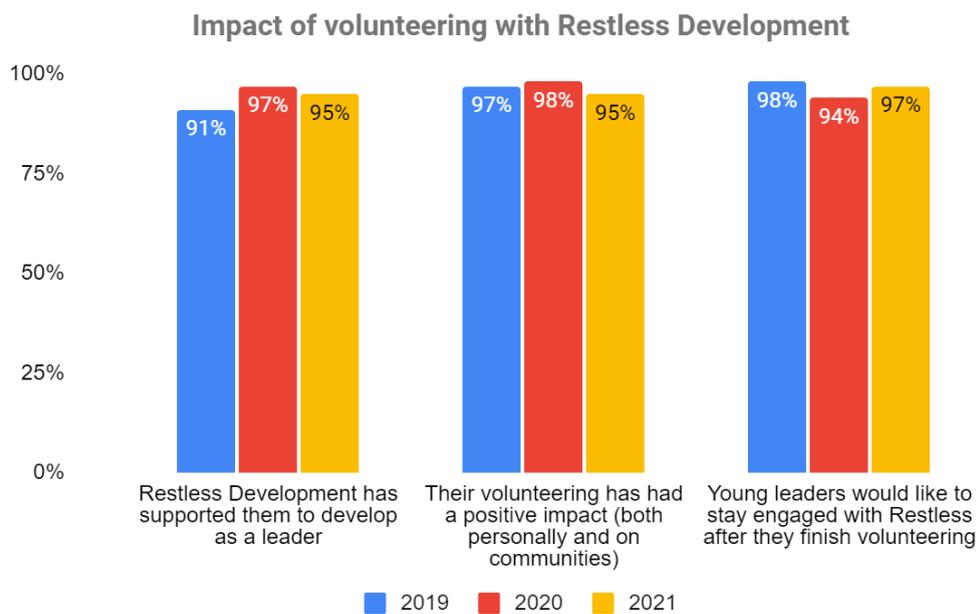
There has been an improvement in the support received by young leaders during their engagement with Restless Development between 2019 and 2020 with respect to training received, communication and their safety. A small reduction has been observed in the period between 2020 and 2021 across all four aspects, which has formed the basis for the recommendations given.

- Do young leaders feel valued?**



The proportion of young leaders who feel proud to volunteer with Restless Development, feel that they were listened to and that their contributions were respected increased showed an upward trend between 2019 and 2020. Young leaders have maintained a consistent proportion between 2020 and 2021 with respect to Restless Development valuing its young leaders, their contributions and them feeling proud to volunteer with the agency. There has been a marginal decrease in being listened to as well as in the way our commitment to diversity in the workplace has been perceived by young people.

- **Impact of volunteering with Restless Development**



It is worth noting that the proportion of young leaders who wished to stay engaged with Restless Development once they finished volunteering has decreased from 2019, when the survey was first launched. Though there has been an increase between 2020 and 2021, the fact that it still remains lower than 2019 is important to note.