

RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT ZAMBIA



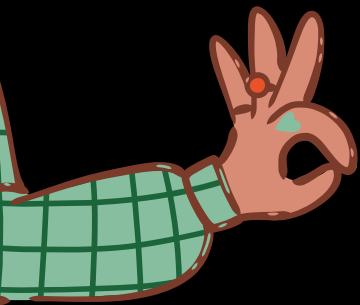
Strategic Plan
2022 - 2030

Unlocking the Potential of Youth-led
Development through Youth
Leadership

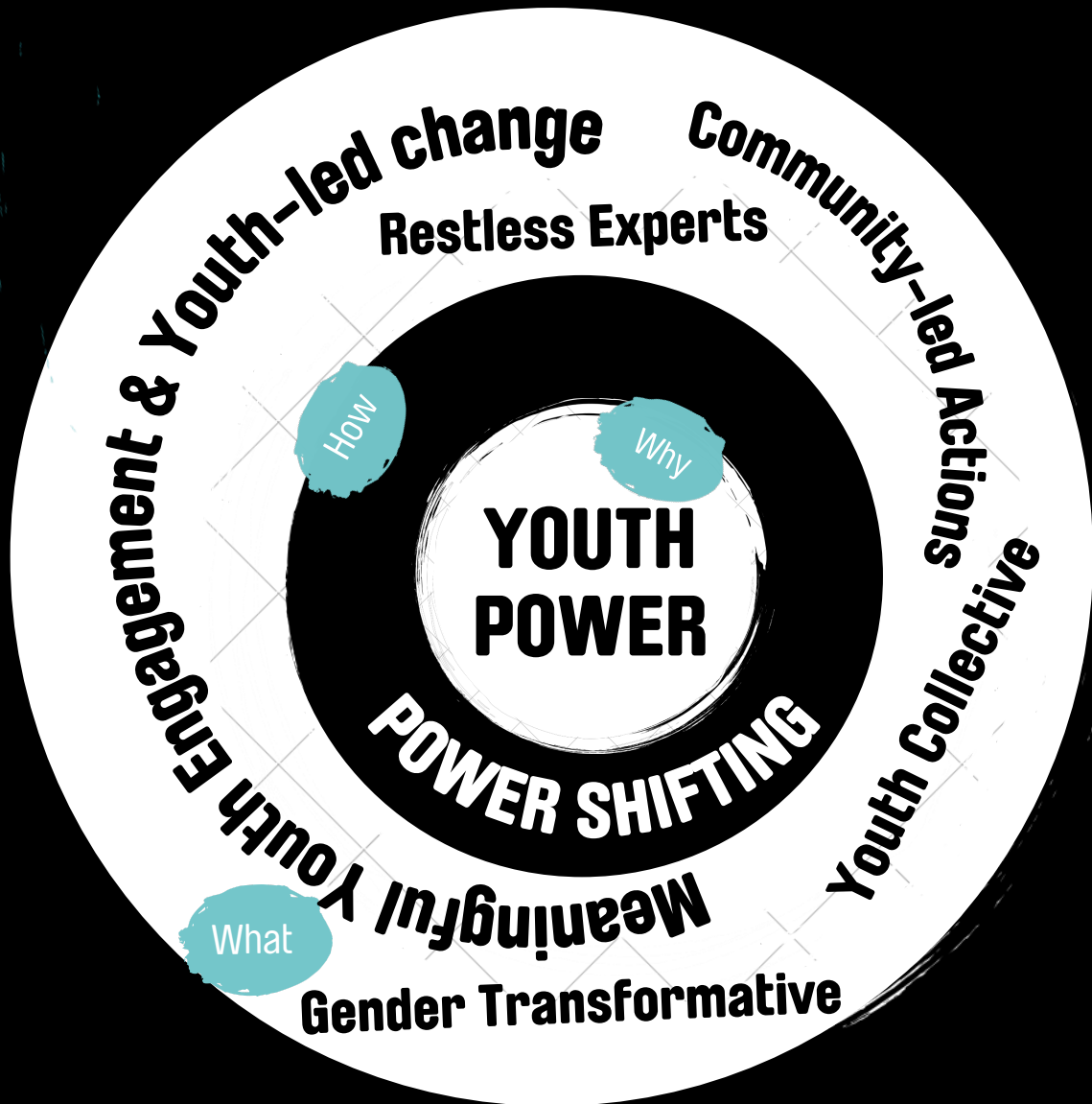
**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

**At the heart of everything we do is
Youth Power:
The collective power of young
leaders to create a better world.**

YOUTH POWER



OUR STRATEGY IN BRIEF



IMPACT

Priority Areas



Education & Livelihoods



Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights



Voice & Governance



Climate Justice

An illustration of a hand holding a bouquet of colorful flowers (yellow, blue, and red) against a dark background. The hand is rendered in a stylized, textured brown color. The background features abstract, glowing blue and purple circular patterns.

RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT ZAMBIA

Since 2003, Restless Development Zambia has been working with young people in Zambia towards youth-led development to ensure that their voices are heard in the decisions that affect their lives, bodies, health and wellbeing, livelihoods, and communities.

For us, youth-led development means unleashing the leadership of young people as assets towards solving Zambia's challenges.

Our work aligns to the country's Vision 2030 and the 8th National Development Plan (8NDP), which also positions the "peak youth" generation as vital to achieving the country's priority plans and Sustainable Development Goals

www.restlessdevelopment.org

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

Our reach

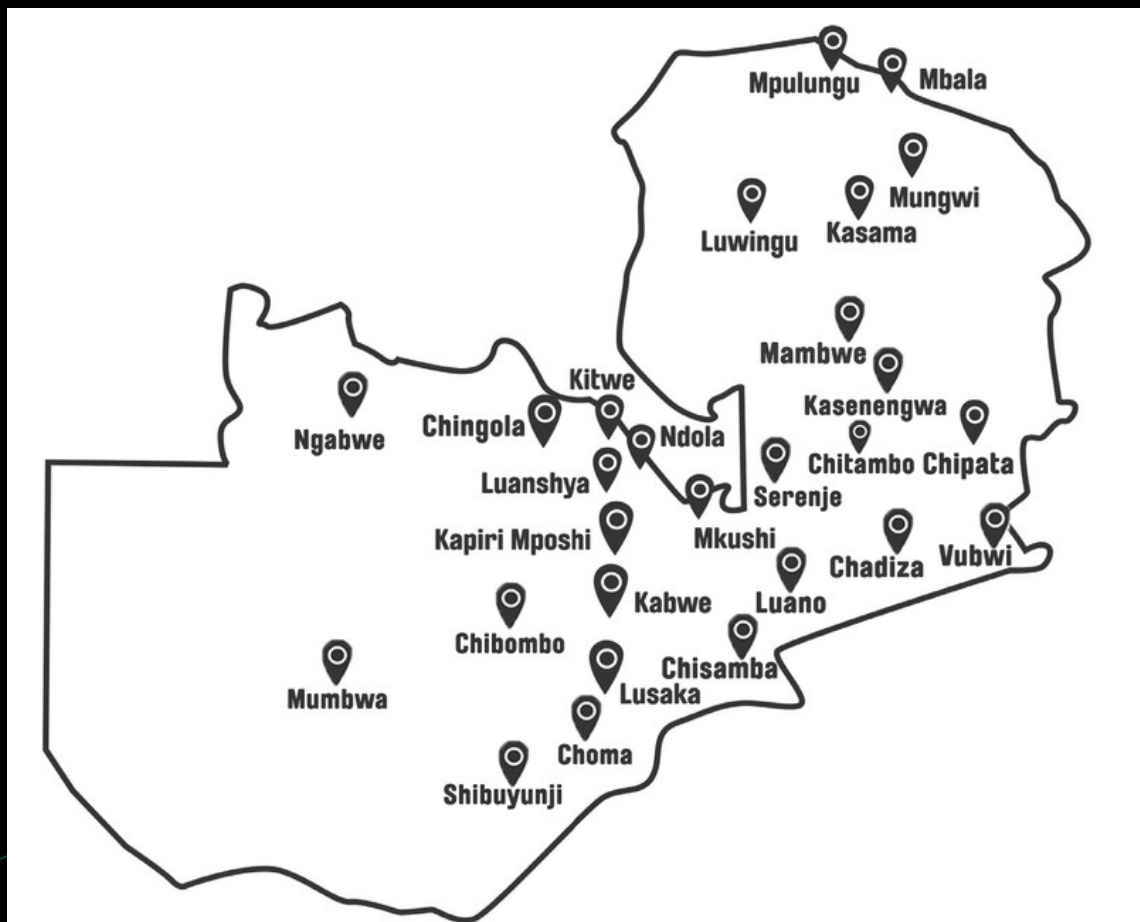
We work with young people between ages 10–28 years old directly and with all youth up to age 35 in collaboration with our partners across the country. Our way of working allows us to operate anywhere, always in partnership with local young people.

Our reach differs depending on whether we are working on direct implementation with communities, through community-based organisations or local authorities, or to advocate toward and influence power holders.

We continue to diversify our reach both by activating new opportunities for youth-led change and leveraging ongoing efforts of our organisation and our partners.

Areas of intervention

Currently, we operate in 51 districts (71% of all districts) across six provinces: Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Lusaka, Northern and Southern Provinces. This reach is a snapshot in time and will change based on the needs and opportunities of young people and the projects through which we work



The situation of young people in Zambia

Zambia is a youthful country. Nearly half of the 18.4 million residents are between 10–35 years old, and that proportion is still growing. However, young people are experiencing exclusion and socio-economic challenges including high youth unemployment, slow decentralisation, poor educational outcomes, insufficient access to sexual health and reproductive rights and services, increasing climate injustices, and harmful social norms and biases.

The majority of young people are growing up in conditions of poverty (59%), despite Zambia's emergence as a lower middle-income country in 2010, and most are not meaningfully being included in the decisions that shape their future.

EDUCATION

Education is widely viewed as a critical component to enhance the country's development as evidenced by Vision 2030, 8NDP, amongst other policies and frameworks. Furthermore, public spending on education is 3.7% of the nation's GDP, which matches the global average and the average amongst middle and lower-middle countries. Despite its priority in national frameworks and policies, it is a problematic area of service provision.

School enrolment and secondary school completion rates are improving, but they remain troublingly low: just one-third of students will graduate. Girls are less likely to complete secondary school and nearly half drop out by the time they reach upper secondary levels. This is due in large part to teen pregnancies and child marriages. There is hope that enrolment and completion rates will climb thanks to the introduction of free education for all launched in January 2022.

More work will still be needed, though, to ensure students can equitably receive a quality education by combating poor educational infrastructure and high student to teacher ratios, amongst other administrative challenges.



*LIVELIHOODS

Despite average poverty rates slowly declining, income inequality is increasing; this predominantly affects rural households with larger families and those living in compounds. Income inequality is partially contributed by the rise in unemployment over the past decade, which has been even more pronounced for young people. Youth unemployment increased from 14% in 2005 to more than 17% in 2021.



The country's National Development Plan and Vision 2030 envision an economy that offers decent employment opportunities for all Zambians of different skills and backgrounds. This can only be achieved through harnessing equitable opportunities for economic diversification and growth for all.

Prioritising investments aimed at creating sustainable opportunities and a supportive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship for the growing labour force, particularly young people and women, will be vital toward the future achievement of Zambia's visions and goals.

* SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

Access to SRHR information and services continues to be challenging for young people due to socio-cultural barriers that limit their access to information and guidance about making positive decisions about their sexual health.

SRHR education remains exclusionary – especially in rural areas, with cultural and religious norms being cited as reasons why relevant information is not shared with adolescents, including by parents. These are reasons why, for instance, half of young people are not aware that abortion if the pregnancy affects the health of the mother is legal under Zambian law. As a result, most young people turn to unconventional or home-based methods. Of maternal deaths in adolescence, 75% are attributable to unsafe abortion.

Furthermore, early marriages and underage and unplanned pregnancies are rising: half of Zambian women are married before they are 19. And, rates for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV remain high, especially for women who are disproportionately affected by HIV (14.2% compared to 7.5% in men).



* MENTAL HEALTH

Youth mental health is increasingly recognised as a growing problem in Zambia. Globally, an estimated one in every seven adolescents experience a mental health condition. The adolescent or youth prevalence of mental health conditions are not known in Zambia, though an estimated 20% of the population (all ages) suffers from a mental health disorder – higher than the 13% global average.

Zambia is not prepared to deal with the crisis: as of 2017, there are approximately two mental health professionals per 100,000 people (compared to the worldwide median of nine). The experience of mental health issues are multifaceted and include factors such as the lack of social communication, quality education, opportunities for activities, and increased family and financial burdens.

Undoubtedly, the youth mental health crisis has been deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic.



* GENDER EQUITY

Patriarchal tendencies have significantly affected the country's human and economic development. The daunting power imbalances between men and women and other vulnerable groups such as children, the youth, and people with disabilities means that those with greater power and ability to access productive resources (mostly men) are likely to participate more in all aspects of development (e.g., education, economic activities, decision-making), whereas those with less power or control and access continue to be marginalised.

Although Zambia is making progress towards achieving gender equality and equity, there are some notable challenges that continue to jeopardise efforts, particularly regarding enhancing women's access to productive means such as land, early and child marriages, and contradictory laws and policies between those constitutionally granted and customary law.

The 8NDP prioritises these issues, along with tackling gender-based violence, teenage pregnancies, child abuse, and violence against the vulnerable.

* VOICE AND GOVERNANCE

Zambia has been experiencing record low public participation in governance processes, with low engagement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in democratic decision-making. In fact, youth held just 4% of Parliament seats as of August 2021. Youth participation in local decision-making also remains low owing to, among other reasons, the country not having a framework to institutionalise and guide implementation of youth participation mechanisms.

Even when young people do make recommendations in community decision-making platforms, only 28% of them report their recommendations are worked on by duty bearers. There is a strong feeling amongst young people that their voices count, and they should be listened to by both civic and political leaders. But, because duty bearers do not demonstrate they are listening with actions, young people are unmotivated to continue to participate.

* CLIMATE JUSTICE

The government recognises the importance of biodiversity conservation and climate justice and has made it a development priority through numerous programmes and the ratification of multiple global statutes affirming commitments towards mitigating climate change (e.g., during COP26). Green growth, safeguarding the environment, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction are all priorities for GRZ.

Young people are equally invested in addressing climate change, as its impact on their future is inevitable. But, most feel that adults are not doing enough to address these environmental concerns.

Three-quarters of young people aged 10–16 recognise that their future will be different than what their parents experienced due to climate change and 60% feel sad or anxious about food shortages, flooding, drought, loss of flora and fauna, pollution of water or land, and/or overconsumption and waste of natural resources.



The Opportunity



The context underscores the urgent need to continue reaching young people, especially as they represent the growing majority of the population. Poverty and exclusion reinforce the call for more inclusive development and governance processes that ensure the aspirations and interests of young people are addressed and prioritised through policies, strategies, and resource allocation. Zambia is now in a prime position to listen to youth voices.

With the shift in government last year and the president's promise to work with young people, the opportunity is now to prove what the power of young people can be when equipped with the right tools.



Young people are essential to Zambia's socio-economic development and future: they can play a significant role in attaining Zambia's development vision if their rights and wellbeing are fully enhanced and their personal and development aspirations are fulfilled.

Our future

Unlocking the power of young people is at the heart of everything that Restless Development does. In our vision for Zambia, young men and women's voices are heard in decisions that matter to them most, from their communities to the government.

They have ownership over the decisions that affect their bodies, health, and wellbeing. They have the skills needed to make a living and succeed in life and where they are able to build strong communities that work together to solve issues.



Our vision

A Zambia where young people meaningfully participate in development for social and economic transformation.



Mission

To actively promote youth leadership as the centre of development in Zambia by generating an evidence base on youth participation in development.

Our values

We are a values-driven organisation. Our values describe what kind of the organisation we are, our beliefs, and the kinds of partnerships we join. Here are our values:



We are 100% professional.
We prove that young people can.



We are who we serve.
We are brave.



We are in it together.
We listen and learn.



We generate leaders.
We are proud to carry the banner for young people leading change.

Outcomes



By the end of our strategy period in 2030, we strive to achieve the following results that, together, contribute to achieving our vision for young people in Zambia:

- Well-equipped young people. Young people equitably have access to sufficient opportunities for quality education that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in life-long learning and pursue decent work.
- Influential and responsible young leaders. Youth leaders from diverse backgrounds are elected, appointed, and invited into governance and/or decision-making spaces at local to national levels, responsibly influencing development processes.
- Supportive communities. Communities support the rights and contributions of young people, removing the barriers, harmful customs and traditions, and restrictive social norms that undermine their ability to take part in decision making.
- Thriving youth civil society. Youth civil society in Zambia is mobilised in collective partnership through the Youth Collective to sustain and scale youth-led development.
- Inclusive powerholders. Powerholders facilitate a youth-friendly operational and regulatory environment because they recognise the growing population of young people as vital to development in Zambia.



Transformed institutions. The way development is done shifts, yielding power to young people to prioritise their needs and enact their solutions.

Ambition



By 2030, we will know our strategy has been a success when we see the following results:

For young people:

- Young people are viewed by power holders as experts in their own realities and as part of the solution to the decolonisation of development in Zambia; they are appropriately represented in development decision-making and government actors systematically seek inputs from them for major policies and legislation.
- Young people increase their perceived empowerment to take on the challenges in their lives and provide solutions.
- Young people in Zambia benefit from more youth-responsive governmental and development partner programmes and policies.

For our stakeholders:

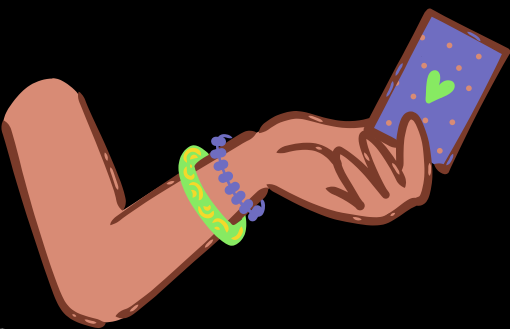
- Grassroot, youth-led organisations – individually and collectively in networks – have increased power to lead and influence decision-making.
- Civil society routinely demands accountability of powerholders using evidence-based solutions generated through youth-led research and social accountability.
- Government ministries and departments that work with youth are utilising evidence-based models and approaches for youth-led development.



For our organisation:

We reach at least 100,000 young Zambians through our direct interventions:

- At least 500 Zambian youth organisations and groups are reached through the Youth Collective and have been strengthened and mobilised around youth-led change.
- We are sought out as a thought leader and ‘go-to’ agency on youth and youth-led development by international and national development partners, donors, the media as well as the public, private, academic, and civil society sectors.
- We are seen as a ‘big sister’ organisation to youth organisations in Zambia by supporting them to grow, lead, and succeed.
- Restless Development Zambia is viewed as a key player in advocacy with national actors and we have built relationships with and are influencing government associations, structures, and institutions in favour of youth concerns.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

IF WE DELIVER OUR INTERVENTIONS IN OUR PRIORITY AREAS:

- **EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOODS**
- **SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS**
- **VOICE AND GOVERNANCE**
- **CLIMATE JUSTICE**

AND WE ENSURE THAT WE INTEGRATE OUR CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES OF:

- **YOUTH LEADERSHIP**
- **MENTAL HEALTH**
- **DIGITAL INNOVATION**

USING OUR APPROACHES OF:

- **MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH-LED CHANGE**
- **COMMUNITY-LED ACTION AND INTERVENTION**
- **GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH**
- **YOUTH COLLECTIVE**
- **RESTLESS EXPERTS**

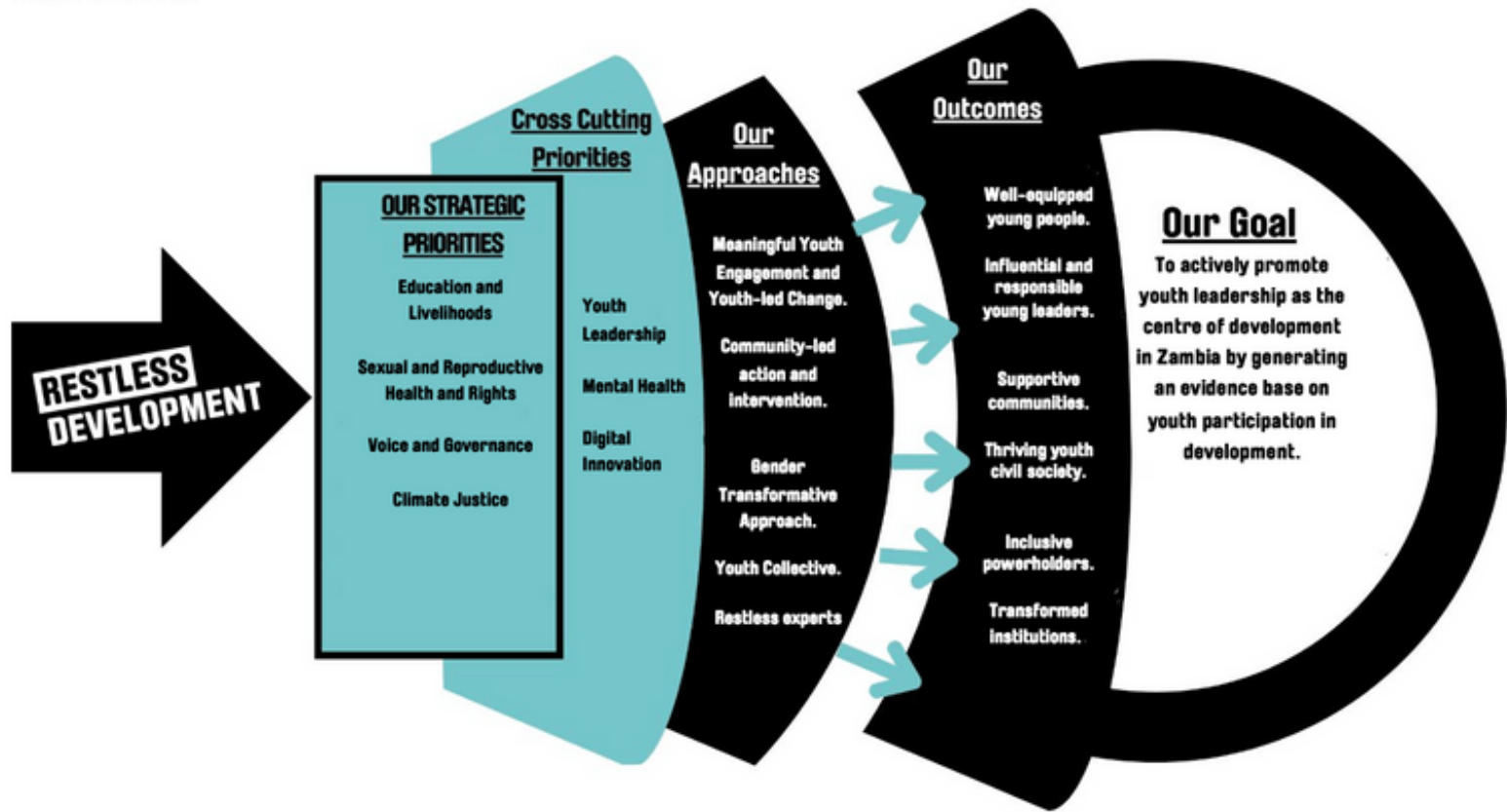
**TO YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN AGES 10-28 YEARS OLD,
BASED ON THEIR NEEDS AT EACH STAGE IN THEIR LIVES BETWEEN 10-19 AND 19-28,
AND**

IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS TO REACH YOUTH AGED 29-35.

**THEN ULTIMATELY, A ZAMBIA WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE
MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT FOR SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION CAN BE ACHIEVED.**

Our theory of change

THEORY OF CHANGE

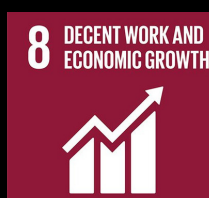


OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

* EDUCATION & LIVELIHOODS *

Our objective is to ensure that young people are equipped and well-positioned to access quality educational, training, livelihood, and financial opportunities that set them up for life. We want all young people to have the skills, knowledge, resilience, and opportunities that enable them to thrive. We empower young people – especially girls, teen mothers, and young brides and those aged 10–24 – to stay in school so they can make a sustainable, fulfilling living when they leave.

We connect with and support youth-led and youth-focussed organisations committed to education and livelihoods for young people.



* VOICE & GOVERNANCE *

Our objective is to influence and mobilise a louder youth voice and bigger say in national processes in support of youth-led development. We believe a more participatory government is possible, with institutions that are accessible and responsive to young people. We aim to dismantle the barriers that undermine their ability to take part in decision making platforms as responsible citizens. We see a future with young people in the driver's seat of decolonising development in Zambia and leading with local and youth-led solutions. We prepare young people, especially those aged 19 and older, to self-identify as active citizens and role models in their communities, ready to take leadership opportunities and influence change.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

*SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS *

Our objective is to empower young people to advocate for supportive and inclusive services and policies to advance and uphold sexual and reproductive health and services and rights. We encourage young people – especially young women and girls – to take control and obtain menstrual and hygiene products, and demonstrate safe sexual practices. We raise awareness with young people of their rights and embolden them to exercise their voice and advocate for supportive and inclusive services and policies. We also work with community leaders and teachers to train them in Comprehensive Sexual Education to ensure young people continue to learn about safe practices, how to access services, and to understand their rights.



* CLIMATE JUSTICE *

Our objective is to facilitate collective action to transition into a more sustainable Zambia and amplify an intergenerational response to climate change. Young people risk losing the most from climate change, yet they are systematically excluded from conversations to address it. We instil a sense of responsibility in young people to champion the transition to a just and sustainable Zambia that protects the nation's biodiversity and the people most impacted by climate change. We do so by strengthening youth civil society, facilitating youth inclusion in national and local conversations on climate change, and nurturing an intergenerational response.



Our strategic priorities are core to our work. However, we focus on all priorities identified by young people as they emerge. Our cross-cutting priorities of Youth Leadership, Mental Health, and Digital Innovation enable this inherent flexibility.

*** YOUTH LEADERSHIP ***

Our objective is to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities needed to become self-reliant and lead in delivering change. We consistently prioritise youth leadership in our design of programmes and campaigns, trusting young people to lead initiatives as agents of change and as partners rather than beneficiaries. At the core of our youth-led development approach, is our belief in the contagious power of youth that enables supported young people to become leaders and help them multiply that leadership in their communities and at national level. We will continue to equip young people with the skills to become self-reliant, leading holistic development projects that spread knowledge, develop skills, and address priority issues within communities even beyond any project or programme period.

*** MENTAL HEALTH ***

Our objective is to reduce the barriers faced by young people and combat stigma around accessing mental health services. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a clear realisation about the mental health needs and struggles that young people are facing. Young people tell us that some of the key barriers they experience are a lack of available services, low knowledge of mental health conditions, and high stigma in the community. We work to reach young people where they are, supporting them with high quality, age-appropriate, and rights-based information and services to support their well-being and psychosocial health.

*** DIGITAL INNOVATION ***

Our objective is to promote digital innovation and transformation that unlocks the potential for higher quality opportunities and access to networks.

Young people are increasingly using technologies in their education, livelihoods, and to access information about governance, SRHR, and climate change. The 8NDP recognises digital transformation and innovation as key enablers toward the creation of decent jobs for young people, particularly as it relates to the Economic Transformation and Job Creation agenda. Thus, the integration of digital innovation across sectors will better prepare young people to learn and engage in new ways and better prepare them for their futures. We promote digital engagement with governance spaces and in advocacy. However, the digital divide disproportionately impacts some groups of young people, so we are transforming how we work in ways that do not leave anyone behind.

OUR RESTLESS APPROACHES

MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT & YOUTH-LED CHANGE

Our projects and interventions utilise the meaningful youth engagement (MYE) and youth-led change approaches – young people engage in and lead change on their own terms. We support them to get the opportunities, confidence, networks, skills, and information they need to make it happen. We guarantee that a diverse representation of young people lead the design and direction of our interventions, and they own the knowledge generated. We champion inclusive opportunities through our projects for active participation in and decision making of young people through co-creation activities, community dialogues, process monitoring, surveys, evaluations, research, and consultations. There are multiple models that underpin our work, including:

* LEADERSHIP STRENGTHENING

Young people are provided with information, training, and skills development about topics affecting their lives.

* YOUTH-LED RESEARCH

Young people generate evidence that captures key insights on issues that matter most to them and use it to inform policy and practice.

* YOUTH-LED ACCOUNTABILITY

Young people are empowered to advocate and hold decision-makers to account. We emphasise evidence-based rights claiming and capitalise upon all opportunities for emergent civic space.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

The gender transformative approach (GTA) contributes towards a gender-equal Zambia where gender disparities and gender-specific needs are addressed. We recognise the barriers that women and girls disproportionately face and work toward a future free from harmful customs and traditions and restrictive social norms. Therefore, across all topics, we address gender disparities and gender-specific needs directly and design gender-responsive models, projects, and programmes. We work to ensure that those who face injustices can be the ones who voice solutions in the fight against them.

GTA is a means to foster an enabling environment where all stakeholders work together to support young people, especially young women and girls, on their journey towards breaking intergenerational poverty and ending discrimination and inequity.

We mobilise, train, and support young people to generate evidence through community-led actions (e.g., scorecard process and community self-assessments) to engage with power holders and demand their rights regardless of gender. We use GTA to understand and address constraints resulting from gender norms, barring young people, especially girls, from thriving.

GTA interventions build young women's agency over the decisions that affect them by improving skills such as confidence, negotiating, relationship building, and accessing and controlling their resources

COMMUNITY-LED ACTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

As one of the founding members of the **Zambian chapter of the Movement for Community-Led Development (MCLD)**, we subscribe to the belief that **communities should set and achieve their own development goals. Informed by good practices outlined by MCLD, we strengthen the engagement of young people in community-led development and improve the capacity of partners in Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE).**

Through community dialogues and mobilisation, young people change behaviours and/or mobilise action in their communities to respond to challenges. We mobilise, train, and support young people to generate evidence through community-led actions (e.g., Scorecards, community self-assessments) to engage with power holders and demand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to effect change.




YOUTH COLLECTIVE

The Youth Collective is a diverse network of groups, movements, or organisations that share the belief that young people can lead change and want to come together to connect, learn, share, and collaborate.

We facilitate new or utilise existing spaces where young people contribute to campaigns, access decision-makers, reach new donors, fundraise for their causes, develop youth-led initiatives, and connect to other young people. In these spaces, knowledge, insights, research, and experiences are shared amongst members. They are safe spaces where all members can innovate and experiment.

We advance the Youth Collective by coordinating high impact youth-led advocacy through our existing spaces and networks (e.g., Tikambe Youth Centre, Youth Collective Website, project-based WhatsApp groups, National Youth Development Council, National Technical Working Groups, etc.).

We also coordinate through our partnerships with youth-led organisations and networks and our alumni networks of Restless Experts. To grow our Youth Collective portfolio, we will support small youth-led to register with the platform so they too can benefit from and contribute to the Youth Collective's goals.



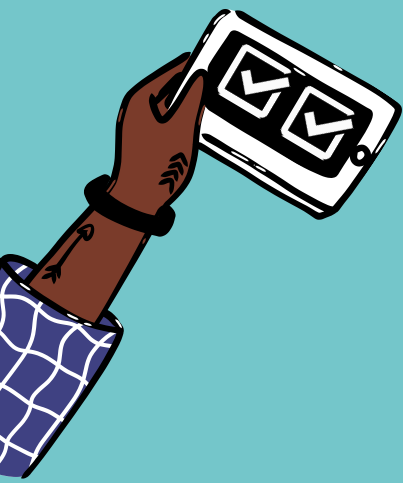


RESTLESS EXPERTS

We offer consultancy services to international and local non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and development partners such as the United Nations Agencies and bilateral donors, government partners and the private sector. We utilise our internal expertise and the expertise of our associates to help them incorporate youth-led solutions into their practices and tackle barriers and challenges raised by young people. This embeds innovative, youth-led solutions into institutions across Zambia, which allows us to not only sustain, but further develop change. We offer innovative solutions, including:

- Assistance in designing high-quality work or programming related to young people in Zambia based on our experience and extensive track record.
- Facilitated consultations with young people for the purposes of drawing on their opinions, perspectives, and recommendations to design or improve development programmes, public policy, or private sector practices.
- Technical Assistance to achieve outcomes using appreciative, evidence-based methods for meaningful youth engagement, strategic planning, organisational development, and programme design and implementation.
- Facilitating training and capacity strengthening activities using our interactive training methodologies, grounded in our core values of diversity and inclusion.
- Support to and management of young people to conduct research and analysis, including the gathering data, analysis, forming recommendations, and creating a final report highlighting youth perspectives and recommendations on key issues.





POWER SHIFTING CHECKLIST

1. PRIORITISE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Trust young people to lead from the outset.
- ✓ Support youth-led organising.



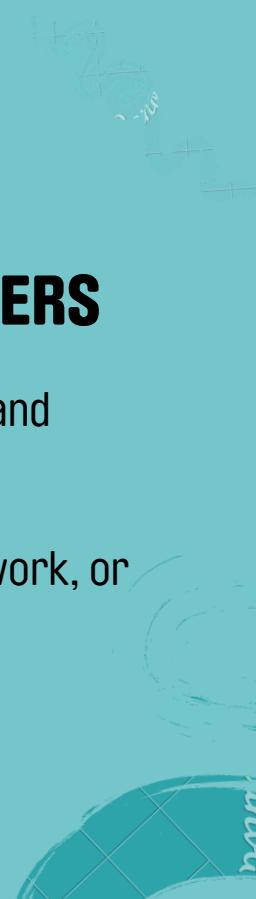
2. PRIORITISE SAFETY & HAPPINESS

- ✓ Protect the health and safety of young people.
- ✓ Support youth happiness and wellbeing.



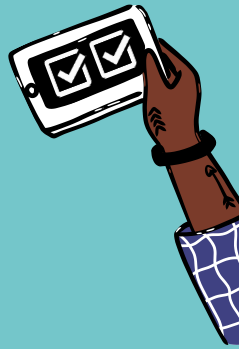
3. TRAIN, SUPPORT & RESOURCE YOUNG LEADERS

- ✓ Plan Ahead. Provide and resource tailored inclusive training and support to all young leaders.
- ✓ Compensate fairly. Ensure no young person is doing unpaid work, or is out of pocket due to their commitment.
- ✓ Fund locally led youth groups and organisations.



4. BE OPEN, DYNAMIC AND ACCOUNTABLE

- ✓ Learn. Invest in monitoring and evaluation and build a culture of learning.
- ✓ Ensure Dynamic Accountability. Let young people participate fully, be transparent and provide a continuous feedback loop.



5. INTENTIONALLY SHIFT POWER

- ✓ Recognise Intersectionality. Acknowledge that everyone has a unique experience of discrimination – and be intentional about removing barriers for every young person.
- ✓ Let communities lead their own development.
- ✓ Let young people be holistic leaders, to inform, influence and deliver their own futures.



6. BE RESTLESS: FLEX, INNOVATE & CREATE

- ✓ Youth Power is not bound by existing systems or the status quo. Give young people the space to flex, innovate and create new ways to have impact.



An illustration on the left side of the page shows a hand holding a bouquet of colorful flowers (yellow, blue, and red). The hand is brown and has a tattoo of a crescent moon and a star. The background is dark with teal-colored circular patterns and a globe-like grid. The word 'RESTLESS' is written in a teal font at the top right, and 'DEVELOPMENT' is written in a teal font at the bottom left.

RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT

Restless Development is a non profit global agency. We support the collective power of young leaders to create a better world.

We are independently registered and governed in nine countries (India, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, USA, Zambia and Zimbabwe) bound together by our vision for youth power. We are a global team of more than 200 people based in 13 countries and we also host a growing youth collective of close to 4,000 youth organisations in 185 countries.

We are committed to creating an agency that paves the way on youth-led change and walks the talk on power shifting.

www.restlessdevelopment.org

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**