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A Message from Our Board of Trustees

Bridget Mumba Stephenson
Board Chairperson
Restless Development Zambia

Welcome to this year’s annual report – celebrating a year of impact and transformation at Restless Development Zambia. In this publication, you will read about the many ways in which we have impacted the lives of young people across Zambia.

In 2023, our ambition was not just about working with young people, it was about building new leaders and shifting power to the communities we work with. In doing so, we delivered gender transformative, inclusive and holistic programmes.

In order to achieve our ambition, we trained, mentored, supported and connected thousands of young people all over the Zambia to work together to solve some of the biggest challenges in their communities.

We worked to deliver inclusive, holistic Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), life skills, and financial literacy programming for the most vulnerable young girls who are victims of sexual gender-based violence and young people living with disabilities.

As part of our accountability and governance programming, we trained young people to conduct research and document their experiences in order to effectively influence decisionmakers, shaping both government policy and community attitudes.

We organized policy engagement events and dialogue meetings and provided opportunities for young people to engage in person with government ministers, health care providers, parents, and teachers about their SRHR.

As we continue on this journey, we are clear on one thing – never has the world needed the collective power of young leaders more. We will do everything to enable them to thrive.

FOREWORD

“Never has the world needed the collective power of young leaders more. We will do everything to enable them to thrive”

- Bridget Mumba Stephenson
Restless Development Zambia Board Chairperson
“Our transformative, inclusive, and holistic programs addressed the unique challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including young girls affected by sexual gender-based violence and those with disabilities.”

- Chanda Chisenga Nkhoma
  Restless Development Zambia Hub Director

A Message from Chanda Chisenga Nkhoma
Hub Director – Restless Development Zambia

Dear Readers,

In 2023, Restless Development Zambia went beyond working with young people, focusing on building new leaders and shifting power to communities. We delivered comprehensive Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (ASRHR), life skills, and financial literacy programs to leave no one behind. Accountability and governance were central to our initiatives.

We empowered young people to conduct research, influencing decision-makers and shaping government policies. Through policy engagement events, dialogues, and direct engagements with ministers, healthcare providers, parents, and teachers, we advocated for the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of young people. Additionally, our collaboration with community-based organizations amplified youth voices, focusing on advocacy, rights-based approaches, and fostering youth-led accountability.

Looking forward, Restless Development Zambia is committed to reaching more young people through direct interventions. Our strengthened and mobilized youth collective will champion youth-led change. As we aim for a future where the youth actively contribute to decision-making, we pledge to continue fostering youth-led accountability, ensuring their voices shape institutional strategies, plans, and budgets.

Together, we embark on a path towards a more equitable and empowered future, driven by the restless energy and aspirations of the youth.
At the heart of everything we do is Youth Power.

We believe young people’s collective power can lead us all through the world’s greatest challenges.

That’s why we train, mentor, support and connect thousands of young people all over the planet to work together to solve some of the biggest challenges of today.

Catherine, a member of the Youth Advisory Board supported the Children’s Future project in Eastern Province.
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.

We work with young people aged between 10–28 years old directly and with 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.
We currently operate in 51 districts (71% of all districts) across six provinces: Central, Northern, Luapula, Western, Eastern, Lusaka, Copperbelt, 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.
Restless Development Zambia prides itself on making an impact.

We focus our efforts on four key areas that are both young people’s priorities and essential to creating a better world for all:

- Education & Livelihoods
- Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights
- Voice & Governance
- Climate Justice

Read on to find out how we’ve been making an impact in more detail.
Education & Livelihoods Project List

- Tusunge Lubono
- Ulemelero
Ulemelero ‘Live Well’ Project

Our Education & Livelihoods work continues to be a key part in reaching thousands of young people every year and helping them receive the education and skills they need to succeed.

The Ulemelero ‘Live well’ project funded by Jersey Overseas Aid (JOA) delivered financial literacy training and increased access to inclusive financial services and products in rural and hard-to-reach areas, reaching 1,500 young women and 1,000 men living in 45 rural communities. This made a strong impact with 74 saving groups subsequently created in different communities, leading to more women having improved access to loans and helping them set up businesses to better withstand economic shocks.

To accelerate the transitioning of these informal finance groups (saving groups) to formal financial services, we worked with a number of market actors to digitalize all saving group processes by forging relationships that are working to better integrate young participants into markets using Digital Financial Services (DFS), effectively creating credit profiles that make it easier to get unsecured loans from formal sources.

Young people participating in our saving groups have reported improved access to capital which has enabled them to invest in small businesses as well as improved income, nutrition and support for their children in school. Women have also reported having a stronger voice within their households as a result of increased participation in financial decision-making and greater autonomy. We have particularly addressed barriers to women’s financial autonomy through our couples savings model which advocates for unified saving goals between husband and wife.

To improve our programming efficiency and intervention outcomes, we integrated our livelihoods approaches in other thematic areas that include Voice & Democracy, SRHR and Climate Justice.
Our livelihoods approach focused on making markets work for young people using the ‘push-fit-pull’ approach to ensure financial inclusion through formation of saving groups. The Tusunge Lubono project funded by Zambian Financial Sector Deepening (FSD Zambia) resulted in a gender transformative approach to address harmful gender norms which pose as barriers to rural young women’s financial inclusion.

We formed saving groups, typically composed of women (over 75% membership), who had access to finance that is, about 20% interest. Interest earned on member loans was invested back into the central fund, effectively breaking the cycle of poverty for a lot low income unbanked communities.

Through our model, a member is entitled to a collateral free loan of up to 3 times their saving. The savings groups enjoyed 99% loan repayment rates and fund utilization rates of over 74%, allowing group members to enjoy an average return on their investments (savings) of up to 37%.

To accelerate the transitioning of these saving groups to formal financial services, we worked with different financial service providers to digitalize all saving group processes, efficiently forging relationships that are working to improve the embeddedness of young people participating in these groups, into markets through Digital Financial Services (DFS).

Through the electronification of saving group processes, we generated credit profiles/scores that worked to improve access to non collateralized formal loans.
Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights

PROJECT LIST

- Settling the Score
- She-Soars
- Youth for Health
- Kudziwa Tikambe “Let’s Talk”
- Chimwemwe Teens
- Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future
Settling the Score Project

This year, we placed even more importance on gender equality and sexual rights as they are fundamental to ensuring young people have the right to be safe, respected and have access to the healthcare they need.

Our ‘Settling the Score’ project co-implemented with Tackle Africa reached over 10,000 community members with changemakers raising awareness on healthy relationships through football which in the past has always been a traditionally a male-dominated sport.
Young women using football to deliver HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Growing up, Agness always played football – a male-dominated game in her village. Often, she got discouraged from playing as she was expected to be at home helping out with house chores. Her interest in football started when she was in 5th grade in primary school. During lunch breaks, she would play football on the soccer field. It was very entertaining and made her happy each time she played.

Now at the age of 22 and a single parent, Agness is using football to train other young people and share sexual health information on contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV testing.

In Agness’ community, teenage pregnancy and early marriage are problems facing many girls. The vast majority of girls are enrolled in primary school. Once they reach secondary school, many are forced to drop out and are married off to support their families financially.

“There are few options for young people to lead fulfilling lives here. Due to this, many young people are forced to partake in illegal behaviours like drug use and unprotected sex.” Agness says. In 2022, right after entering the 10th grade, Agness became pregnant. On discovering Agness’ pregnancy, her mother had little choice but to push her to quit school and get married. Agness’ mother, a small-scale farmer, would then receive five cows as a gift in exchange.

In Zambia, young girls that fall pregnant face stigma which forces them to drop out of school. Eventually, they are married off in exchange for cattle, a practice most prevalent in very poor families. In Agness’s community, teenage pregnancy and early marriage are problems facing many girls. The vast majority of girls are enrolled in primary school. Once they reach secondary school, many are forced to drop out and are married off to support their families financially.

Many girls in Agness’ community have been through what Agness went through; living in vulnerable households, becoming pregnant and subsequently ending their regular schooling immediately. Very few girls return to school after giving birth in rural Zambia as getting pregnant means a start to marriage for many.

This changed however when football drills were introduced in Agness’ neighbourhood by Restless Development and Tackle Africa. Girls like Agness, who had dropped out of school after becoming pregnant were enlisted to play football and were given training on how to use football drills to improve sexual health education.

“I facilitate football drills lessons in community football teams to share sexual health information with young people.”

“The impact on young people has been great. They are able to access contraception such as condoms while playing football. Our sessions provide young people with knowledge and work to develop girls’ resilience and confidence to have safe sex or refuse sex altogether. For young women especially, that can be a difficult conversation in a male-dominated society, and it’s often not something girls even think is an option.” Agness says.

Another football player named Mumba stated, “I had never gone for Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) before the football drill sessions. I was too shy to visit the hospital and undergo testing. After attending the sessions, I went for VCT and now understand how important it is for everyone to be aware and lead healthy lives.”

Thanks to the drills, Mumba understands that taking VCT does not necessarily mean that one has been engaging in unprotected sex.
She-Soars Project

SHE-SOARS (Sexual and reproductive Health and Economic empowerment Supporting Out-of-School Adolescent Girls' Rights and Skills) is a 7-year project designed to improve the access to sexual and reproductive health services and information among out-of-school adolescents in Zambia.

With funding from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Restless Development Zambia has partnered with CARE International and Centre for Reproductive Rights and Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights to build the clinical capacity of Health Care Providers and offer comprehensive and responsive services that meet the needs of out-of-school adolescent girls and boys.
Ruth Kombe Mumba is a trained and In-Charge nurse at Naviluri Health Facility in Chadiza District of Eastern Province. She was trained as an Adolescent Trainer of Trainers by Restless Development Zambia and SHE-SOARS implementing partners.

When queried about the challenges she faces when interacting with adolescents Ruth said, “The challenge I face is how to explain certain topics like the use of a condom. The other challenge is how to address the lack of privacy as youths access the sexual and reproductive health services and information from the clinic. Some young people fail to be free when they come to the clinic and find their parents. Engaging parents is another challenge as some parents still don’t approve of the sexual and reproductive health services and information among adolescents. Inadequate supply of commodities like condoms is another challenge as sometimes the hospital runs out.”

Despite these challenges, Ruth said still finds a way of working reaching her community. She hopes to see a constant supply of the commodities, and private structures to respond to adolescents’ needs in future.

Away from sexual and reproductive health services and information, Ruth helps her community with entrepreneurial skills, managing to raise funds through pieces of work and a grocery business.

"The project is creating a positive impact. There is a cultural shift as community members and leaders have started accepting and appreciating the benefits of conversations around sexual and reproductive health services and information among adolescents. I personally didn’t know how to approach adolescents, but SHE-SOARS has taught me how to. I have learnt that the best way to engage adolescents is to become like them. Therefore, before we start talking about sexual and reproductive health information, we play games together and this helps to create an environment where young people can easily and freely talk about things affecting them. One approach which even makes the girls and boys groups more youth friendly is the peer-to-peer approach. This means that the messages are delivered through young people to young people."
Papa Ngoma is a young person based in Mambwe early Boma compound in Jumbe area. The second born child in a family of six, Papa went to live with his aunt after his parents divorced when he was just 6 years old. His aunt then took him to school from primary level to secondary level and while he was at school he was a peer educator at Jumbe clinic.

Although Papa finished his secondary education, getting a tertiary education proved difficult as his aunt did not have the financial means to send him to university. However, Papa never gave up on his passion of serving his community, volunteering as a peer educator and eventually applying for a position of young connector at Restless development on the She–Soars project where he was selected and gained skills that empowered him to advocate for the people of kapole in Chamatwa village on the issue of having clean and safe water through a Facebook page of the area councillor.

Prior to this advocacy, girls from Papa’s community group would walk 8 km to fetch contaminated water shared with domestic animals, negatively affecting his outreach efforts as many girls skipped his training sessions.

Papa’s advocacy went beyond Facebook as he visited the area councillor’s office to alert them of the need for clean and safe drinking water in Chamatwa. Papa then tagged the constituency development chairperson on Facebook sharing pictures of the situation in Chamatwa village, attracting the attention of the area councillor, Honourable Richard Njobvu who brought up the matter to senior management resulting in the assignment and installation of a borehole to Chamatwa village.

Today Chamatwa village has two clean and safe water sources and the girl are no longer skipping the girls role model group sessions.
In partnership with Marie Stopes Zambia, we delivered the Youth for Health (Y4H) project which focused on promoting adolescents’ fundamental rights to sexual and reproductive health.

We worked closely with the Ministry of Health to develop and review policies, guidelines, clinical tools/curriculums, and protocols to support adolescent and disability-inclusive care.

For example, after the launch of the Adolescent Health Strategy in early April 2023, we began the printing and dissemination of materials to all Y4H supported communities to raise awareness about the Adolescent Health Strategy. We also supported the review process for the Life Skills and Education curriculum to replace the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) framework underway by the Ministry of Education.

We used a range of strategies and platforms to engage with the media and promote a more enabling environment for SRH such as conducting adolescent-focused radio campaigns in Kapiri-Mposhi, Kabwe and Mkushi districts and holding a youth-led online media “Reproductive Health Education” series for advocacy that sought to strengthen the capacity of youth advocates who will serve as online youth champions for reproductive health education through peer education, awareness creation and advocacy as well as create visibility for the project.
Kudziwa – Tikambe “Let’s Talk” Project

Jointly implemented with BBC Media Action and funded by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Kudziwa – Tikambe ‘Let’s Talk’ project established spaces for young people to meaningfully participate in governance processes in relation to their Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). The Tikambe Youth Media project facilitated the creation of platforms for young girls and boys to access youth-friendly (SRHR) services and information, voice out their issues related to (SRHR) and strengthen their ability to demand accountability from decision makers.

In partnership with BBC Media Action and the Government of Zambia, we worked with community radio and TV stations to provide skills and information on health, well-being and sexual and reproductive health, supporting young people to have a voice, gain life skills, and attain an understanding of their sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR). The platform also helped young people lead online conversations in relation to SRHR, creating a chain of education and opportunity and making young people less vulnerable to sexual reproductive health risks.

The project also facilitated provincial policy dialogue meetings leading up to a national policy dialogue where young people presented their policy briefs to policy makers on enhancing access to SRHR services to improve the delivery of Comprehensive Sexuality Education. The national policy dialogue presented a national platform to foster meaningful youth participation and provide a space and voice for young people and youth organisations to set and drive their own development agenda and promote the involvement of young people as key partners in the implementation of key youth policies and the SRHR Agenda for Zambia.
Chimwemwe Teens Project

Our Empowered Adolescents project, the Chimwemwe Teens Project, conducted activities aimed at strengthening comprehensive case management pathways and the follow-up care and support services for vulnerable Adolescents and Young People (AYP) by piloting a unique, youth-led engagement model: Adolescents Agents for Change (AAC).

With support from Project Concern Zambia, we implemented interventions focused on adolescents' HIV and Sexual Reproductive Health (SHR) using a case management approach. Our aim was to deliver personalized and comprehensive services to AYP, particularly Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) at higher risk of HIV, to enhance their resilience and improve their health outcomes. This implementation was done using three pillars to monitor the progress of the Adolescent Agents of Change; Capacity Building, Improved Access to Services, and Accountability.

The project engaged 20 agents of change who reached out to 1,200 young people and adolescents and referred over 1,000 young people for clinical supportive care and prevention services.

The project also facilitated the formation of an Accountability Committee to provide a platform that allows young people, especially adolescent girls and young women in the district, to hold local decision makers accountable for their decisions on the provision of critical services, enabling them to claim their power in holding SRH Service providers accountable for the quality of services provided to young people and their communities.
Voice & Governance Project List

- Kudziwa - Ishiwi “My Voice”
- Aim Youth Power
- CIVSAM
**Kudziwa–Ishiwi “My Voice” Project**

On our Kudziwa–Ishiwi ‘My Voice’ project jointly implemented with BBC Media Action and funded by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), over 200 young people were trained in engagement techniques to help them in decision-making spaces.

Their work gathered insights on how the local constituency development fund was being used and led to the participation of young people in several council meetings.

The project also facilitated training for young people in meaningful youth engagement techniques, resulting in the contest of 23-year-old Tasila as ward councillor in Zambia’s general elections.
Before her involvement with Restless Development Zambia, Tasila had limited awareness of her potential role as a community leader. The Ishiwi ‘My Voice’ project, initiated in 2020, became a transformative space for Tasila and other young people, providing them with the tools to engage fully with duty bearers.

With her new found knowledge, Tasila, along with project volunteers, encouraged young people to see politics as their domain and conducted focus groups with first-time voters in schools. Adopted by an opposition political party to contest as ward councillor in 2021, Tasila faced challenges in a male-dominated field but emerged in the third position. Despite not winning, she takes pride in inspiring young girls to participate in decision-making processes.

Thanks to the Ishiwi project governance sessions, Tasila now makes informed decisions, actively engages in key community decision-making processes and eagerly anticipates re-running in the 2026 elections.

In Chingola district, Copperbelt province, the Ishiwi project facilitated the formation of school councils that hold management accountable for educational services. At Kambundi Combined School, learners demand for accountability led to improvement of sanitation facilities at the school.

During a school meeting, learners held a dialogue meeting and appealed to the local authorities, the Mayor and Ward Councillors, to build new toilets and construct a proper water reticulation system.

“The skills I gained motivated me to explain my manifesto to voters. The campaign was tough because I was discouraged by my fellow women who believed politics are for men. I also lacked resources to campaign which limited the number of people I reached out to. I came out third position in an election hugely contested by men. Despite not winning the elections, I’m proud that young girls have learnt from me and are now bold enough to come forward to participate in key decision making processes.”

The Ishiwi project has strengthened the capacity of young people especially women in the community to take on leadership roles in the political sphere.
Aim Youth-Power Project

The Aim Youth Power project implemented by Restless Development Zambia and funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) is implemented in over six provinces and was able to train community members in key development areas such as monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, grant-making, strategic planning, human resources, and stakeholder engagement.

The project is aimed at strengthening the capacities of youth-led and youth-focused non-governmental organisations in social accountability with an objective to increase access to funding of various community outreach programmes.
Empowering Youth-Led Initiatives for Sustainable Change

Under the Aim Youth Power project, we are working with The Healing Balm Foundation in mobilising and successfully securing funding to facilitate community outreach programmes. Through this project, The Healing Balm Foundation was able to secure 2 major funding partners;

The first partner gained was Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) who has funded other Restless Development projects in the past. After planning and rigorous assessment, The Healing Balm Foundation applied for a local subsidy in 2022, an opportunity that initially posed numerous challenges such as stringent compliance requirements to financial management complexities. However, equipped with the expertise gained through Restless Development’s mentorship in Choma, The Healing Balm Foundation navigated through these obstacles with confidence and gained a new partner is GIZ.

Another partner gained through the Aim Youth Power Project was the Zambian Governance Foundation (ZGF) who since partnering with The Healing Balm Foundation has enabled them to unlock opportunities for community-led development and self-advocacy. This partnership provided The Healing Balm Foundation with 6-month funding for their climate change project, a 4-month microgrant focusing on children’s rights in climate justice, and consideration for a 5-year grant.

“With the invaluable support and capacity-strengthening mentorships provided by Restless Development, our team has undergone significant development in key areas such as Monitoring and Evaluation, advocacy, grant-making, strategic planning, human resources, and stakeholder engagement.”

Our training sessions, guidance and mentorship activities under Aim Youth Power empowered The Healing Balm Foundation to effectively engage with donors and advocate for impactful initiatives.
In Kabwe district, young people’s demand for accountability led to the construction of a Maternity Wing. Poor health services and lack of maternity space forced women in Kabwe District of Central Province to opt for home births rather than visit the nearest health centre, Nakoli Health Centre or travel 10km to Kabwe General Hospital to give birth. Those that travelled would risk being stuck in long queues due to small maternity wards or giving birth in line. Ishiwi ‘My Voice’ empowered young people to advocate for better health services.

The project also motivated 21-year-old Peter, a young volunteer who received training from Restless Development, to begin training other young people on holding decision makers accountable. Together, they formed the Ishiwi Community Group tasked to advocate for the construction of a maternity wing.

During a dialogue meeting broadcast on the Ishiwi ‘My Voice’ radio show on KNC radio organised by Peter and other young people and with help from the Ministry of Health, ward development committee and Mayor’s, Peter lobbied that part of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) be allocated to building of new toilets and improving water facilities. The Mayor and all the other local authorities agreed with this preposition and money was allocated for this project.

Following the construction of the toilet, teacher and pupil absenteeism has declined and there is improved performance of the pupils at the school. Water borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea have drastically reduced,” noted the Mayor of Chingola District.
Young People at the Centre of demanding accountability

A new maternity wing was constructed at Nakoli Health Centre, encouraging a lot of women to visit the health facility for maternal services. Philis Hamambo, the person-in-charge notes that the coming of the new maternity annexe has helped improve their service delivery to women, and other services seekers. The maternity ward has three labour rooms as well as prenatal and postnatal spaces.

In Chingola, Musenge community with a population of over 20,000, had no health facility coverage and could only access health care through the nearest rural health centre at Lumone, which is 16 km away.

This was a burden to the community, especially women and children, as they had to walk approximately three hours each way to access primary and emergency health services, reducing and/or blocking access to emergency and primary health.

Belington, a Restless trained young volunteer on the Ishiwi “My Voice” project, began conducting activities in Musenge Ward. Community members were sensitized on the Zambian health service delivery standards and the citizen’s policy entitlements, which led to community leaders realizing that it is the government’s responsibility to ensure that the health system offers access to quality primary health care.

One of the young people trained by Belington on the Ishiwi project was Mwila who never knew he could advocate for better health services in his community before he got involved with the project.

After the training a local level advocacy committee was created to work closely with community leaders and civic leaders in mobilizing the community through meetings on policy sensitization and service delivery standards.

“Through training I realized that, as a young person, there is so much I can do to turn the table around for my fellow young people and the development of my community too. The training gave me remarkable skills and confidence to believe in myself that I can do amazing work.”

With a new understanding of their rights, Mwila and other community members working through the Ishiwi ‘My Voice’ approached the ward development committee and lobbied for the allocation of Constituency Development Funds (CDF) for the construction of a health post in their community.

Given the structure and power of the ward development committee, the Ministry of Local Government responded positively and following an audit of existing health services, identified funds and resources to construct a health post in Musenge.

After the construction of the health post, young people started to advocate for the deployment of more health personnel in order to improve service delivery. The government recruited and deployed two community health assistants to the health post and has been conducting community health education in malaria prevention, hygiene and sanitation, and many other topics.

As part of the ongoing joint dialogue and planning process with the District Council, the community also advocated for the construction of a youth-friendly centre at the health facility so that young people can have access to Sexual Reproductive Health Services and Information.
The Youth Collective is a global community for young people and youth-led organisations. It’s our way of ensuring youth civil society can thrive.

Our unique network is transforming the way young people make change happen – shifting power from traditional, top-down civil society organisations to resource-sharing, grassroots, youth-led organisations.

As part of our Aim Youth Power project funded by GIZ, we trained 32 focused youth-led and youth-focused non-governmental organisations in social accountability with an objective to increase civic engagement and improve transparency and accountability of government actions and policies in Zambia.

The trainings focused on strengthening the capacity of community-based organisations in social accountability in order to increase civic engagement and improve transparency and accountability of government actions and policies in Zambia. These community-based organisations were drawn from the Copperbelt, Central, Lusaka, Luapula and Southern Provinces.

Mulenga Bwalya, Plat It Foward Executive Director said the trainings have strengthened her skills in social accountability.

"I learnt new things such as meaningful youth engagement, inclusion and safeguarding. My organization is now well equipped to advocate for policies that will influence change."

"Over 30+ community-based across six provinces"

"increased civic engagement and improve transparency and accountability of government actions and policies in Zambia."

"Strengthened youth-led accountability enabled more young people to more effectively hold decision makers accountable"

"2023 saw a 37.5% increase in members accessing capacity in social accountability"

"OUR GOAL: 1,000 Youth Collective members by 2030"
Power-shifting

"23,000 young people reached through awareness raising events"
Last year, a group of young people co-designed and developed the Chitetezo project to tackle Gender Based Violence (GBV), Child Marriages and Teen Pregnancy in a way that meets their needs. This power shift saw young people collect local data and develop an advocacy strategy that suited their own ideas leading to raised awareness among key community stakeholders through events, traditional media, and social media campaigns.

With funding from UNICEF, Restless Development Zambia, working with the Ministry of Community Development & Social Services, trained Community Leaders, Media Practitioners, Community Welfare Assistant Committee (CWAC) members, and Social Welfare Officers drawn from the districts of Nalolo and Mongu in Western Province, Chasefu and Kasenengwa in Eastern province and Chawama and Makeni in Lusaka district on ending Child Marriages and Harmful Practices.

For 16-year old Maria in Chasefu district, Eastern Province, initiation ceremonies such as Chinamwali where young girls are taught how to satisfy a man’s sexual desires led to rampant child marriages and teen pregnancies which prevent young girls from completing their education and reaching their full potential. Now a young activist on the Chitetezo project, Maria runs activities in schools and communities to raise awareness on child marriages, teen pregnancies, gender-based violence and harmful practices.

“Chinamwali is a bad traditional practice. We want an end to it. I appeal to the traditional leaders, religious leaders and members of parliament to introduce laws that will bring an end to such bad traditional practices.”

The Power-shifting approach was designed to address systemic inequalities and historic injustices that shape the world we live in. It is purposeful in our efforts to enable young people to lead.
The Children’s Future project was designed by young people in Petauke district using the SHIFT model which focuses on empowering young activists with SHIFT methodologies under the Children’s Future Project to develop a youth led campaign on reducing teenage pregnancies and early marriages in Petauke District. With support from the Children’s Future Project, this joint project was implemented by Save the Children and Restless Development to end child marriages, teenage pregnancies and child labour in Petauke district.

This saw young people getting involved in mobilizing public support, raising awareness, and advocating for policy changes and systemic reforms to address the root causes of child marriages, teen pregnancies and child labour.

Traditional leaders such as Headman Yohane of Kolwe village in Mumbi Chiefdom have established local committees mandated to implement interventions to address social and cultural drivers of child marriages in the Chiefdom. The headman revealed that because of education and sensitization programs that are being undertaken by the project in his village, most families now apprehend the dangers of child marriage.

Headman Kolwe remains resolved to fight child marriages and accelerate inclusive development in his chiefdom through sustainable solutions that address negative traditional and social norms saying “As a traditional leader, I want to ensure that we challenge social and traditional norms and practices that negatively affect girls. We do this through undertaking community dialogues with parents and children to make them understand why child marriage has negative consequences on health, education and wellbeing of children.”

“We are also working with traditional counsellors who conduct the initiation rites to revise the curriculum to focus only on progressive topics and cultural practices that promote respect for human rights.”
Our Impact

Youth-Led Research

What is the impact of Gender and social norms on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of Out of School adolescent boys and girls? That was one of the big questions tackled by young researchers on the SHE SOARS project which advances Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and Economic Empowerment for girls and young women in Eastern Province. The project is jointly implemented with CARE Zambia, Live Well and Centre for Reproductive Health.

The youth-led research was conducted by young people in the three districts of Eastern Province; Mambwe, Chadiza, and Kasenengwa. It explored the impact of gender and social norms on adolescent sexual and reproductive health rights and services among out-of-school adolescent girls and boys. Through focus group discussions and key interviews, a total of 1,442 adolescents participated as respondents, revealing that accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services remains challenging for adolescents and young people in most communities in Zambia, especially for out-of-school adolescent girls.

The survey results by gender indicate that the majority of both male and female respondents are aware of the available SRHR services in their communities. Among adolescent girls, 78% indicated having knowledge of SRHR services, 14.9% reported lacking knowledge, and 7.1% preferred not to disclose their knowledge. Similarly, among adolescent boys, 77% indicated having knowledge of SRHR services, while 14.9% expressed a lack of knowledge, and 8% preferred not to disclose.

One of the key recommendations is strengthening youth-friendly services at health facilities to ensure that young people have access to appropriate SRHR services. This can be achieved through various measures, including the use of age-appropriate materials, the establishment of youth-friendly waiting areas, the provision of privacy and confidentiality, extended hours of operation, training of health workers on the specific needs of young people, and the involvement of peer educators and youth leaders in service delivery.

1,442 People reached through our sexual reproductive health & rights work
Restless Experts

As Restless Development we are honoured and privileged to have amidst our associates, an ever-growing network of development experts and enthusiasts who are very passionate about our mission and are willing to share their expertise and skills to help us achieve our set aspirations.

After their initial interaction with Restless Development as staff and volunteer, many of our associates have progressed to gain impressive professional skills and experience in different aspects of development; training, research and evaluations, organizational and individual development as well as other specializations in the non-profit, private and public sectors.

Recognizing this, we have established a network for Restless Experts – highly experienced professionals; leaders & consultants available for hire to the general public for purpose of leading special short-term projects on our behalf. These professionals offer professional expertise, experiences, skills and ideas further championing our work in the youth sector.

Through this diverse and inspirational collection of seasoned professionals and experts, our offer to the youth sector has broadened. It has also ensured that the high quality work, ethic and attitude that we are best known for is more readily available. We are now able to undertake special assignments or support projects outside the confines of our long term programmes directly young people in communities.

In addition to the above, through our Restless Experts, we provide access to our extensive network of partners and like-minded organisations including government, communities and subject matter experts to support clients’ project.
We are hopeful and visionary
We are creating new pathways beyond the status quo. We innovate and turn our vision of a better world into reality.

We are proudly young
We are global and diverse, not defined by an age bracket. We have different lived experiences, knowledge and are experts in our own realities.

We are adaptable and resilient
We are not restricted by process and short-termism. We are resilient to challenges and crises and adapt in ways to best achieve our goals.

We are diverse and interconnected
Our leadership is not hierarchical. We are paving the way and call on others to change and support our transformative and alternative forms of leadership.

We are leaders
We don’t work in sector silos. We recognise the connectedness of the issues we seek to address: including gender equality, climate change, health, livelihoods, education, disability rights and democracy.

We are inclusive
We are all different and unique. We celebrate the power of our diversity. We also acknowledge intersectionality, our diverse experiences and privileges. We seek to create safe spaces for free participation.

We are changemakers
We are effective in the long term and our actions impact the future. We mobilise and organise using transformative approaches that respect people and the planet.

We are skilled mobilisers
We are connected. We use tech to provide solidarity and support, overcoming barriers of time and distance, creating local and global movements with shared purpose. We are best when we work together.

We are truthful
We are authentic and honest with ourselves and each other. We are driven by passion and hold each other and decision makers to account.

We are diverse and interconnected
We are not rigid, it works across different issues and sectors. Youth power is about celebrating our complexity, diversity and uniqueness. For us Youth Power is the following:

Youth power principles
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What is your youth power principle?
THANK YOU.

Our donors and partners who have backed us through a transformational year. Thank you once again for all you do.