

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**
POWERED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



WE LEAD ANNUAL BRIEF

January – December 2023

Consortium Partners:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, Restless Development continued to harness the power of young women rightsholders to claim for their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights across Africa, Middle East/North Africa (MENA), and Latin America (LATAM).

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In most nations, the context in which We Lead was implemented was unstable and limiting. Several problems were faced, including political instability, violence, economic crises, and attacks on rightsholders.

- In MENA, the political and economic situation was particularly dire in Lebanon, where a succession of events had a severe influence on the country's social fabric and political climate. Jordan's situation was comparable to Lebanon's, and inflation exacerbated the economic predicament. The backlash against SRHR and LGBTQ was also experienced in Jordan,
- The situation was not different in Kenya, the proposed Family Protection Bill which includes a ban on activities promoting homosexuality was mooted throughout the year and is likely to be introduced in the national assembly for discussion,
- Nigeria's presidential elections brought in a new government whose position on gender and sexual rights is not yet known,
- In Guatemala the change of government represents the change of authorities in some institutions, which affects institutional action in favor of rightsholders,
- Honduras experienced negative changes where some of the programme outcomes that were considered progressive in the recent past are now perceived as setbacks. A case in point is the comprehensive education law for the prevention of teenage pregnancy that was vetoed by the president. This represents a setback, as the efforts to pass the law again may not succeed.

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Despite the above set backs, this annual report details key milestones and achievements realized in the year:

- Strengthened the capacity of 105 rightsholders across 85 diverse youth organisations dubbed as the Community of Action (COA) in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Guatemala and Honduras on Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) and Youth Led Accountability (YLA), leading to the development of national action plans and the integration of MYE principles.
- Organised Linking and learning spaces for 131 youth organisations, including physical and virtual leadership labs, aimed at enhancing the capacity of youth CSOs.
- Accompaniment of nine (9) Community of Action Facilitators (COAFs), supporting them to enhance their leadership skills and empower them to lead change within their respective communities.
- Supported rights holder voices in global advocacy spaces: CSW67, Women Deliver, and CPD56, amplifying their voices and influencing policy discussions on gender equality and youth rights.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Capacity strengthening of the Youth Collective SRH-R Network (CoA)

Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) and Youth-led accountability (YLA):

- 38 youth organisations from Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria were trained on Meaningful Youth Engagement and Youth-Led Accountability, leading to the development of accountability action plans and integration of MYE principles in their work as highlighted below.
- Kenyan organizations like Action for Sustainability Initiative (AFOSI) and [Positive Young Women Voices \(PYWV\)](#) developed plans to cascade MYE training to their rightsholders, Dream Achievers Youth Organization (DAYO) planned to sensitize duty bearers in Kilifi County on MYE, and Nyimine Community based organization-NYECBO plan on supporting rightsholders to participate in the budget-making process in Siaya County.
- In Jordan, MYE training for 26 COA members resulted in an [MYE code of conduct](#).
- In a bi-national youth CSO gathering in Honduras, 25 rightsholders from Guatemala and Honduras were trained in Meaningful Youth Engagement and Youth Led Accountability. The COA developed a national youth-led accountability model that will be implemented in 2024-2025, placing rightsholders at the forefront of advocacy and overcoming traditional barriers to conducting advocacy.
- In Uganda, [Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS \(UGANET\)](#), a COA member, hosted a key dialogue in December to evaluate efforts to bridge gaps in SRHR, HIV, and legal access to healthcare services for adolescent girls and young women. Stakeholders from government, policymakers, CSOs, media, and rightsholders convened to synchronize SRHR and HIV policies for young women in Uganda and FemAlliance did an Assessment of the challenges faced by LBO women living with HIV.

Youth Led Research:

- Youth-led Research (YLR) training was conducted in Nigeria, Lebanon, and Jordan resulting in increased knowledge of youth-led research methodology. In Nigeria, As a result rightsholders got the opportunity to collaborate with UNFPA and the Ministry of Health on a national level research. The rightsholders participated in the research on Adolescent Health and Development (AHD) in Nigeria by the Federal Ministry of Health. The lead researcher collaborated with the rightsholders to inform the national research agenda, and validated the data collection tools to make them more youth-friendly and pertinent to a diverse needs of young adolescents. Furthermore, [Stand with a Girl Initiative](#) plan to lead research on *Knowledge, Perception, and Experience on Sexual and Gender-based Violence in WASSA Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp* applying the youth led research skills they learnt.

- We trained 12 youth organisations in Lebanon on youth-led research as a result, the Lebanon youth organisations (CoA) plan to lead a research on the impact of the economic crisis on women with disabilities using the youth-led research methodology. A related training was conducted in Jordan for 23 youth organisations. As a result, [Hikaya Center for Civil Society Development](#) plan to lead a research titled “Assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to SRHR for married and ever married couples in Jordan”.
- In Nigeria, after the Youth Led Research training, [Today For Tomorrow Foundation](#) developed the SRHR programming roadmap with clear roles for the youth led CSOs and NGOs in Adamawa State. It included a pathway to the meaningful participation of 15 youth-led CSOs’ directors and program managers, in the same country Great Women Initiative for Health and Rights is concluding a research on discriminatory practices experienced by sex workers accessing SRHR services, and Girl Power Initiative continued collaborating with youth-led and youth-focused SRHR organizations identified in 2022, forming state-level community action groups. Together, they developed an advocacy kit based on research findings and utilized it during stakeholder advocacy visits.
- In Kenya, Resilience Action International (RAI), a youth organisation in Kenya, transitioned to Kobo Collect for data management in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement Scheme. This shift from Google Forms to Kobo Collect simplified data collection and analysis, enabled offline use, and enhanced accessibility. Inuka Success Organization also adopted this tool for its operations.



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TOPIC: Teenage Motherhood
Autonomy (SRH for Teen)

Objectives:

1. To find out if teenage appropriate srh inform
2. To find out how many teen have access to contraceptives
3. To understand the meaning of autonomy when it comes to p ethically-grounded, f adole. frien health care services to prog
4. To understand if teenage moth ethically-grounded and adoles reproductive health care services



Linking and learning

Leadership Labs:

We held 3 physical leadership labs in MENA and CA reaching out to 29 CSOs. We also held 3 virtual leadership labs reaching out to 102 youth CSO's.

- In collaboration with Positive Vibes and youth organisations in Central America we organised a physical leadership lab that showcased creative works of rightsholders, highlighting advocacy efforts during the election period. In Honduras, we presented the graduation of “Escuelita Lúa,” a menstrual education school, featuring educational chapbooks, illustrations, and art materials for [public viewing](#).
- In collaboration with Marsa and youth organisations like Haki Nasawi and Gharsah, we organised a Leadership Lab on “Standing in Solidarity: Feminism and Colonialism”, which connected youth organisations and sparked important conversations relevant for the region.
- Three virtual leadership labs discussed gender equality, climate justice, and violence against women in politics with members from youth organisations as speakers. The first session, titled [“Gender Equality More than just buzzwords”](#) engaged 80 youth civil society organisations. This was led by young women from Nigeria, Lebanon, and Uganda who shared expertise on gender and social inclusion for youth civil society. Young leaders leading the programme – Nour Nahhasr and Fisayo Owoyemi shared their expertise and experience to 80+ youth civil society organisations. 78% of participants gained new knowledge.
- Two Leadership Labs were held in collaboration with Democracy Moves, titled [“Empowering Youth For Climate Justice”](#) and [“Strategic Advocacy for Gender Equality Investment: Addressing Violence Against Women in Politics”](#). These led to informed advocacy and action among the next generation of leaders.
- We collaborated with the consortium partners and the Jordan host organization, ANHRE, to hold the [Linking and Learning Conference](#) in Jordan. The conference brought together the youth collective SRH-R network from Jordan with government representatives to strategize on how to advance SRH-R for young women. Restless Development [shared key practice tips on MYE](#) and how to accompany rightsholders in global advocacy events



Rightsholder Voices in Global and Regional Spaces

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):

Restless Development served as an official organizing partner for the CSW Youth Forum and Intergenerational Dialogue, playing a pivotal role in shaping the five key recommendations for inclusion in the [Agreed Conclusions](#) and the Youth Forum Program. This platform also facilitated connections for five youth advocates to numerous speaking engagements. Additionally, we hosted a parallel event that brought together young feminist voices from the MENA region, Central America, and Africa alongside representatives from the Malala Fund. This gathering provided a unique opportunity for participants to share their digital activism experiences with CSOs, funders, and other feminist organizers. Our Youth Advocates spoke in multiple sessions such as the Youth Forum, Young Feminist Caucus Launch, the feminist futures event by YP Foundation, Global Fund for Women, UN Women, Generation Equality among others. They also participated in the Dutch Feminist Policy Pub Quiz which gave them an opportunity to understand feminist foreign policy and how this affects the flow of funds to youth organizations.

Commission on Population and Development CPD56:

Restless Development facilitated CoA members from Lebanon and Jordan's attendance at CPD6 at the UN headquarters. We moderated a session on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and youth with disabilities organized by our partner, Hivos, and other CSOs. The event featured speakers from Lebanon, the Netherlands, Australia, and UNFPA, with our Senior Youth Collective Coordinator serving as moderator.

Women Deliver:

In collaboration with Hivos and Marsa, we co-hosted an event at the UN Foundation Nest Hub titled "Intersectionality in Practice – Building a Global SRH–R Movement Serving Young Women in all their Diversity." This interactive session featured CoA members from Lebanon and Honduras. Restless Development also facilitated rights holder participation at Women Deliver in Rwanda, where they contributed to a side event launching the SOYCS report and highlighted feminist movements in their respective countries. Additionally, we arranged for a Jordan CoA member to speak at a side event titled "Strategies for Equality in the Arab Region," where she discussed the region's major challenges and proposed solutions as a young Jordanian woman, thereby empowering and amplifying voices. [We Lead's impact at the Women Deliver Conference 2023.](#)

Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference:

We collaborated and virtually participated in a pre-conference session titled "The future is now: the road to meaningful & inclusive youth participation as a core principle in FFP," discussing principles and tools for effective youth engagement. However, our physical presence at the conference was cancelled due to the situation in the MENA region, preventing our Senior Youth Collective Coordinator from Lebanon from travelling to represent We Lead in person.

State of Youth Civil Society Report (SOYCS):

Restless Development published the [“State of Youth Civil Society Report”](#) titled “Young, Feminist, and Fearless – Holding the Line,” exploring youth civil society dynamics and the critical role of feminist movements globally. Featuring findings from 127 interviews, 20 focus groups, and a survey with 847 responses across 82 countries, with spotlights from seven countries – India, Iran, Lebanon, Uganda, Honduras, Brazil, and Sierra Leone. Young leaders on the programme participated as co-lead researchers and they were accompanied to share key findings at the Women Deliver conference to donors, member states, other civil society members and movements. Showcased at the Women Deliver Conference in Rwanda, with representation of the Lebanon CoAF and CoA member, the report underscores the impact of feminist movements and enabled two rightsholders to address SRH–R issues at international forums like the CPD and CSW, holding decision-makers accountable.





Youth leadership and Dynamic Accountability

Young rightsholders leading the programme:

Restless Development continued with the accompaniment of 9 young leaders –Community of Action Facilitators (COAFs), supporting them to enhance their leadership skills and empower them to lead change within their respective communities. 28 one-on-one calls were conducted with COAFs for leadership development. The regional and global calls provided opportunities for exchanging experiences. The COAFs were also trained on social media storytelling. There is continued emphasis on the importance of continuous learning, mentorship, and networking for the COAFs. As the CoA facilitators have proven to be an indispensable part of the structure of the CoAs, they lead and push the work so that the Action Plan is carried out, they assume responsibilities for promoting lobbying and advocacy, Capacity Building, security and protection and well-being. We Lead has provided the facilitators with personal growth, strengthening their skills and experience, this allowed four of them to obtain better jobs or scholarships abroad. The following are testimonials from COAFs expressing how the accompaniment plan has contributed to their personal and professional growth.

“ The Accompaniment Plan has indeed been very instrumental in my personal leadership development journey. It has helped me refine my managerial skills and gain valuable insights on people management. I’ve been provided with support and guidance which has increased my confidence, mental wellbeing and effectiveness. Through continuous learning and self-reflection I’ve become more adaptable and open to change which is enabling me navigate complex CoA challenges and lead with resilience. ”

- Martha Clara Nakato- Uganda COAF

“ The training on social media has helped me tell better stories on Twitter and LinkedIn. ”

- Betty Mtuweta, Kenya COAF

“ I multiply leaders by providing opportunities for them to enhance their knowledge and engage in advocacy. Additionally, I offer mentorship and support, particularly to young women in LBT spaces, guiding them through real-world experiences and helping them build valuable networks. ”

- Fisayo Owoyemi, former COA Facilitator from Nigeria

“ 1:1s are a good place to find solutions that I wouldn’t usually find on my own, it’s also a good space to think about what I’d like to improve. In this sense, I think they are very functional. Regarding the global calls, they are a great space to connect with the other facilitators, to know what everyone is doing, since we don’t see each other that often. ”

- Ligia DeStephen, COAF from Honduras

Rightsholder Voices in the Governance of the programme:

In supporting young women rightsholders to feel empowered to fulfill leadership roles, Restless Development recruited and oriented a [new team of rightsholders](#) to join the steering committee.

Dynamic Accountability:

A We Lead powershifting model was documented and devised with two critical learning questions at its core; firstly, how do Restless Development and other key stakeholders involved in the We Lead program define power shifting? Secondly, in practical terms, how and to what extent is power shifting realized within the We Lead program? The detailed findings from this inquiry were disseminated across the consortium and some of the key insights gleaned around the following: Local ownership initiatives as core strategies of power shifting in the programme were overall positively appraised by rightsholders and are perceived to facilitate implementation; rightsholders expressed appreciation for activities designed to strengthen local COA organizations especially participatory grant making; and prioritizing safety and happiness require a bit more concerted effort and attention.





Program accelerators

Collaboration with consortium partners:

- In the MENA region, we organized a Linking and Learning workshop in collaboration with consortium partners and ANHRE, focusing on advancing SRH-R for young women and sharing best practices on meaningful youth engagement and global advocacy event participation. In Lebanon, in collaboration with Marsa, two CoA organizations, Haki Nasawi and Gharsah, led a Leadership Lab on “Standing in Solidarity: Feminism and Colonialism,” addressing feminism, solidarity, and colonialism in the current MENA context. Highlighting the experiences of Syrian and Palestinian refugees, this session was highly successful, with a proposal for a similar activity at the AWID conference now in progress.
- In Central America, the “Art for Advocacy and Healing” workshop in Guatemala, a collaboration between Positive Vibes, Restless Development, and COA organizations, showcased rightsholders’ work and initiated discussions on preserving and sharing these works online. In partnership with Positive Vibes and Central American COAs, the Guatemalan We Lead Rightsholder and Theatre Festival included sessions on regional campaigns and contributed to the festival’s agenda and methodology. Additionally, for the second consecutive year, we partnered with Nosotras La Preferimos Sencilla from Honduras, where the COA led the Leadership Lab with minimal support from Restless Development.

Global collaborations;

- We facilitated three global virtual Leadership Labs with Democracy Moves, showcasing the program and spotlighting rightsholders and their COAs. Additionally, [global annual State Of the Youth Civil Society report](#), elevated and celebrated the work of young feminist movements, spotlighting young leaders and rightsholders in We Lead countries like Honduras, Lebanon, and Uganda.
- We also partnered with Femnet and Hivos to co-design our CSW engagement strategy and with COAs and HOs to engage rightsholders effectively in this space.

“Thanks to We Lead I fell in love with digital activism [for the Emergency Contraception Legalization in Honduras]. I became more involved with Acción Joven [a COA organization] and attended more We Lead workshops in Tegucigalpa. I learned how to properly do political advocacy not just in social media but also with decision makers in the health system for Women living with HIV, the rightholder group we work with in Llaves.”

– Andrea Honduras in June 2023