

1. Introduction

1.1. About AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective

AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective (AU-EU YVL - PoC) is a four-year programme funded by the European Union with the overall objective of creating an inclusive society in Africa and Europe which responds more to the needs of youth. This is being achieved through;

1. equipping young people with the skills to advocate for their concerns at the local, regional, and continental levels and,
2. engaging institutions and decision-makers to integrate youth concerns and voices in the governance processes.

This programme is implemented by Oxfam, Restless Development, Search for Common Ground, Youthmakers Hub, and ComDev Africa.

2 AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Fund

In the coming 3 years, the AU-EU Youth Voice Lab - Power of the Collective will launch a call for proposals inviting youth-led organizations and groups (in their diversity) to apply for small grants. The grants will support implementation of initiatives by youth-led organisations and groups across the 15 intervention countries of Cameroon, Burundi, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Belgium. Youth initiatives in the mentioned countries will have the opportunity to apply for funding to implement their own ideas and solutions linked to global challenges.

This funding manual describes the purpose of the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Fund, the fund/grant sizes, eligibility, selection criteria, application and award processes.

2.1: Why the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Fund.

Young people represent over 60% of the African population and remain faced with numerous challenges that limit them from realizing their dreams and aspirations. Many, for instance, are not in employment, education, or training, others are unable to voice their needs, and others are faced with conflicts, political instability, and poor healthcare.

The AU-EU Youth Voices Lab programme recognizes that youth must be equal partners in shaping actions to attain the global aspirations of sustainable development, equality, and peace.

They must also be equal partners to achieve the regional vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful

Africa, driven by its citizens, represents a dynamic force in the international arena.

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It is upon this that the programme initiated the youth voice fund to support the implementation of their ideas and solutions linked to global challenges, learning, sharing, and collaboration among youth across Africa and Europe. The fund also supports youth especially those in hard-to-reach communities to have their voices and solutions reach policy and decision-makers at different levels, including the European and African Union.

2.2: The fund/grant sizes

The grants will range from €1,000 to €10,000 per collective or youth-led initiative. These will be in three categories; that is, small size of €1,000 will be 10 in number, medium size of €5,000 will also be 10 in number and 10 large (€10,000).

The funds/grants will be given out or made available two times in the coming three years. In the first and second years (2024 & 2025) the funds will be given to 15 (fifteen) youth-led organisation or groups while in the third year (2026) 15 additional youth-led organisations or groups will benefit from the grants. In total 30 small grants will be made available.

Duration of grants

Each grant will last for a period of 12 months maximum.

2.3: whom will I work with (Consortium Partner?)

Restless Development Uganda will manage the grants. Restless Development is a legally registered entity with the NGO Board in Uganda under permit Number 09855. Restless Development is a non-profit organization that supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. And also hosts a growing youth collective of 185 youth-led organizations spread across countries. Restless Development is committed to creating an agency that paves the way for youth-led change through power-shifting. Restless Development programming focuses on 4 impact areas, i.e., education and livelihoods, gender and sexual rights, voices and democracy, and climate justice.

As these are powershifting funds, co-designed by young people for young people, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) holds decision-making authority in the selection process. The grants will be managed in line with the principles of funding youth power, which include;

- i) Putting young people in the driving seat – A committee of Youth Advisory Board members will be responsible for reviewing and approving the grant applications. This will ensure that decision-making power is in the hands of young people and reflects their priorities

- ii) Making the application process easy and accessible – The calls for proposals, application forms, assessment forms, and the outreach strategy will be co-created with the Youth Advisory Board members to ensure that youth perspectives are integrated into the entire application process. For instance, an online application form will be developed in three different languages (English, French, and Portuguese), and some information awareness meetings will be conducted as well as webinars explaining the application process.
- iii) Funding traditionally marginalized and excluded groups and individuals and not just the usual suspects – priority will be given to funding applications from the underrepresented groups (e.g., rural youth, minority communities, or young people with disabilities). Actively reach out to these communities through partnerships with grassroots organizations
- iv) Investing in young people beyond finances. Grantees will identify capacity-building needs to which mentorship programmes will be tailored too. Grantees will also be networked to existing opportunities for capacity building and knowledge sharing including access to the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab application platform.

3. What should my proposal for the grant focus on?

Your proposal should have activities or interventions that fall under the categories below:

3.1 Awareness campaigns challenging discriminatory acts and promoting inclusion at local level, national, subregional and continental.

Examples include:

-Youth organizing campaigns to raise awareness about specific discriminatory practices in their communities, using social media, art, and public events to share their message. The campaigns have to lead to a specific advocacy action.

3.2 Youth-led initiatives that clearly demonstrate how voices and prioritizes of hard-to-reach young people can be integrated into national, sub-regional, continental and cross-continental advocacy.

E.g -hackathon – these are events where young people come together to collaborate to identify solutions.

- Investigative research resulting in increased participation of young people in decision-making processes, policy reviews, and formulation.

- Development of policy briefs and dialogue events with decision-makers;

3.3 Initiatives that foster stronger youth civil society advocacy at country, sub-regional and continental and cross-continental. E.g coalition/social movement building focusing on initiatives aligned to the national youth plans and the AU agenda 2063.

3.4 Youth-led initiatives to increase collaboration between the African youth in the diaspora and youth groups in Africa

Additional funding priorities

a. Target groups

Please note that proposals targeting youth groups representing hard-to-reach communities, young women, and other marginalized populations will be given priority. creates barriers to their participation in social, economic, and political spheres. Priority will be given to youth who are living with disabilities, lack formal education, belong to indigenous communities, are young women, migrants, refugees, rural youth, and young people living with HIV, among others. In your proposal, we are interested in learning more about how you ensure inclusivity and actively engage diverse groups of young people in your work.

b. Sustainability

Your proposal must outline how your initiative or main activities will continue existing after the grant period ends. Specifically, explain how you see the continuation of activities or how the outcomes of your efforts will drive lasting change beyond the project's conclusion.

4. Applying for Grants

a. Am I eligible to apply for the grants?

The Grants have the following eligibility criteria:

1. Your organization or group must be youth-led, with decision-makers and target groups aged 15-35 years. The founder or at least one co-founder must be under 35, and at least 70% of the staff or volunteers should be young people under 35 years old, with a focus on underrepresented or marginalized youth.
2. You must be a registered youth-led organization or group, NGO, association, trade union, collective, or network/alliance of these entities.
3. At least 50% of your target group should consist of young women or minority individuals, with at least 10% being young people with disabilities or led by young people with disabilities.
4. Your organization or group must be based in one of the following 14 African countries: Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Cameroon, Tunisia, TZ, Burundi, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia -
5. Having experience working with marginalized groups/underserved communities;

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6. Sustainability: Continuity after the end of the grant period (e.g. finance, capacity building, buddy system)
7. The proposed activity must take place in one or more of the 14 countries listed above.

b. Steps to apply for the grants

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS		
Step 01	Responding to the Call for Proposal (CfP)	<p>A CfP is released annually in January or February, and an organization or youth group has up to five weeks to respond and submit their application.</p> <p>Applications will be made through a provided link to the Bamboo HR or an agreed collection point in specified countries in the CfP. The Bamboo HR online environment will take you through the narrative and financial application questions and elements of your proposal.</p> <p>In the CfP, applicants are encouraged to join the 'Youth Voices Lab Application' online community to receive updates on the application process (www....)</p>
Step 02	Online events and other support to grantees	<p>To provide additional support to applicants, an online session will be scheduled before the application deadline to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer clarity and examples of the types of initiatives eligible for application. • Explain the minimum eligibility requirements and the application assessment process. • Address any remaining questions from potential grantees. <p>Additionally, in-person information and awareness meetings will be held in selected countries with umbrella organizations or well-connected grantees.</p>
GRANT SELECTION		
Step 03	Longlisting and Application Assessments	All grant applications must be submitted in either English, French, or Portuguese, and should address the specific CfP you are applying to. Please note: You can only apply to one CfP at a time and may submit only one

		<p>application for your chosen CFP. If multiple applications are submitted to one or more CFPs, only the first application will be considered.</p> <p>Once all applications are received, the Youth Advisory Board for the Youth Action Lab, in collaboration with the Restless Development team, will conduct a screening process that includes the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the eligibility of each application. • Evaluate each application based on the submitted narrative and financial proposal according to the established selection criteria. • The highest-scoring proposals will be notified, and we will then engage in a due diligence and organizational assessment process, which will take approximately three weeks.
GRANT AWARD		
Step 04	Offer of Grant Award and Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the due diligence and organizational assessment are completed successfully, the grant award process will begin. • Successful applicants will receive an official grant award notification, after which a Grant Agreement will be signed. The goal is to notify organizations by early March 2025. • Following the signing of the Grant Agreement, the first financial transfer will be made, and an Inception Meeting will be held with selected grantees in March 2025 to discuss the project proposal and outline the next steps. • The financial transfer will be made in a single payment for smaller grants below €5,000 and two installments for large grants of €10,000. The transfer schedule will be aligned with the proposed planning and milestones outlined in the grant proposal. • Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and encouraged to engage with the broader program, particularly through the Youth Voices Lab Application Platform. They will also have the option to request a brief assessment of their

	application, to provide feedback by the end of March 2025.
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c. To submit your application, use the Bamboo HR System.

Clicking on the link will direct you to the Bamboo HR application system. Follow these steps:

- 1...
- 2....

d. Narrative application question focus

The application form will guide you through the process, with specific questions and instructions included.

The application consists of the following sections, all of which must be completed. Please follow the instructions carefully, as your application will be assessed based on your responses. It is important to adhere to the suggested length and page limits:

1. Organization /Youth Group Information and Contact Details
2. Additional Organization/Youth Group Details
3. Project Relevance and Justification
4. Deliverables & Project Activities
5. Capacity
6. Monitoring and Evaluation
7. Risk Management
8. Sustainability of the Project
9. Project Budget
10. Additional Questions (optional)

NB; standardised downloadable templates for Monitoring and Evaluation and project budget shall be provided.

e. Budget Minimum Requirements

- You will use the budget template that will be included in the application form.
- Each budget item must be clearly described, with all columns for each budget line filled out. This includes specifying the cost per category, the number of units, and the unit value for each item, as per the instructions provided. The budget should reflect costs for the entire project.
- The budget must be presented in Euros, and all costs and unit values should be rounded to the nearest euro.
- For Human Resources costs, indicate the percentage of time for each position and specify whether the role is full-time (FTE) or part-time.
- Budget costs should adhere to the principles of Reasonable, Allowable, and Allocable:
 - Reasonable: Costs should be fair and in line with market prices, neither excessively high nor low.
 - Allowable: Only costs that are deemed acceptable should be included.
 - Allocable: Costs should be directly traceable to the approved budget as outlined in the proposal.

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- All costs incurred during project implementation must be verifiable through the grantee's records and necessary for the successful completion of the project.

f. What makes a successful application?

What makes a successful application?

- Applications submitted on time.
- Properly filled and complete applications in line with the application template.
- Applications that fulfill the eligibility criteria in section 4 - above.

What are unsuccessful factors?

- The application does not meet the criteria - see eligibility criteria;
- Application not in the right format or key questions left unanswered;
- Unreasonable costs (cf. financial guidelines);
- In general, the purchase of motor vehicles, land, or buildings;
- Poor presentation or incomplete application.

5. Overall grant management

All grant programs under the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab have a capacity development focus and aim to connect young people across Africa and Europe. Being a part of these grants is much more than just receiving financial support!

Restless Development will manage and coordinate the grants. As a grantee, you will be paired with the Programs Manager, who will be your primary contact throughout the grant process.

You can expect regular communication from Restless Development through email and online calls. Together, we will explore how coaching and mentorship can enhance your work, learning, and capacity development needs. Your main contact will also be available to assist with any practical questions related to grant implementation, spending, and more.

The grants are designed to foster connections among young people from different countries. As a grantee, you will be required to join our online community on the

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Power2Voices digital platform. Monthly, we will facilitate interactive learning exchanges within your grantee cohort and beyond. Additionally, the platform allows you to take the lead in creating learning opportunities and engaging with other grantees across the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective programme.

The Youth Voices Lab also organizes annual face-to-face/virtual Learning Events. As a grantee, you will be expected to attend these events and share your knowledge and experiences with fellow peers from Africa and Europe.

The Grants offer capacity development opportunities based on the needs and interests identified by your organization. In your proposal, you will be asked to allocate at least 5% of your total budget for capacity development. You are welcome to propose specific training or development opportunities for your team. If you have particular capacity development needs but face challenges in identifying the right resources or opportunities, Restless Development will assist by providing a list of potential service providers you can engage with.

6. Grants Agreement and Disbursement Guidelines

The Grant Agreement serves as a binding document that specifies the project duration, and the awarded grant amount based on the approved application, work plan, and budget. It also details the grantee's obligations under the grant, including reporting requirements, adherence to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) policies, conflict of interest disclosures, and other terms and conditions.

Cost

All expenses incurred during project implementation must be verifiable through the grantee's records and demonstrably necessary for the project's execution.

Verification:

Grant Disbursements

For grants amounting to 5000 - 10,000 Euros, disbursements will occur in two instalments

1. First Disbursement

The initial disbursement will be made upon fulfillment of the following conditions/milestones:

- Full execution of the Grant Agreement and all annexes.
- Approval and sign-off of the budget and work plan.
- Submission of a completed Bank Information Form.
- Submission of a completed Grantee Information Sheet.

2. Second Disbursement

The second and final disbursement will be processed upon achieving the following milestones:

- Submission of receipt acknowledging that you received the funds and corresponding bank statement for the first disbursement.
- Submission and assessment of the quarterly narrative report.
- Submission and assessment of the variance report.
- Demonstrated progress towards achieving objectives of the youth-led initiative.
- Submission of a formal request for the second and final disbursement.
- Upon utilization of 75% of funds received.

These guidelines ensure accountability, transparency, and alignment with the grant's objectives.

7. Details on assessment criteria

The AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Grants are competitive, application-based funding opportunities designed to support a wide range of youth-led organizations/groups.

To receive funding, organizations must submit an application that undergoes review through an open and transparent assessment process.

Selection Process

1. Screening Applications

Restless Development will lead the initial screening of applications against the eligibility criteria. This process is expected to take one week, though it may be extended depending on the volume of applications received.

2. Longlisting

Eligible applicants will be grouped by country to ensure equitable representation across the 14 focus countries.

3. Application Assessment

Shortlisted applicants will undergo an assessment by the YAB and Consortium partners. A pre-designed assessment tool will be used to evaluate and score the various elements of each proposal.

4. Notification and Contracting

The highest-scoring proposals will be notified and required to submit additional forms and details to facilitate contracting.

5. Organizational Capacity Assessment

A preliminary evaluation of the applicant's capacity will be conducted through an Organizational Capacity Assessment to ensure their readiness to manage the grant.

6. Site Visits (if applicable)

Where necessary, site visits may be conducted to verify governance and accounting protocols or review existing programs. These visits may involve Restless Development's country offices and on-ground support from YAB members, where feasible.

This structured process ensures fairness, transparency, and the effective allocation of funds to deserving youth-led organizations.

8. Statement on Integrity

The AU-EU Youth Voices Lab upholds a strict "zero-tolerance policy" for all forms of misconduct, including sexual, financial, or interpersonal offenses. This commitment is enforced through the policies and practices of Oxfam, Youth Makers Hub, Search for Common Ground, ComDev Africa, and Restless Development Uganda. Safeguarding, financial management, and interpersonal behavior are integral to agreements and programs involving partners, grantee organizations, suppliers, and contractors.

Organizations receiving funding from the Youth Voices Lab are required to implement robust mechanisms to address allegations of misconduct. These

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mechanisms must encompass prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting of issues such as:

- Safeguarding misconduct: including sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, or child abuse.
- Corruption-related misconduct: including fraud, theft, bribery, money laundering, terrorist financing, aid diversion, or nepotism.
- Interpersonal misconduct: including bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination.

Before signing the grant agreement, an organizational assessment will be conducted to collaboratively review your organization's policies, code of conduct, and mechanisms for addressing misconduct. This assessment will consider the organization's size and the grant amount, and it will help identify any potential capacity development needs related to misconduct prevention and response.

Organizations receiving funding from the Youth Voices Lab are required to report any allegations of misconduct related to the overall AU-EU Youth Voices Lab project or its grantees to the Program Manager. All reports will be thoroughly investigated and, if substantiated, addressed within a reasonable timeframe, following Restless Development's policies.

If the concern involves a Youth Voices Lab grantee, the respective project partner managing the relationship with the grantee (Oxfam, Youth Makers Hub, Search for Common Ground, ComDev Africa, or Restless Development Uganda) will oversee the investigation and resolution according to their established procedures. All reported cases and actions taken will be shared with Oxfam, the lead contract-holder with the donor.

In cases where a complaint cannot be handled by the respective partner organization or if it is unwilling to address the matter, Oxfam, as the lead agency, will take responsibility for managing the process. All partner organizations are committed to handling complaints with a survivor-centered approach, ensuring the survivor's wishes, safety, and well-being are prioritized at every stage while maintaining respect for due process.

If your concern relates to the functioning/inappropriate action of any member of the AU-EU Youth Voices lab project, the project's Consortium Manager will coordinate the investigation, following the relevant policies and processes of Oxfam.

If the concern is directly related to the behaviors of the Consortium Manager, it will go to the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab Steering Committee.