



**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

**WE ARE
RESTLESS**

Uganda Annual Report 2024

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Green Jobs Youth Researchers celebrate the end of a successful Youth - Led Research Training.



MESSAGE FROM THE HUB DIRECTOR



GABRIEL IGUMA

Hub Director

What a journey this past year has been!

I take a moment to look back and reflect, some things stay true; First, At the heart of Everything we do is YOUTH POWER. The belief that young people are the solution. Restless Development Uganda's work is about young people's potential and the changes that happen when they are trusted, supported, and given the opportunity to lead. Looking back on 2024, we have enjoyed so many inspiring moments powered by young people. From amplifying youth voices in decision-making spaces to driving impactful conversations in health, climate, and governance, we have witnessed firsthand what happens when we put young people in the driver's seat. One of our biggest wins was deepening youth-led accountability through projects like the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab, where young people not only participated in program design but also led impactful conversations on advocacy in their communities. Through their leadership, partners and stakeholders have become more responsive, a shift we are proud of.

We made significant strides with the Olu Alu campaign in West Nile, using school debates and sports galas to address harmful social norms and gender-based violence. We look forward to seeing young people challenge these norms in their communities, which will be inspiring.

In governance, we engaged youth coalitions to ensure young people are active citizens shaping Uganda's future. Through leadership visits and policy dialogues, we help young people take their place in civic spaces. We strengthened regional connections and prioritised mentorship and learning for our youth advisory boards and community leaders.

So, what's next? We know the future depends on how we treat and trust young people today. That is why we are focusing on sustainability and deeper partnerships in the year ahead. We will strive to connect youth-led groups with new funding, skill-building, and advocacy opportunities. We are also eager to grow our digital engagement so young people, no matter where they are, can access tools, networks, and opportunities that fuel their leadership.

We will continue to build accountability into everything we do, from grassroots monitoring to influencing national policy, and we will maintain a strong focus on the intersection between health, livelihoods, and leadership.

Thank you to every young person, staff member, partner, and supporter who has walked this journey with us. Your belief in the power of youth makes all of this possible. The energy is real, the momentum is growing, and together, we are just getting started.

Enjoy the read.

With this inclusive data collection, I know the voices of girls with disabilities will be heard and not left out like most of the times.

Catherine Anyakun, a Girl Champion from Moroto, under the Global Girls Creating Change (G2C2) program.

MESSAGE FROM YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



Being part of the AU-EU Youth Action Lab has been an incredible journey. The lab has offered a space where youths' perceptions have been included in shaping and operating the power-shifting grants, enabling meaningful youth engagements for sustainable change. As we move forward, I'm excited to see the various grant modalities that we have shaped come to life, empowering and supporting youth-led initiatives across Africa and Europe. I am thrilled to be part of this impactful program.

NAJMA OMARY - YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER, AU-EU YOUTH ACTION LAB



As a youth advisory board member of the AU-EU Voice Lab, I have seen firsthand the commitment of the Lab and partners to put the young people first. We have jointly worked with the program team on a framework and manual for funding youth voice initiatives, as well as participating in several engagements with stakeholders. This commitment to engaging us in defining the youth journey excites me, just like it should excite other youth, because more than before, African and European youth are going to be given skills, knowledge and support to transform their societies. For youth, now is the time to reignite hope and roll up our sleeves to better our continents!

ANDREW DDEMBE - YAB MEMBER, AU-EU YOUTH VOICES LAB



As a youth advisory board member, I am proud to highlight our work with Reach Out Mbuya on the Community Score Card initiative at Kisugu and Wentz Medical Centre. It was inspiring to see adolescents actively participating in community score cards, identifying issues like negative attitudes of health workers that hinder adolescent health services, and proposing actionable solutions. This demonstrates their empowerment and the tangible impact of our programs in fostering accountability and improving community health outcomes.

ATIKI DERRICK - YAB MEMBER, SHE SOARS PROGRAM



Facilitating the Youth Advisory Structures Training in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties, Kenya, was a rewarding experience that enabled me to guide and inspire young leaders to become agents of change within their local communities. Through interactive sessions on Sexual Reproductive Health, Meaningful Youth Engagement, and Gender, we all acquired invaluable knowledge and skills. This experience reinforced my commitment to empowering youth and ensuring they are meaningfully involved in decision-making spaces, moving beyond tokenism to genuinely influence positive change in the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights space.

GLORIA MOGOI - YAB MEMBER, SHE SOARS PROGRAM

OUR STRATEGY 2023-2030



Our strategy ensures that Restless Development Uganda supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. We make sure that young people's voices are heard, and that they have the power to mobilise action in their communities to respond to long-standing challenges.

Our impact goal areas include,



Voice and democracy, ensuring institutions are accessible and responsive to young people.



Climate Justice, Investment in creating systemic change and supporting young people to lead the way in addressing the climate crisis whilst creating a fairer and more just world.



Education and livelihood, equipping young people with skills, knowledge, and opportunities to thrive.



Gender and Sexual Health, supporting young people to change attitudes and policies, to uphold sexual and reproductive health and gender equality.



OVERALL RESULTS



8.5m

Young people were reached

11.1k

Participants were directly engaged in our program activities.



746

Young people were trained to lead change and deliver our various programmes effectively.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



622 stakeholders, including government officials, youth-led organizations, and private sector actors, to implement our interventions at both the district and national levels.

Collaboration with stakeholders is essential for the successful implementation of project activities. It ensures a shared understanding of goals, strengthens resources and support, and fosters a united approach to addressing challenges.

By the end of the year, 427 organizations had signed up to be part of the Youth Collective, marking a significant milestone in amplifying efforts for meaningful youth engagement. The Youth Collective continues to serve as a valuable networking platform for youth organizations. Through the granting of sub-components of our AU-EU programs, we are optimistic that some Youth Collective members will receive support to enhance youth engagement further.

IMPACT PER PROGRAMMATIC AREA

GENDER AND SEXUAL HEALTH

SHE SOARS



This program remains our primary intervention for reaching out-of-school adolescents in Arua, Madi-Okollo, Terego, and Kampala districts.

Through Behavior Change Communication (BCC) outreaches, Household Intergenerational Dialogues (IGD), and Social Analysis and Action (SAA) activities, we address the socio-economic factors that increase adolescents' risk of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Notably, 34% of participants were out-of-school adolescents below 19 years. The IGD model has proven to be highly effective in bridging the sexual communication gap between older and younger generations.



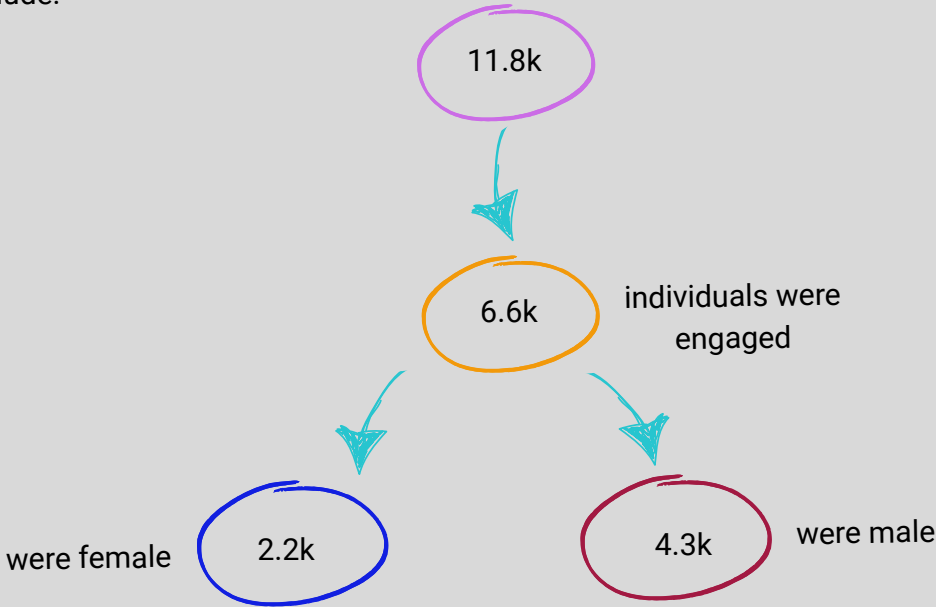
"Since Restless Development educated us through the Intergenerational Dialogues, the elders (Mzees) are now more open to listening to our calls for change. They have taught us the important roles parents should play and how young people can respond when faced with challenges such as early marriage. Our responsibility now is to follow the advice given to us and to educate community members on the need to abandon harmful practices, such as trading girls for dowry and engaging in premarital sex. "John IGD participant in Terego district .



The integration of livelihood strategies into Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) messaging has led to the formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), which has contributed to a reduction in youth involvement in risky sexual behavior. The savings accrued from these initiatives have eased affordability of SRH packages by out of school adolescents.

"I no longer give money to girls to make them love me, nor do I buy alcohol for friends at the trading center to show off. I now save my tobacco money. I want to build a permanent house and plan with my wife so that we can grow and live happily." — Dramadri Collins, a member of the Aripea VSLA group stated.

A total of 11,801 household-level Intergenerational Dialogues (IGDs) were conducted and include:



We Lead Project

"I learned about two-way accountability. If we want to hold our government accountable, we also have to be accountable to the people we represent."

Lydia, Right holder from a Community of Action.



Young leaders share best practices for advancing adolescent-centred SRH at the We Lead Linking and Learning conference in Nairobi.



We built the capacity of 81 Community of Action participants in youth-led accountability and meaningful youth engagement. These leadership training are crucial in empowering young people to claim their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The midterm evaluation showed that over 50% of participants felt their knowledge in Meaningful Participation, and 52% felt their understanding of Youth-led Accountability had improved.

We also participated in the Regional Linking and Learning Conference, which brought together participants from Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria. Several youth-centered SRHR best practices were shared, including: Blending toll-free youth friendly innovations with local collaborative partnerships involving SRHR service providers, such as health centers and NGO-based health specialists. This approach has significantly improved access to SRHR services, including ARV refills and counseling, enhancing efficiency beyond periodic physical outreaches. Members of the SRHR Alliance Uganda, such as the Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC), have successfully implemented this model. Intentionally documenting registered results through open online platforms, which simplifies cross-learning and serves as a valuable reference for programmatic efforts. The "Data Waffe" model, promoted by the Uganda Key Population Consortium, was highlighted as a shared one-stop center for evidence-based programming and partnerships. This platform provides access to best practices, toolkits, publications, and other resources, all available for download. It facilitates a digitally accelerated response for key populations, promoting collaboration and knowledge-sharing.



The Olu Alu Campaign



In partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), we launched the Olu Alu “I Can - You Can” adolescent-led media campaign. This initiative empowers young leaders aged 13 to 24 in Arua and Yumbe districts to build a social movement aimed at identifying community-level sexual reproductive health (SRH) barriers and seeking support from other duty bearers to address these issues. A total of 40 adolescent change agents (21 females and 19 males) were selected from Arua and Yumbe districts to take leadership roles in addressing gender-based violence, early marriages, and school dropouts in their communities.

37 awareness sessions were held across 40 school communities in Arua and Yumbe, reaching 835 participants (431 males and 404 females). These sessions introduced the Olu Alu campaign, raised awareness about key issues such as gender-based violence, school dropout, early marriages, and teenage pregnancy, and fostered understanding of the campaign’s goals, laying a strong foundation for its implementation.

A Co-creation and Co-design workshop was organised in Arua, bringing together 8 mentors and 17 adolescent change agents to address issues such as drug abuse, gender-based violence, and school dropout. Participants worked together to develop context-specific campaign messages and strategies for the Olu Alu Campaign, ensuring its relevance and impact within their communities.



The Olu Alu change makers and agents during group sessions at the co-creation workshop in Arua and Yumbe.

IMPACT PER PROGRAMMATIC AREA

Voice and Democracy

Ending Violence Against Children (EVAC)



The Youth Mobilisers of the Ending Violence Against Children (EVAC) at the ministerial conference held in Bogotá.

In response to Article 19 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) obligates states parties to undertake all necessary measures to protect the child against all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, we identified and trained 15 young people and international partners across all World Health Organization (WHO) regions to confidently champion the call to end violence against children.

This project indirectly engaged 2 million people from across the globe. We participated in a ministerial conference held in Bogotá, Colombia, where Governments and organisations submitted over 120 pledges promising transformative action to end violence against children. Notably, nine countries (Burundi, Czechia, Gambia, Kyrgyzstan, Panama, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uganda, and Nigeria) pledged to pursue legislation against corporal punishment in all settings.

Almost 50 countries committed to investing in parenting support to prevent violence against children. Solomon Islands pledged to raise the legal age of marriage from 15 to 18 years.

The Restless Development and WHO [Safe photography project](#) outstandingly contributed to this advocacy call through pictures that reflected a million experiences related to violence against children from across the globe.



"Youth power is not something to be built, it is already here, ready and waiting to be unleashed. Youth leadership does not mean that the old step aside, we are asking that you step forward with us, not as mere beneficiaries but as equal partners, the missing piece in the puzzle," **Marie, Youth ambassador at the Bogota summit.**

AU-EU Youth Voices Lab



We rolled out two continental projects—AU-EU Youth Voice and the AU-EU Action Lab in partnership with the African Union and European Union to address gaps in youth civic and democratic participation. Both were launched in Addis Ababa and co-created with 18 youth advisory board members from across Africa. Co-creation was a major milestone, placing youth at the heart of decision-making and pushing for youth-led policies, including the call for independent youth institutions—marking a shift toward more youth-owned, responsive development.

The projects aim to amplify youth voices at both individual and institutional levels. Individually, they empower youth and youth-led networks to advocate for their priorities locally, nationally, and globally. Institutionally, they engage governments, partners, and corporations to be more youth-centered in policy and decision-making.

The initiative targets 240,000 youth aged 15–35 and 8,000 youth-led groups, including 3,500 from 14 direct countries, 4,500 across Africa, and 500 from Europe

AU-EU Youth Action Lab



The AU-EU Youth Action Lab (YAL) is a four-year program (2024–2028) co-funded by the European Union and implemented by Oxfam, Restless Development Uganda, and the European Youth Forum. It aims to bridge the gap in opportunities for youth in Africa and Europe to collaborate and scale their initiatives.

The program provides grants in four categories:

- Innovation grants for youth-led solutions to global challenges.
- Entrepreneurship grants for employment and enterprise initiatives.
- Representation grants for marginalized youth to lead change in their communities.
- Cooperation grants to foster Africa-Europe youth collaboration.

An inception meeting brought together 20 participants from ministries, youth organizations, and key stakeholders. Key recommendations included: empowering youth as change agents, fostering partnerships across sectors, and raising awareness of grant opportunities in underserved areas.

These insights are essential for driving sustainable youth development and boosting the impact of youth-led actions.



CLIMATE JUSTICE

Global Girls Creating Change

We rolled out the G2C2 program in Jinja, Mayuge, Napak, and Moroto districts, where 319 girl champions have been enrolled to lead climate initiatives in their respective communities. Recognizing the central importance of evidence-based climate advocacy, a youth-led research foundational training was conducted, equipping 30 girl champions with skills for effective evidence-based climate advocacy.



The Girl Champions on the Global Girls Creating Change (G2C2) project during a group activity at their foundation training.

30 girl champions participated in data collection using participatory tools such as Kobo Collect surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIs) to generate preliminary data for community-level climate action. Their involvement ensured that the findings authentically represented the lived experiences of girls in the community, which enhanced the credibility and relevance of the data. This laid a strong foundation for more targeted and impactful interventions.

Unfortunately, the programme has come to an end following an abrupt cut in funding from USAID. This has directly affected thirty girl champions who were actively engaged and leading in their communities. While the work they began has laid a meaningful foundation, the sudden halt has interrupted momentum and left a gap in support for these young leaders who were just beginning to make their voices heard.



“Now that I am going to be a girl champion, I am so confident in using the research and advocacy skills I’ve learned to impart knowledge to other young girls out there and contribute to small changes in my community. The training has given me the confidence to reach out to leaders and ask them to address the climate issues affecting girls.” Catherine Anyakun, Girl Champion in Moroto Uganda.

YOUTH-LED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Green Jobs Research

Youth Motivation for Green Jobs: The majority of respondents (87% of 608 respondents) reported being motivated to engage in environmental conservation and restoration activities, with tree planting being the most popular activity. Key barriers such as lack of capital, space, and skills were identified as significant obstacles to broader participation.

Barriers to Youth Engagement in Conservation: The primary constraints preventing youth from achieving their aspirations for "dream jobs" in environmental activities include inadequate education (34%), lack of working capital (29%), and insufficient skill training (17%). Additionally, the absence of economic incentives and limited awareness further exacerbates the challenges, highlighting structural and economic hurdles in achieving sustainable youth involvement in green jobs.



The Green Jobs project youth researchers conducting focus group discussion in Nakasongola district.

Youth-Led Research Project

Under the Green Jobs and Youth Researchers Academy programs, a total of 36 youth researchers (16 females and 20 males) were trained and deployed to conduct community-based research. The Green Jobs research explored barriers and opportunities related to youth entrepreneurship in Jinja and Nakasongola districts, while the Youth Researchers Academy examined the intersectionality between Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and climate change in Jinja and Mayuge districts. Some of the key research highlights include the following:



Youth Researchers Academy

From 670 respondents, stigma and discrimination were identified as major barriers to accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services. In Mayuge district, 64.5% of respondents reported such experiences, with females disproportionately affected, and the situation worsened by healthcare provider misconduct. The research also revealed that climate change exacerbates SRH challenges in Jinja and Mayuge by disrupting livelihood systems, which in turn reduces access to SRHR services. Additionally, the resulting financial and psychosocial stressors further expose adolescents to risky sexual behaviors.

POWER SHIFTING HIGHLIGHT

Masitula Musubika: A Voice for Young People with Disabilities

At 28 years old, Masitula Musubika from Jaguzi Island in Mayuge District lives with a physical disability, but she hasn't let that define her. In 2024, she joined Restless Development as a Youth Researcher under the Youth Researchers Academy, focusing on access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for young people with disabilities.

"Joining Restless was unexpected, but it gave me a platform to grow," she says. Her work allowed her to connect deeply with communities and uncover how different types of disabilities, such as albinism and hearing impairments, come with unique, often overlooked challenges.



Masitula has faced her share of discrimination, from inaccessible infrastructure to being denied jobs based on her appearance. She credits her strength to her family's endless support and the confidence Restless Development placed in her. "They believed in me, and that changed everything."



"I now feel confident to contest for leadership positions. I can speak for myself and others," she shares.

Her message to others with disabilities: "Do not lose hope. Keep yourself presentable. If a chance comes, take it, it may only come once." - **Masitula Musubika.**

CELEBRATING YOUTH POWER

YouthImpactExpo



A team from Sawa World exhibits their locally led and innovative products to participants of the Youth Impact Expo in Uganda, 2024.

On November 6th, 2024, we hosted a Youth Impact Expo, an action-packed day attended by young people, youth civil society organisations, donors, Restless Development Uganda staff, government, and alumni. It was filled with inspirational stories about youth-led initiatives, a youth-led panel that called for flexible, unrestricted funding from donors.

We heard from more than 20 amazing youth organisations that are changing the course of the future - young women building e-bikes, creating solar-powered backpacks, using technology to reach communities, accelerating science learning in Africa, and establishing Mobile Hubs to take learning to communities, to name a few.



Owiny Hakim from eBee, posing on an eBee bicycle during the Youth Impact Expo in Uganda in 2024.



Strategy Launch



Gabriel, Hub Director of Restless Development Uganda, speaking during the launch of the 2022-2030 Strategic Plan at the Youth Impact Expo 2024.

We also launched the **Uganda Strategic Plan (2023-2030)** with the Uganda National Board, partners and young people. We also launched the Uganda Strategic Plan (2023-2030) with the Uganda National Board, partners and young people.

This was followed by a panel discussion where four young people who lead youth civil society organisations reflected on the State of Youth Civil Society Research on Funding Youth Power to Thrive called upon the need for meaningful youth engagement in all aspects of research; for trust based financing and flexible funding; to let young people collaborate with each other for funding, not compete and invest in them as they are architects of the solutions to issues that impact them.



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The Restless
Development
Uganda Strategic
Plan 2013 - 2030



Team leads Baker (Tech Reach Africa), Andrew (Mobiklinic), Jamilah (Smart Girls Foundation), Peace (Nile Girls Forum), and Ashraf pictured after a powerful panel discussion on Funding Youth Power at the Youth Impact Expo 2024 in Uganda.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS

