

Restless Development Minutes of Trustee Meeting

Attendance: See table at end of document	Date: 30/04/2025	Recorder: Richa Sinha
Location: Zoom	Time: 12.00pm - 3.00pm BST	Approved:

Agenda	1. Welcome and Approval of Previous Members 2. Trustee Spotlight 3. State of the Agency Report	4. People Strategy Break 5. Financial Position - Year End position, Reserves and Cash flow, Q2 Forecast	6. People Committee 7. Strategy Committee 8. Business Committee 9. Youth Spotlight 10. AOB	
Actions Updates	Actions from Meeting(s)	Lead	Status update/timeline	Progress
1	Final signed audit report will be shared with the Board Chair and Business Committee Chair for sign-off by May 7.	Sunil		
2.	Ensure that all papers are distributed to trustees before the meeting to allow adequate time for review.	Richa		

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Agenda	Minutes
Welcome (BM)	JW sent her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting. BM was requested to chair in her absence; she expressed her thanks and subsequently approved the minutes of the previous meeting. An apology was also received from FB.
Trustee Spotlight (Ek)	<p>EK shared insights from their career journey in Uganda, highlighting their transition from journalism to youth civil society and human rights work. They emphasized their experience in community philanthropy, explaining how local resource mobilization is often undervalued, especially by international funders. EK expressed fatigue with ongoing dialogues around reforming the aid sector, feeling that these conversations rarely lead to meaningful change. Instead, they are now more focused on supporting alternative systems and grassroots models of development, where young people and movements operate outside traditional NGO structures. They noted a growing trend among youth to distance themselves from institutional identities, embracing movement-based language and organizing.</p> <p>TA asked EK what they believed were the main reasons behind young people shifting away from NGOs. TA suggested it might be due to both push factors—such as growing criticism and flaws in large NGOs—and pull factors, like the increasing appeal of movements as more autonomous and attractive spaces. TA then asked whether, based on EK's conversations with young people, the shift is more about rejection of NGOs, attraction to movements, or if other factors are at play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ES responded that NGOs have lost legitimacy, often seen as bureaucratic entities delivering externally funded programs and gaming the system to sustain themselves. This perception associates NGOs with corruption and self-interest, whereas movements are viewed as more authentic and community-driven. As a result, people are more likely to identify with movements, which are seen as collective and purpose-driven, rather than with NGOs, which may carry negative assumptions.
State of Agency Report (AK and KM)	AK shared updates on several key areas:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategy: The youth expo was used to soft launch the theory of change, with positive engagement from funders and young leaders.• Resource Mobilization: Promising progress with 2 donors; program funding team is performing well despite a tough funding climate.• Financial Position: A £31K shortfall this quarter after a major USAID funding loss; efforts are underway to reshape the financial model and structure for sustainability.• Annual Planning: Focus on exploring new income streams, including community fundraising.• Staff Changes: Planned Farewells of Zim Hub Director(June) and Tanzania Hub Director (mid-year); 40th anniversary celebration planned for 13 Nov in Harare.• Appeals for Help: Seeking trustee support or contacts for major donors, donor-advised funds, impact investment, and volunteer support for upcoming triathlons. <p>ND inquired about the 40th event, expressing interest in the Zimbabwe plans and wondering if there were any updates since the last brainstorm or ways the team could support, or if the discussion was meant for a later time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ak responded that the <i>Restless, Always Restless</i> campaign was delayed due to the USAID appeal but was now set to launch, with plans for alumni engagement, a celebration call in June/July, a possible film, and a triathlon thank-you event. Due to limited capacity, no major events were planned for the year, with a focus on impact-driven activities going forward, focusing on impact over anniversary celebrations.
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People Strategy(CB)	<p>CB shared the progress and insights into the People Vision and Strategy, emphasizing the importance of patience and understanding the agency's dynamics before making recommendations. By the end of the last financial year, CB had a clearer view of the agency's needs to enhance the people function, especially focusing on leadership development, talent retention, and mitigating risks related to incidents and succession planning. The agency remains committed to creating the best employee experience and offering the best value proposition. The strategy is centered around building opportunities across all functions, ensuring alignment with the agency's vision.</p> <p>The strategy includes five priority areas: succession planning and talent development, performance management, behavioral change, operational efficiency, and well-being and safety. CB discussed the critical need for talent development programs, particularly for entry-level staff, second-tier leaders, and executive leadership, to avoid overburdening key individuals and ensure a sustainable leadership pipeline. Additionally, a focus on learning and development through quarterly sessions and comprehensive skills assessments aims to address gaps in skills retention and staff growth.</p> <p>CB also highlighted the importance of intentional performance management, including goal setting and continuous feedback, to support high performers and address low performers constructively. The power shifting and behavioral change efforts will focus on enhancing the agency's DEI initiatives and improving organizational culture. Operational efficiency improvements are being pursued through better employee satisfaction surveys and enhanced feedback mechanisms, aiming for a 15% improvement in engagement levels.</p> <p>On the well-being and safeguarding front, CB mentioned the goal to provide consistent employee assistance programs across all hubs and improve incident reporting pathways. Additionally, resource mobilization efforts are ensuring that staff development is incorporated into proposals to sustain and grow the agency's workforce.</p> <p>Finally, CB emphasized that the strategy is not static but evolving, with ongoing adaptations to keep up with the agency's fast-paced environment. The operational plan is in progress, and the people function continues to grow, guided by these strategic priorities.</p>
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<p>Financial Position-Emerging year End Position , Reserves and Cash Flow (SM)</p>	<p>SM presented an update on the organization's financial position, focusing on the Q2 reforecast and the year-end results for FY 2023–24. A major emphasis was on how the organization is recovering from the £600,000 loss of USAID funding, which had severely impacted several hubs. Despite this, the organization showed strong resilience, securing £8.3 million in income—a 22% increase over the annual budget and a 4% improvement compared to the Q1 reforecast. This growth was primarily driven by strong pipeline performance in hubs such as Uganda, Zambia, and Tanzania. However, some Hubs like Zimbabwe and Nepal are still facing deficits, and the unrestricted Income unit had to revise down its targets due to underperformance from corporate and major donors, contributing a net shortfall of £46K.</p> <p>SM also highlighted that the current pipeline has shortened from 12 months to 6–9 months due to the closure of global programs and the need to refund a portion of USAID-supported funds. The post-pipeline deficit stands at £56K, including a £25K reserve target. While cash flow remains tight in early months of the year, new contracts (such as those under the SAFE initiative) are expected to improve the financial position in the coming months. A high-level preview of next year's budget indicates a projected combined deficit of £719K across hubs and satellite operations, with a post-pipeline gap of £540K. The board was informed of ongoing risks, including £35K in pending USAID reimbursements and £60K in expected but unsecured income. SM concluded by emphasizing the need to review the organization's cost structure, especially POD staff costs, and to secure long-term funding as major global and UK projects approach closure.</p> <p>For the FY 2023–24 year-end, SM reported a total income of approximately £8M—a 2% increase from the previous year—largely due to enhanced fundraising efforts. However, the unrestricted reserve dropped by £39K, and the final deficit rose to £65K (from a Q4 forecast of £40K), mainly due to Zimbabwe's performance. Auditors from Bajakot & Co. were satisfied with the audit process this year, noting timely closure and no overrun charges. The current reserve stands at £556K, significantly below the benchmark of £662K or based on a three-month core cost average of £726K. Board approval of the audited year-end position was requested.</p>
<p>People Committee (EJ)</p>	<p>EJ provided an update from the People Committee, where the upgrade to Bamboo HR was approved, costing \$1.20 per employee per month. This upgrade is essential for maximizing the system's value, and a training campaign will accompany it. The committee also discussed risks, acknowledging the broader impact on staff and industry, including the tragic loss of</p>

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		<p>a colleague in Sierra Leone, which prompted swift support from the team. Safeguarding policies are being reviewed and updated, with special attention to Tanzania's upcoming elections.</p> <p>The committee reviewed staff turnover, identifying the lack of growth opportunities as a key reason for departures. The Learning and Development programs in place are expected to address this. The committee also requested feedback on program outlines to ensure they meet the development needs of different staff groups.</p>
Strategy (PS))	Committee	<p>PS shared that during the latest strategy committee meeting, the focus was on shifting towards sustainable, locally driven funding models due to shrinking international aid. The committee discussed the importance of local resource mobilization.. They also supported creating a shorter, solution-oriented version of the youth civil society report to spotlight youth-led organizations.</p> <p>Regarding the risk register, two key updates were made: an increase in reputational risk due to rising global intolerance on rights and gender issues, and a decrease in risk for demonstrating impact, as funding challenges have stabilized. The committee agreed to stay vigilant and monitor the situation closely.</p>
Business (JD)	Committee	<p>JD updated the business committee update. JD acknowledged the collective efforts of the team in effectively managing the challenges posed by USAID cuts and triathlon disruptions, noting that the outcomes achieved were the best possible under the circumstances. He confirmed the Business Committee's approval of the year-end accounts and the Zimbabwe payment decision. JD highlighted the positive audit process, with improved collaboration between the team and auditors. He also raised concerns about declining income and reserve usage, stressing the need for the executive and board to review upcoming financial papers and consider necessary decisions to align the organization's size with its income for future sustainability.</p>
Youth (Peter)–	Spotlight	<p>Peter George , Youth Leader from Sierra Leone hub reflected on his journey with Restless Development across its various phases, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the opportunities he received. He credited the organization for playing a pivotal role in shaping his personal and professional achievements.</p>

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AOB (AK)	<p>The board discussed changes to the RSA Liaison Office and bank account operations, including adding three new signatories—Nalini, Naval, and Franklin—to improve efficiency. India has moved to corporate banking for government compliance, which requires updating the list of authorized signatories for ROSA. Additionally, the signing authority for Indian compliance is proposed to shift from Sachin to Naval. These changes were proposed and seconded by JD, with the board unanimously approving them.</p> <p>This meeting marked GS's final session with Restless Development after six years of valuable contributions. Her dedication and hard work were greatly appreciated by the team. Additionally, AR and DU attended their last meeting as their terms end in May. Their significant contributions to the organization will be missed.</p>
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Attendance: Trustees	5th February 2025	30th April 2025	30th July 2025	10th Sep 2025	Attendance: Staff	05th February 2025	30th April 2025	30th July 2025	10th Sep 2025
Bella Mosselmans	●	●			Charity Bafana		●		
Jenny Wilson	●	○			Alex Kent	●	●		
Paul Wafer	●	☒			Natalie Agboeze	●	●		
Mafipe Chunga	●	●			Kate Muhwezi	●	○		
Winnie Owako	●	●			Sunil Mahawar	○	●		
Tom Allen	●	●			Genevieve Seddon	●	○		
Lucinda Moore	○	●			Nikita Khanna	○	●		
Diwakar Uprety	●	●			Nalini Paul	●	○		
Amisa Rashid	●	●			Farida Makame	●	○		
Edleen John	●	●			Richa Sinha	●	●		
Pooja Singh	●	●							
Nicola Dean	●	●							
Justin Derbyshire	●	●							
Francesca Bowen	○	○							
Eshban Kwesiga	○	●							

● In attendance

○ Absent/Apologies

☒ Not a Trustee/Resigned

* Via Zoom

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