



**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**

Restless Development has a strong track record of training and resourcing youth organisations, movements and unregistered groups, ensuring youth-led decision making and engagement throughout.

Over the last 40 years, we have connected 10 million young leaders around the world with opportunities to build confidence, networks and skills so that their work has a lasting impact. Since 2019, we have channelled over £5.5 million in sub-grants, with over £2.5 million going directly to young changemakers. On average, this equates to re-granting a million pounds per year – a number that is rapidly growing each year.

Powering Youth Civil Society

Restless Development's Role as a Trusted Intermediary



This longstanding commitment to strengthening youth civil society laid the foundation for the development of the Youth Collective – a global mechanism designed to amplify and multiply youth power.

The Youth Collective started as an idea in 2016 and developed into a platform in 2019. It provides a global community for young people and youth-led organisations to connect across geographies and sectors, share learnings and resources, and get on a map so that they are findable and fundable. It currently hosts 5,000+ members in 167 countries who are led by young people or serving young people – either registered or unregistered groups, networks, movements or organisations – working on many different issues in all corners of the world; from democracy to gender and sexual rights, to climate change. The Youth Collective is the mechanism through which we are transferring power and resources to young people and youth organisations who are based at the heart of communities, closest to the problems and solutions.

To ensure that the Youth Collective and broader youth civil society are effectively supported, we continuously generate knowledge and evidence to understand emerging needs and drive advocacy for better support mechanisms.

Every year we publish an annual State of Youth Civil Society Report – the only global youth-led research that focuses primarily on youth organising in itself, and not youth for the sake of a singular issue. The 5 publications explore the new realities youth civil society and social movements find themselves in a post-COVID world. Our latest report highlights the resourcing gaps young changemakers face and calls for more flexible, accessible, and sustainable funding solutions to empower youth-led movements globally.

Collectively, we defined 10 #FundYouthPower Principles:

1. Put young people in the driving seat. Co-design the fund with young people from start to finish.
2. Compensate young people fairly for their part in the process. Dedicate enough time and resources to ensure meaningful collaboration.



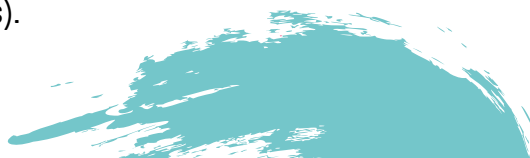
3. Make the application process easy and accessible. Remove exclusionary entry barriers.
4. Don't just fund the usual suspects. Fund traditionally marginalised and excluded groups and individuals as well.
5. Provide unrestricted, core, and long-term funding.
6. Treat each young person as an individual. Co-create a bespoke support offer.
7. Invest in young people beyond finances. Provide training, support, and access to networks.
8. Prioritise mental health and wellbeing support.
9. Look to the future. Develop sustainability plans with the grantees.
10. Monitor together. Centre collective learning.

Our Offer

1. Establishing a youth-led co-design process

Since 2020, we have observed a significant increase in the scale of interest for young people to get involved in redesigning philanthropic and grantmaking processes. Restless Development could support you to co-design all aspects of the development and delivery of the fund to ensure that young people lead the process from start to finish; from promotion to selection, to the support and learning. We would help to establish a flexible trust-based approach to funding that seeks to place resources efficiently and responsibly in the hands of young people and youth civil society organisations based at the heart of local communities and underserved groups.

1. We would work in partnership with you to:
 - Recruit a diverse steering group: combining open and proactive recruitment processes, bringing together an intentionally diverse group of young people who will play a leading role in the design process.
 - Facilitate a youth-led co-design process: enabling the youth steering group to oversee the strategy and direction of the fund by providing training (e.g. on introductions to grant making, safeguarding, application and criteria design) and conducting a series of co-design workshops in partnership with you.
 - Create space to flex and innovate: convening regular spaces for ideation and reflection, giving the youth steering group the flexibility to continually adapt the design and not be afraid to take risks (e.g. funding individuals).





Equitable compensation and opportunities: dedicating enough time, resources and space for the steering group to be successful; providing payment for expenses and per deliverables, as well as peer support and further opportunities for engagement.

“Powershifting is about stepping outside existing systems and challenging the status quo. This means that instead of programme models designed by funders, we give resources, space and support to young people to co-create their own programmes. Their creativity drives the change.”

– Lesley Garura, Sierra Leone Hub Director

2. Co-creating a tailored support package

Our latest State of Youth Civil Society report found that there is a huge unmet demand for training (67% of respondents), unrestricted funding (65% of respondents) and support in amplifying their voices (50% of respondents). It also highlighted the need to provide a safe space for underrepresented and underserved groups to connect with each other, access learning opportunities, and prioritise their wellbeing.

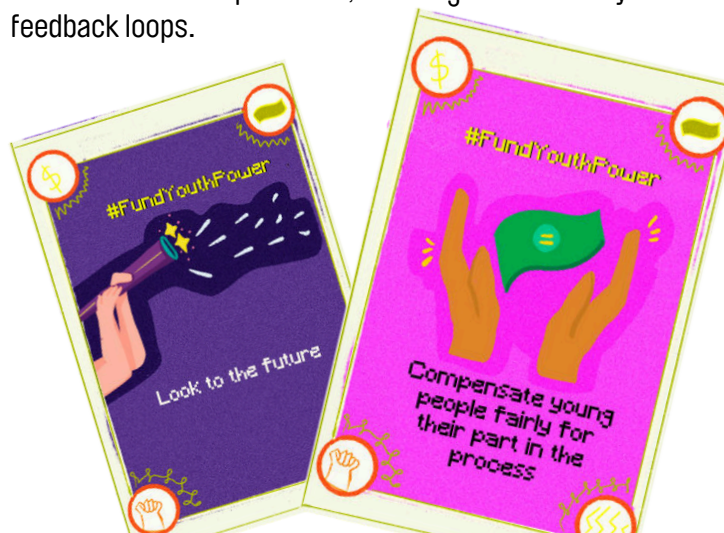
In recognition of this, Restless Development would draw upon its wealth of experience to offer a co-created and bespoke package of support for grantees, including:

- Capacity assessments: supporting grantees to conduct a self-assessment to understand their strengths, gaps and needs and allow them to measure progress.
- One-to-one support: a flexible mentoring offer co-produced in partnership with each grantee which could include regular check-ins with a support officer.
- Wellbeing and safety: providing safety and risk assessment support, allocating resources for legal advice and mental health services, and actively promoting a culture of self-care.
- Peer connections: co-creating safe and inclusive spaces (e.g. a digital platform, thematic groups, Leadership Labs, hackathons) for grantees to access peer connection, solidarity and learning; harnessing our global community of 5,000+ Youth Collective members.
- Strategic platforms: unlocking ‘inaccessible’ platforms, connections and support for grantees to engage in key advocacy and decision-making spaces, on their own terms.

3. Reimagining grantmaking

Our youth-led research identified a general disconnect and deficit of trust between grantors and grantees that is linked to a system built on rigid restrictions, complex application procedures, and a focus on project-based funding, often proving inflexible and inaccessible to young people. We heard a loud call for rethinking funding strategies, emphasising more empathetic, contextual, and inclusive approaches that trust in young people and their ability to lead and implement projects effectively. In line with this, Restless Development could work with you to:

- Remove exclusionary ‘entry’ barriers: establishing a less document-centric and burdensome application process that is inclusive in terms of language and communication (e.g. avoiding jargon, translating calls, providing downloadable formats and recognising proposals in native languages or video/audio formats), and does not force youth groups to formalise or conform to unfair donor expectations.
- Provide long-term flexible funding: trusting youth with more flexible and unrestricted funding that meets them where they are (e.g. providing access to quick and regular cash dispersed at their convenience), enabling them to be more responsive, resilient and sustainable in the long run.
- Fiscal hosting services: We’re able to provide fiscal hosting services – something we have done for the likes of Democracy Moves and Youth Stop AIDS – to flow funding to unrestricted organisations or youth-led initiatives.
- Foster mutual accountability and learning: co-designing a fair and balanced MEL framework with young leaders to redefine what impact means and prioritise the identification and sharing of learning over donor-serving, overburdening reporting and extractive MEL practises, through two way feedback loops.





Our Track Record



The Development Alternative (2019–2024) was a flagship FCD0-funded initiative. As consortium lead, Restless Development disbursed, managed, tracked and closed over £1.7 million in subgrants to seven youth-led and youth-centered partners. Young leaders in Madagascar and Uganda were supported to gather feedback from 308 community members and share solutions on 18 development projects worth £97 million. This initiative challenged conventional development approaches, centering youth voices in defining what meaningful impact looks like.



Through a decade-long partnership with the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, Restless Development delivered a tailored capacity building programme for 137 organisations and 363 young leaders from 157 countries across six continents. Youth-led organisations received training in areas such as monitoring and evaluation, finance and administration, resource mobilisation, governance and strategy development to strengthen their organisational resilience and long-term sustainability.



Our Youth Climate Action Lab channelled £100,000 to grassroots youth organisations and young leaders in Bengaluru, India to lead innovative climate solutions. They were provided with ongoing mentorship, tailored skills-building and local fiscal sponsorship. Twenty youth champions led community-based research, action, and advocacy to drive change from the ground up. The project's impressive impact ranges from restoring a community well that now provides safe drinking water to 800 households, to partnering with the city mayor to incorporate key recommendations in the State Climate Action Plan.



The Young Gamechangers Fund is a £4.5 million initiative supporting 100 young people aged 10–25 across the UK with grants up to £20,000 – all designed and run by young people themselves. The Fund is supporting diverse grantees, ranging from a community-led, sustainable mushroom farm in Manchester, to a Welsh-language grief service in Gwynedd and the UK's first youth-led wheelchair rugby league in Chester.



Through the AU-EU Youth Action Lab, Restless Development is putting £450,000 directly into the hands of 40+ youth-led organisations across 14 Sub-Saharan African countries. Supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, representation, and cross-continental cooperation, the Lab empowers young leaders to drive community-led change, strengthen civic leadership, and engage in intercultural dialogue – all guided by a Youth Advisory Board, dedicated capacity-building support, and youth-friendly systems.

With decades of experience supporting and funding youth-led initiatives, Restless Development is uniquely positioned to serve as a trusted intermediary and partner. By centering young people in every stage – from co-designing funds, to delivering bespoke support packages, to reimagining grantmaking practice – we ensure that resources, knowledge, and decision-making power are placed directly in the hands of those closest to the challenges and solutions. Our proven track record demonstrates that when young people are trusted, funded, and supported, they can drive meaningful, sustainable change in their communities and beyond. Partnering with Restless Development means not only investing in youth, but also investing in a new model of philanthropy – one that is inclusive, flexible, and transformative – and that genuinely shifts power to the next generation of changemakers.

Please contact meganm@restlessdevelopment.org for more information.