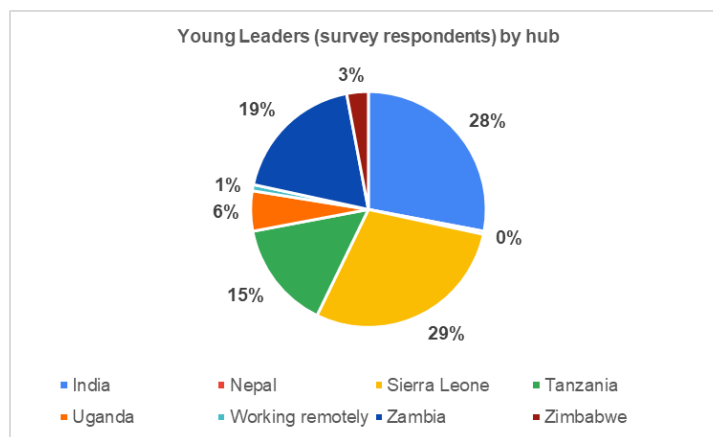


Annual Young Leaders Survey, 2022: What are young people saying?

Executive Summary

Restless Development's Annual Young Leaders Survey is conducted every year to gain feedback from our young leaders on their experience with us. The Annual Young Leaders survey 2022 had 236 responses from both current and alumni volunteers engaged through our hubs and remotely through global projects. It was completed by all types of young leaders, from peer educators delivering activities in communities to advocates, researchers, campaigners, mobilisers, monitors and reporters. This report is intended to provide an overview of how young leaders across the agency have experienced working with Restless Development and outlines some actionable suggestions and recommendations to improve their engagement in the future.

Who are the young people leading our work?



- A vast majority of our survey respondents¹ are in their 20s, with 50% being in the age group of 20-24 years (an increase of 13% percentage points from 2021).
- Respondents in Zambia and Zimbabwe predominantly belong to the age group of 20-24 years; whereas Uganda, Tanzania and Sierra Leone have a greater proportion in the age group of 25-29 years.
- 60% of the respondents identified themselves as females and 40% were males. 9% of the total identified themselves as persons with disability.

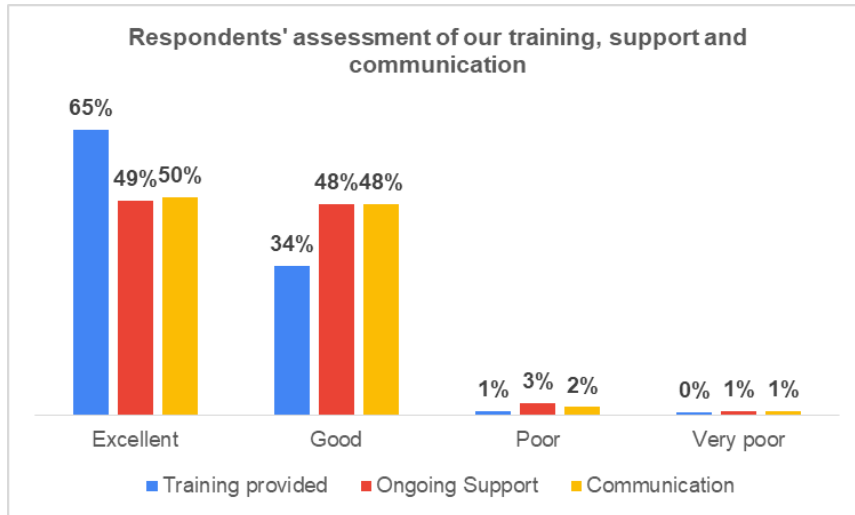
Young People's motivation for volunteering:

- There are a range of motivations that have led young people to engage with Restless Development. The most popular reason being is to lead change and have an impact (85% as compared to 80% in 2021), followed by a desire to gain new skills (78% compared to 70%).
- One significant change compared to last year was a large increase in the percentage of young people motivated to volunteer because they thought it would help them secure a job (56% compared to 29% in the previous year). This may be indicative of the challenging economic climate young people are facing.

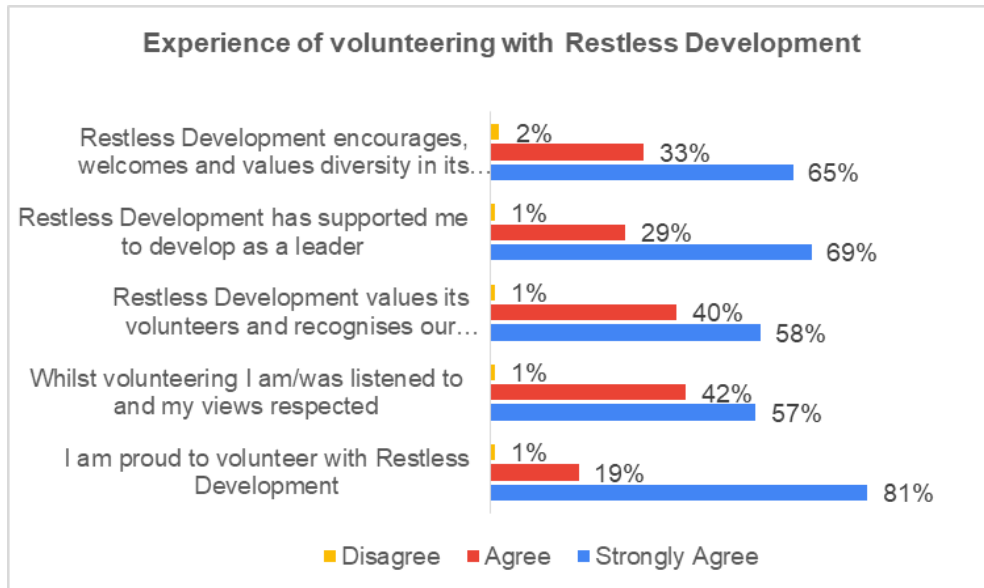
¹ The terms 'respondents' and 'young people' have been used interchangeably throughout the report to denote the young leaders who responded to the survey.

Support received whilst volunteering with Restless Development

- Young people have appreciated the quality of our training, ongoing support and communication as excellent or good.
- There has been a slight drop (77% as compared to 80% last year) in the proportion of those who feel that they have the necessary resources to fulfil their role.
- The proportion of respondents who always felt unsafe (3% as compared to 0.3% last year) has gone up from the past year, indicating the need for targeted attention in this area.



Do respondents feel valued?



- There has been an increase in the proportion of young people who feel that their views are listened to and respected (99% as compared to 95% last year) and their contributions are recognised (98% as compared to 96% last year).
- 98% of the young leaders who responded feel that Restless Development encourages, welcomes and values diversity in its workplaces and programmes (95% last year).

- Respondents appreciate the quality of the training received, platforms and opportunities provided to develop as leaders and being supported financially.
- Respondents proposed that allowing for more peer-to-peer learning opportunities; re-looking at our compensation criteria; and providing linkages to employment opportunities are some of the ways by which Restless Development can strengthen its support offer.

Impact of volunteering with Restless Development:

- 76% of respondents (70% last year) feel that they are better equipped to solve problems.
- 62% of respondents (55% last year) have recognised becoming resilient as one of the impacts of volunteering with Restless Development.
- There has been an increase in those who report having improved leadership (83% as compared to 81% last year) and communication skills (86% as compared to 84% last year).

Recommendations and suggestions

Below are some recommendations and suggestions that have come out of the experiences of the survey respondents with Restless Development. These are not intended to be prescriptive; rather hubs are encouraged to adapt these recommendations keeping in mind the context of their operations and activities.

- It is important for Restless Development hubs to consider practical ways by which they can support young people in their leadership journey, both during and after their engagement.
- Restless Development needs to continue to prioritise the safety of its young leaders during their engagement with the agency.
- Young Leaders have identified adequate compensation for their time as one of the ways by which Restless Development can support them better.
- Young Leaders are looking for Restless Development to provide linkages to employment opportunities post their volunteering with the agency.

Introduction

Restless Development's Annual Young Leaders Survey is carried out every year to gain feedback from our young leaders on their experience with us. The survey forms a central part of our commitment to listening and learning from young people who lead our work in order to improve the support we provide throughout their journey. This helps us to build on what works well and address any challenges to ensure we are setting up our young leaders for success.

The Annual Young Leaders survey 2022 was carried out across our Hubs, and was responded to by both young leaders currently volunteering and those who have completed their volunteering. The survey was completed by all types of young leaders, from peer educators delivering activities in communities to advocates, researchers, campaigners, mobilisers, monitors and reporters.

This report is split into four sections:

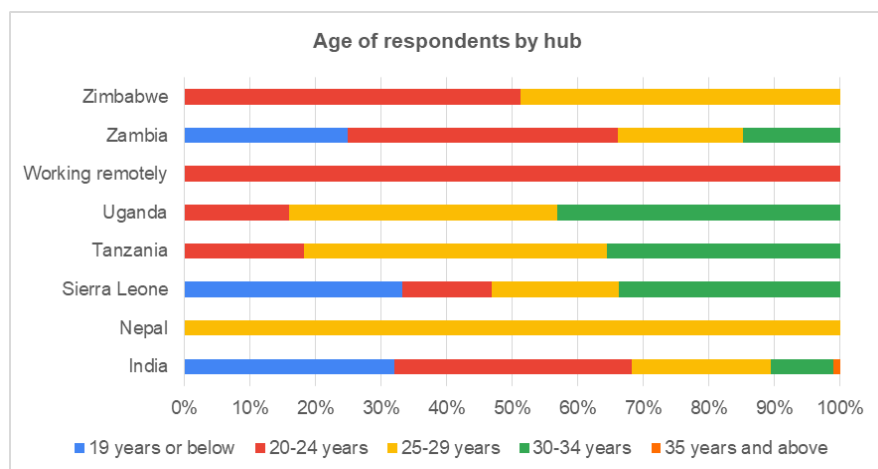
1. Demographic data: Who are the young people leading our work?
2. Support received from Restless Development
3. Experience of volunteering with Restless Development
4. Respondents' perception of the impact of their work

This report provides a global overview of the data from across six of our Hubs²: India, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We also received a small number of responses from young leaders based in other countries, but 99% of responses were from the six countries listed above.

Section 1: Who are the young people leading our work?

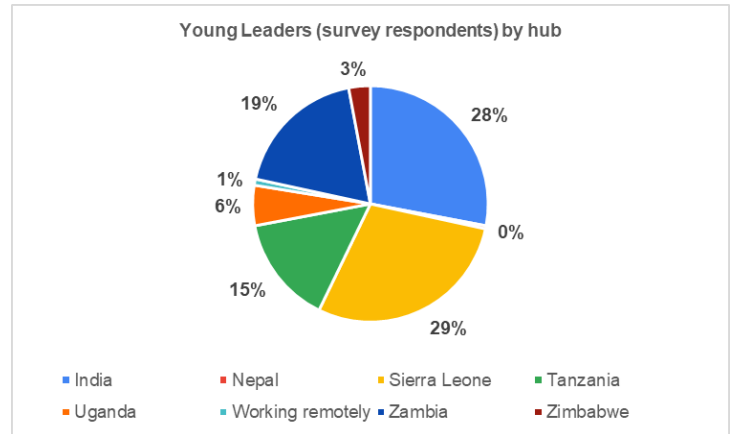
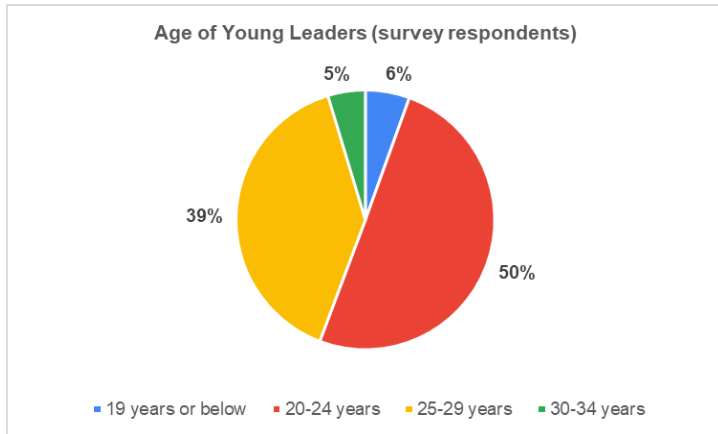
The majority of our respondents (79%) were currently volunteering with us at the time of the survey, while 21% had completed volunteering in the last 12 months. The majority of the young leaders who responded are community volunteers or peer educators (72%); 9% are researchers; and 7% are mobilisers. The remaining proportion consisted of campaigners, communicators and members of Youth Sounding Boards.

A vast majority of respondents were in their 20s, with 50% being in the age group of 20-24 years (an increase of 13 percentage points from 2021). It is also worth noting that in the previous year, the majority of those who responded were in the age group of 25-29

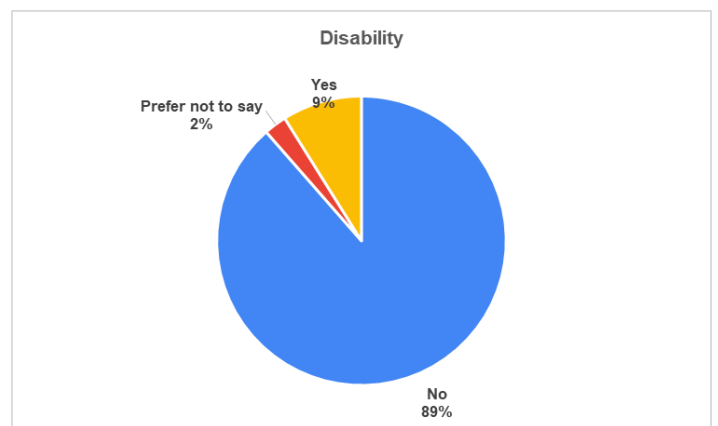
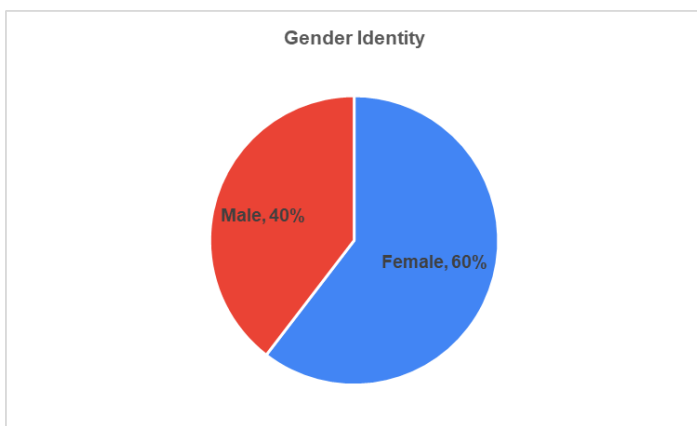


² There was one response from Nepal and none from the USA.

years. This shift is indicative of the fact that we may be working with a younger population as compared to last year. As can be seen from the graphs above, the distribution shifted widely across our hubs, with more young leaders in Zambia and Zimbabwe belonging to the age group of 20-24 years; whereas Uganda, Tanzania and Sierra Leone have a greater proportion in the age group of 25-29 years. There is a much lesser proportion in the age group of 30-34 years as compared to the previous year.



Of the young leaders who responded to the survey, 9% identified themselves as persons with disability, which is an almost five percentage point increase from the previous year (3.6%) and closer to the proportion in 2020 (10%). This indicates that Restless Development is taking steps to improve the inclusivity of its programmes and diversifying the pool of young people who lead change in communities. 60% identified themselves as female and 40% as male³. Data from Quarterly Programmes reporting suggests that more than half of young leaders volunteering with Restless Development are female, which is in line with these findings.



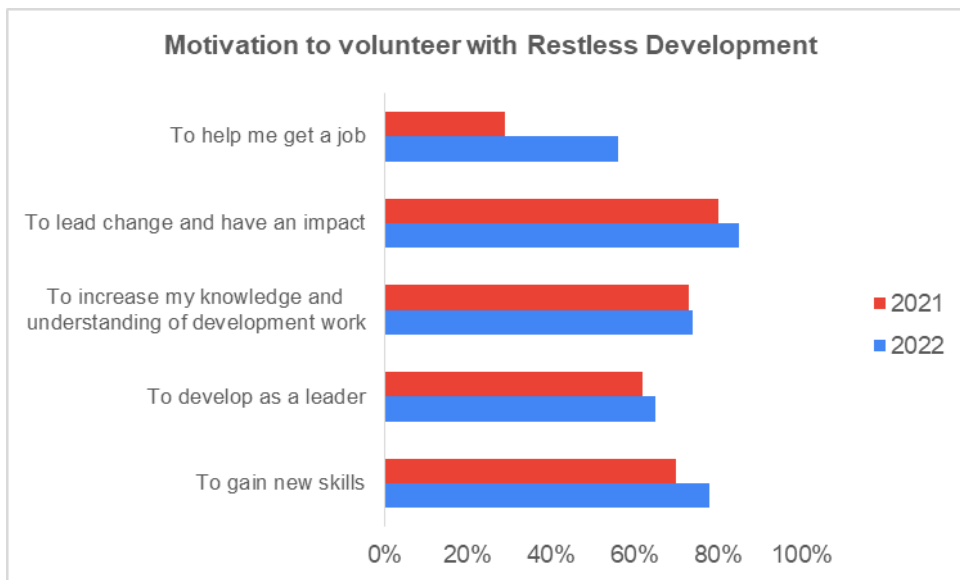
Section 2: Support received from Restless Development

This section analyses young leaders' motivations to volunteer with Restless Development, and how they rate the support provided to them. **The most popular motivation for young people to volunteer**

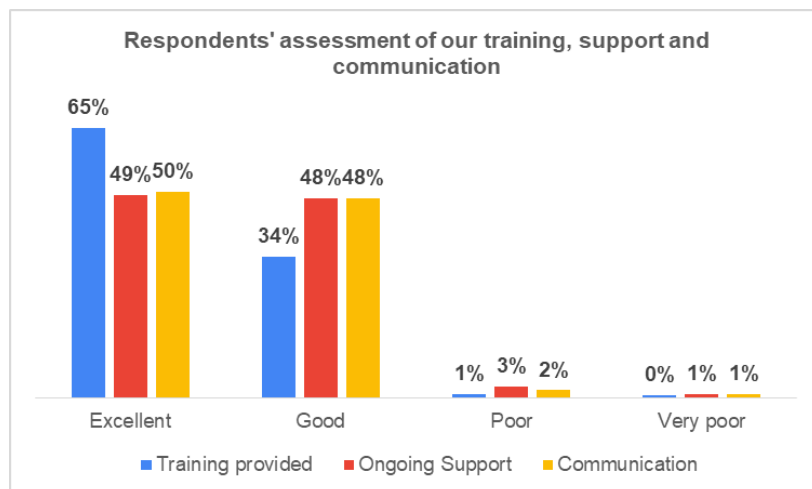
³ There were a negligible number of responses for those who identified themselves as 'Others'.

with Restless Development is to lead change and have an impact (85%), followed by a desire to gain new skills (78%). Respondents continue to appreciate the quality of our training, ongoing support and communication as excellent or good. The proportion of those who felt unsafe during their volunteering has increased from the previous year (3% as opposed to 0.3%), which needs targeted attention.

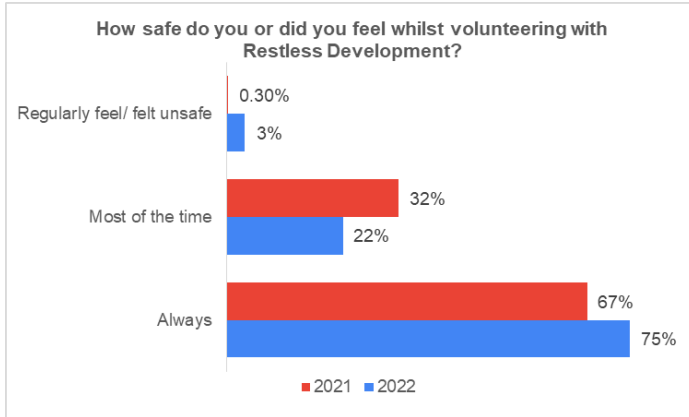
Similar to the previous year (percentages in brackets), the most popular motivation for young leaders to volunteer with Restless Development is to lead change and have an impact (85% as compared to 80%), followed by a desire to gain new skills (78% as compared to 70%), to increase their knowledge and understanding of development work (74% as compared to 73%), and to develop as a leader (65% as compared to 62%). A significant change from the previous year is a much higher percentage (56% as compared to 29% from the previous year) who were motivated because they thought it would help them get a job. **This is indicative of the challenging economic climate that young people are facing and their desire to volunteer in a way that they are able to learn skills that are employable and would help them build their livelihood.**



Survey responses have indicated that there has been an **improvement from the previous year in the quality of our training, ongoing support provided and communication** during engagement with Restless Development. Respondents rate our training the highest, with 99% of our young leaders rating the training we provide as excellent or good (as opposed to 96% from the previous year). 97% of young leaders who responded rate the ongoing support received whilst volunteering as excellent or good,



and 98% of young leaders rate our communication with them during their placement as excellent or good (as opposed to 90% for both components from the previous year). 77% (as opposed to 80% from the previous year) feel that they have the necessary resources (equipment and financial support) to fulfil their role.

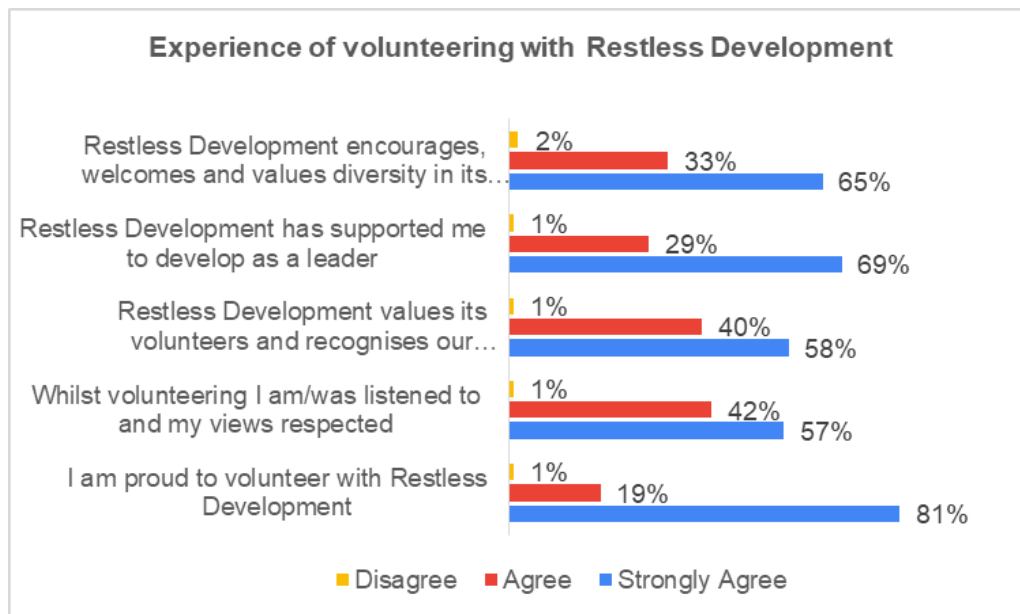


A key recommendation from the survey conducted in 2021 was for Restless Development to prioritise the safety of its young leaders during their volunteering with the agency. There has been an increase in the proportion of those who always felt safe (75% as opposed to 67%) and a decrease in those who felt safe most of the time (32% as opposed to 22%). **However, the proportion of those who have felt unsafe has gone up (3% as opposed to 0.3%)⁴, indicating**

that the agency still needs to look into the recommendations around safety and security from the 2021 survey. Similar to the previous year, female respondents were more likely to feel safe all the time (78%) than male respondents (69%).

Section 3: Experience of volunteering with Restless Development

Young leaders who responded feel proud to volunteer with Restless Development and feel that their contributions are recognised and valued. They have appreciated the training and mentorship, platforms and opportunities, and the space provided for them to grow as leaders, allowing for more peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Support could be improved by ensuring adequate compensation, linkages to employment opportunities and effective alumni engagement.



⁴ These cases are spread across our Asia and Africa hubs.

From the above chart⁵, we can see (last year's scores in brackets):

- 99% are proud to volunteer with Restless Development (has remained consistent at 99% from the past two years)
- 99% shared that they felt their views were being listened to and respected during the course of their engagement with Restless Development (95% last year)
- 98% felt that Restless Development values its young leaders and recognises their contribution (96% last year)
- 99% of those who responded feel that Restless Development has supported them to develop as a leader (97% last year)
- 98% of respondents feel that Restless Development encourages, welcomes and values diversity in its workplaces and programmes (95% last year)

Scores in this section were particularly high, with the vast majority of the respondents reporting a very positive experience and relationship with Restless Development, feeling proud, listened to, valued, supported as leaders, and that the agency values diversity. The overall scores have shown slight improvements in some aspects from last year.

Young leaders were also asked to elaborate on the specific type of support they received from Restless Development and what could be improved.

Respondents appreciated:

- The continued training and mentoring that they received which helped them develop skills on research, campaigns, handling budgets and public speaking;
- The platforms provided and the confidence placed in them to lead initiatives;
- Being supported financially;
- Space provided to learn and grow as leaders;
- Being able to develop the confidence, communication and negotiation skills that helped them navigate their families as well as work with communities.

Suggestions on how we can improve on the support we provide our young leaders included:

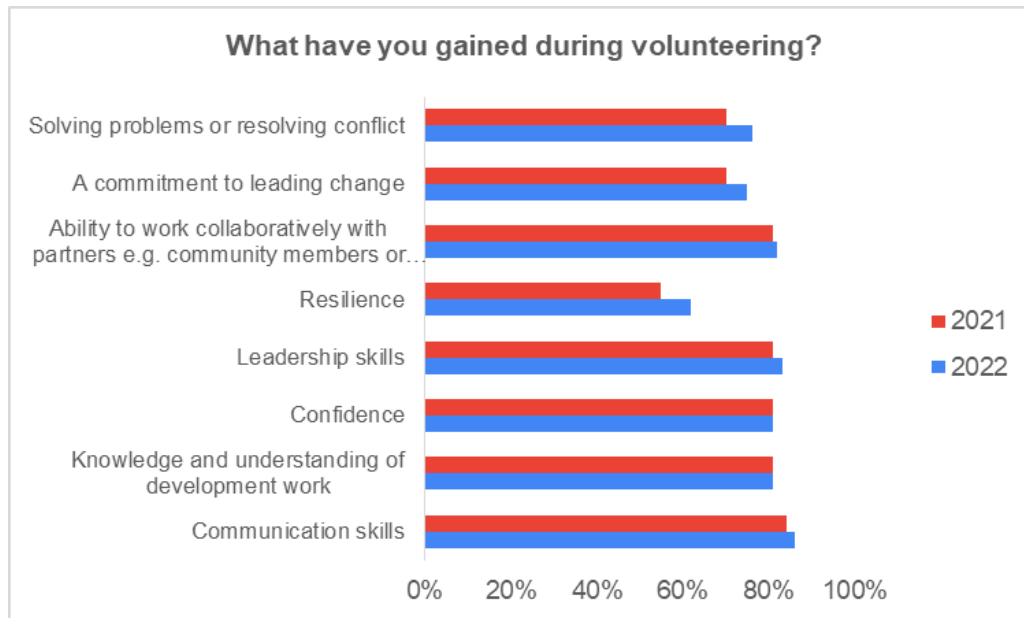
- Continued trainings and mentorship, especially on leadership, communication, advocacy and employability skills;
- Allowing for cross-programme and cross-hub learning between young leaders;
- Being more intentional about putting young people in leadership roles;
- Supporting with accessing employment pathways post volunteering, both within and outside Restless Development;
- Re-looking at compensation criteria and increasing the stipend received due to rising costs;
- Having a model to engage young leaders once they have completed their volunteering with Restless Development.

Section 4: Respondents' perception of the impact of their work

This section looks at what young leaders feel they have gained from volunteering and how young leaders have had an impact in the communities that they work with. **Respondents have recognised the positive impact that their volunteering has had on them personally as well as the communities they worked with. There has been an increase in the proportion of those who have felt supported by Restless Development to become a leader, to gain new skills and become resilient.**

⁵ These scores are calculated by adding together those that "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with these statements.

The chart below shows what respondents feel they have gained from volunteering. The responses are quite evenly spread, with the most common responses being: communication skills, followed by leadership skills, knowledge and understanding of development work, and ability to work collaboratively with partners. These scores are consistent from last year.



When asked about the most significant aspect of their volunteering, the responses were in relation to the impact they observed on people, communities and partners they worked with rather than an impact on the young leaders personally. This was visible through:

- Communities recognising the importance of educating a girl child, delaying the age of marriage and changing attitudes towards women and girls;
- Increased participation of young people in decision making spaces by advocating for young people's priorities;
- Increased responsiveness from decision makers on the priorities of young people;
- Increased knowledge and access to sexual and reproductive health information and services;
- Young people in communities having improved skills related to finance, setting businesses, negotiation, decision making and communication;

Recommendations and Suggestions

Below are some recommendations and suggestions that have come out of the experiences of young leaders with Restless Development. These are not intended to be prescriptive; rather hubs are encouraged to adapt these recommendations keeping in mind the context of their operations and activities.

- **It is important for Restless Development hubs to consider practical ways by which they can support young people in their leadership journey, both during and after their engagement.**

This is indicative of the fact that young people are willing to take on more responsibility; have

leadership roles and decision-making responsibility; be listened to by decision makers; be visible on influential platforms; and have full autonomy to make decisions. Respondents have valued the confidence and skills that they have learnt through the course of their engagement with Restless Development that has allowed them to grow both personally and professionally. Hubs should look at practical ways by which they can strengthen their support offer to young leaders, especially looking at peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and how they can meaningfully engage alumni, as young leaders have expressed a desire to stay connected with the organisation post their engagement. Hubs can consider an alumni engagement model for this that works for their context and responds to the needs and priorities of young people.

- **Restless Development needs to continue to prioritise the safety of its young leaders during their engagement with the agency.**

A key recommendation from the survey conducted in 2021 was for Restless Development to prioritise the safety of its young leaders during their volunteering with the agency. While the proportion of those who felt safe always and most of the time has increased, the proportion of those who felt unsafe went up this year. Investing time in quarterly safeguarding trainings with staff and young leaders and conducting regular welfare checks (can be added to the review meetings) with volunteers to understand what makes them feel safe or unsafe would be an important exercise. It is equally important to ensure that there is clear communication on how and who to report to in the event of an incident. Finally, brainstorming on how we can move towards safety, security and safeguarding systems which are more youth-led is another way through which we can prioritise their safety.

- **Young Leaders have identified adequate compensation for their time as one of the ways by which Restless Development can support them better.**

Adequate and fair compensation to young people for their time is important to ensure that they feel valued for the work they do; which has been a consistent demand since the previous survey. What constitutes fair compensation is contingent, and it would be useful for hubs to identify what that might mean for their contexts, and to review their systems periodically to consider the extent to which they are keeping up with unprecedented rise in prices and the economic climate. The [Maximising Benefits Report](#) for which Restless Development partnered with CIVICUS provides some practical guidance on volunteering and compensation which hubs can adapt for their contexts.

- **Young Leaders are looking for Restless Development to provide linkages to employment opportunities post their volunteering with the agency.**

Restless Development hubs need to critically consider what they can offer young people in this regard. While it may not be possible for Restless Development to provide employment opportunities to young leaders, it should think about establishing linkages with other organisations in its network and the Youth Collective where young leaders could find meaningful employment along with signposting relevant opportunities.