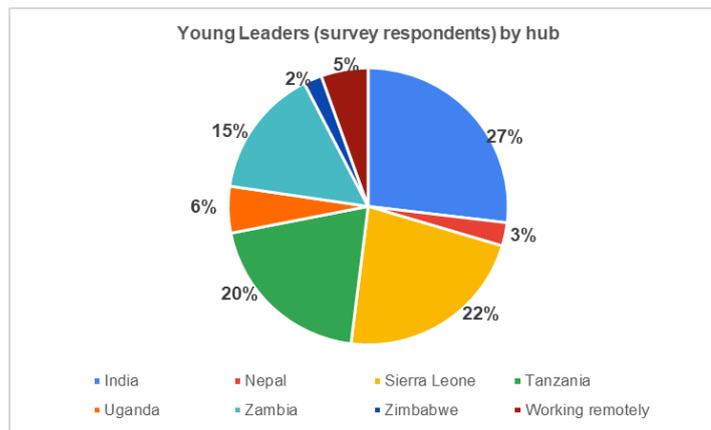


Annual Young Leaders Survey, 2023: What are young people saying?

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 2023 had 331 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 communicators. 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 49% being in the age group of 20-24 years (compared to 50% from 2022).
- India, Sierra Leone and Zambia belong to the age group of below 19 years which is in line with their school based interventions; whereas Tanzania and Uganda have a greater proportion in the age group of 25-29 years.
- 54% of the respondents identified themselves as females and 45% were males. 6% of the total identified themselves as persons with disability.

Young People's motivation for volunteering:

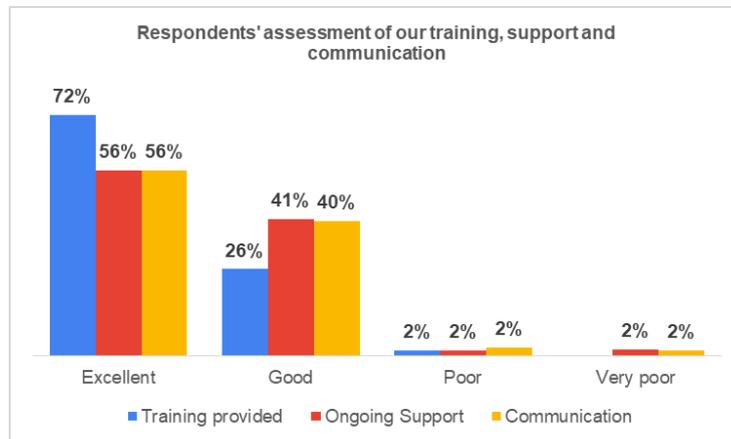
- There are a range of motivations that have led young people to engage with Restless Development. The most popular reason being is to gain new skills (88% compared to 78% in the 2022 survey) and develop as a leader (86% compared to 65%) and to lead change and have an impact (81% as compared to 85%).
- Similar to last year, young people were motivated to volunteer because they thought it would help them secure a job (65% compared to 56%). This may be indicative of the challenging economic climate young people are facing.

Support received whilst volunteering with Restless Development

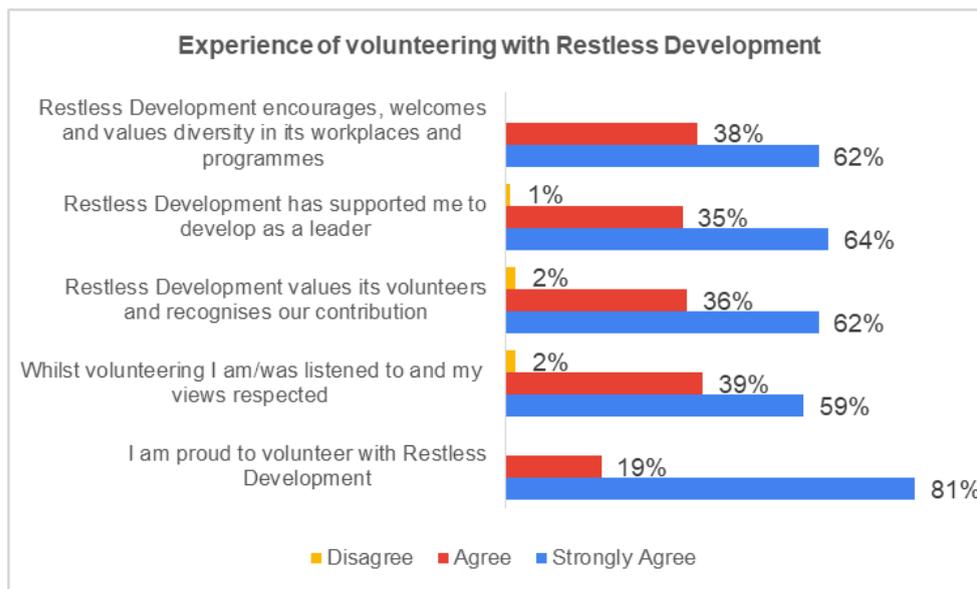
- Young people have appreciated the quality of our training and ongoing support as excellent or good; however, there has been a slight reduction in the proportion of those who feel the same about our communication (a 2 percentage point drop from 2022).

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

- There has been a slight increase (78% as compared to 77% 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 has remained the same since last year, indicating the need for targeted attention in this area.



Do respondents feel valued?



- 100% are proud to volunteer with Restless Development (compared to 99% from the past two years)
- 98% shared that they felt their views were being listening to and respected during the course of their engagement with Restless Development (98% last year)
- 98% felt that Restless Development values its young leaders and recognises their contribution (consistent from last year)
- 99% of those who responded feel that Restless Development has supported them to develop as a leader (99% last year)
- 100% of respondents feel that Restless Development encourages, welcomes and values diversity in its workplaces and programmes (98% last year).

- 100% of those who responded feel proud to volunteer with Restless Development (compared to 99% from last year) and feel that Restless Development encourages, welcomes and values diversity in its workplaces and programmes (98% last year)
- The proportion of those who felt that their views are being listened to and respected, that they are valued and recognise the contribution that Restless Development has had in their development as a leader, remained the same from the past year.
- Respondents appreciate the quality of the training received, platforms and opportunities provided to develop as leaders and being supported financially.
- Respondents proposed that re-looking at our compensation criteria; providing linkages to employment opportunities and connecting them with other youth organisations and networks are some of the ways by which Restless Development can strengthen its support offer.

Impact of volunteering with Restless Development:

- 87% of respondents (82% last year) feel that they are better able to work collaboratively with partners and community members.
- 68% of respondents (62% 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 knowledge and understanding of development work (85% as compared to 81% last year) and communication skills (88% as compared to 86% last year).

Recommendations and suggestions

Below are some recommendations and suggestions that have come out of the experiences of young leaders with Restless Development. These are similar to the recommendations from the previous year, given the respondents' perceptions have remained the same, warranting a need to continue to build on these, rather than develop new ones. 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 improve the quality of their communication with young leaders.

- **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 has decreased slightly, the proportion of those who felt unsafe has remained the same from last year. It could be prudent to relook at hub risk assessments, investing time in quarterly

safeguarding training with staff and young leaders, conducting regular welfare checks (can be added to the review meetings) as well as spot checks in the community and ensuring that they have adequate resources to carry their tasks safely 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 and governed by what young people perceive as safe and unsafe 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 2021. 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.

- **Young Leaders are looking for Restless Development to provide linkages to employment opportunities as well as connections with youth networks 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.