

**RESTLESS
DEVELOPMENT**
POWERED BY YOUNG PEOPLE

UGANDA ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

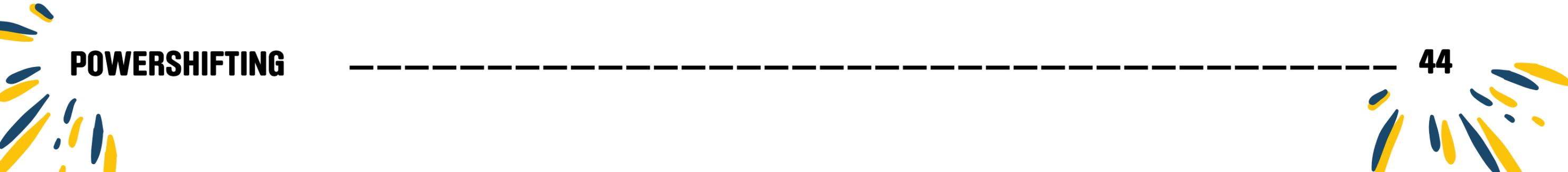


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Leticia, a young debator from the environmental club in Magwa Primary School in Jinja – Uganda.

“

Young people should protect the environment, and if you are to start on something, make sure you achieve and fulfill it.

-Leticia



A message from the Hub Director



Our esteemed Stakeholders,
Greetings from Restless Development Uganda.

As Hub Director, overseeing my first annual report since joining in October 2022 fills me with pride and excitement for our achievements over the period. I express gratitude to everyone reading this report. Together, we have achieved considerable change, been resilient and restored hope across communities, empowering young people to be leaders of their own destinies.

Despite obstacles, including the challenges posed by COVID-19, our reach extends over 22 districts, thanks to our 237 dedicated volunteers. Through their efforts, we've directly and indirectly impacted over 3.4 million young individuals, igniting a ripple effect of empowerment.

Our mission of creating an equitable world for young people hinges on collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including government officials, youth-led organizations, and the private sector. Collectively, we are nurturing an environment where youth aspirations can flourish and their voices heard at all levels. This is a journey you have gladly walked with us on, and we can't thank you enough. The success of 2022/2023 is hinged on the dedication of our young leaders, whose unwavering commitment and innovative spirit have driven initiatives like the Youth Collective, championing causes close to their hearts.

Our impact in key areas such as climate change education, adolescent sexual reproductive health and rights, and youth economic empowerment underscores our unwavering commitment to fostering sustainable change. Whether it be through tree planting initiatives, youth-led research, or regional dialogues on budget responsiveness, our endeavors have been anchored in the belief that every action, no matter how small, paves the way for a brighter future.

As we navigate future challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, let's remain steadfast in amplifying youth voices, dismantling barriers, and fostering an inclusive world where every young person can thrive.

I extend my gratitude to our National Board, Restless Development Uganda staff, partners, and especially our young people (volunteers, interns, alumni). May our collective efforts continue to pave the way for a future where the dreams of young people know no bounds.

Warm regards,

Gabriel Iguma

Restless Development Uganda

A message from Young Board Member



At the heart of Restless Development Uganda, is the great aspiration and vision to transform how development is done by shifting the power to young people. The year 2022/2023 served as another extra-ordinary year for Restless development to replenish efforts towards empowering and positioning young people in Uganda to grow as young leaders and change makers following the COVID-19 pandemic that uniquely amplified young people's vulnerabilities.

In this year, Restless Development achieved significant milestones across all the organisation's priority areas regarding reaching young people in their unique diversities all throughout Uganda ensuring that all organisational programs reached the last mile.

As a young female leader and representative for young people in my country, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of amplifying youth voices in spaces where they can influence decisions and contribute meaningfully to the positive change and outcomes they aspire for in their communities. Restless Development will continue to put young people at the centre of amplifying their sexual and reproductive health rights and opportunities through cross sectoral approaches integrating climate justice, and development that are not only cost effective but also add value in impact.

Despite this highly impactful work, we recognise some of the bottlenecks we have had to traverse in order to ensure that young people are at the fore front of any development initiative. However, despite these immense barriers, we remain committed to youth leadership and empowerment as our driving force and motivation to reach as many young people as possible with opportunities that empower them to be restless and lead their communities with passion.

I would like to appreciate the support of our various partners from civil society, government agencies, and development partners in supporting our great work in serving young people all across Uganda.

We look forward to another successful year!

Nakato Rehema Sessimba
Restless Development Uganda

Our Impact

4 programs

across 22 districts.

237 volunteers

trained to lead change.

4,816 young people

supported by volunteers to multiply change in their districts.

359 organisations

signed up to the Youth Collective digital platform.

244 stakeholders

engaged including Government officials, youth-led organisations and private sector actors with a common goal of creating a better world for young people.

3,400,000 young people

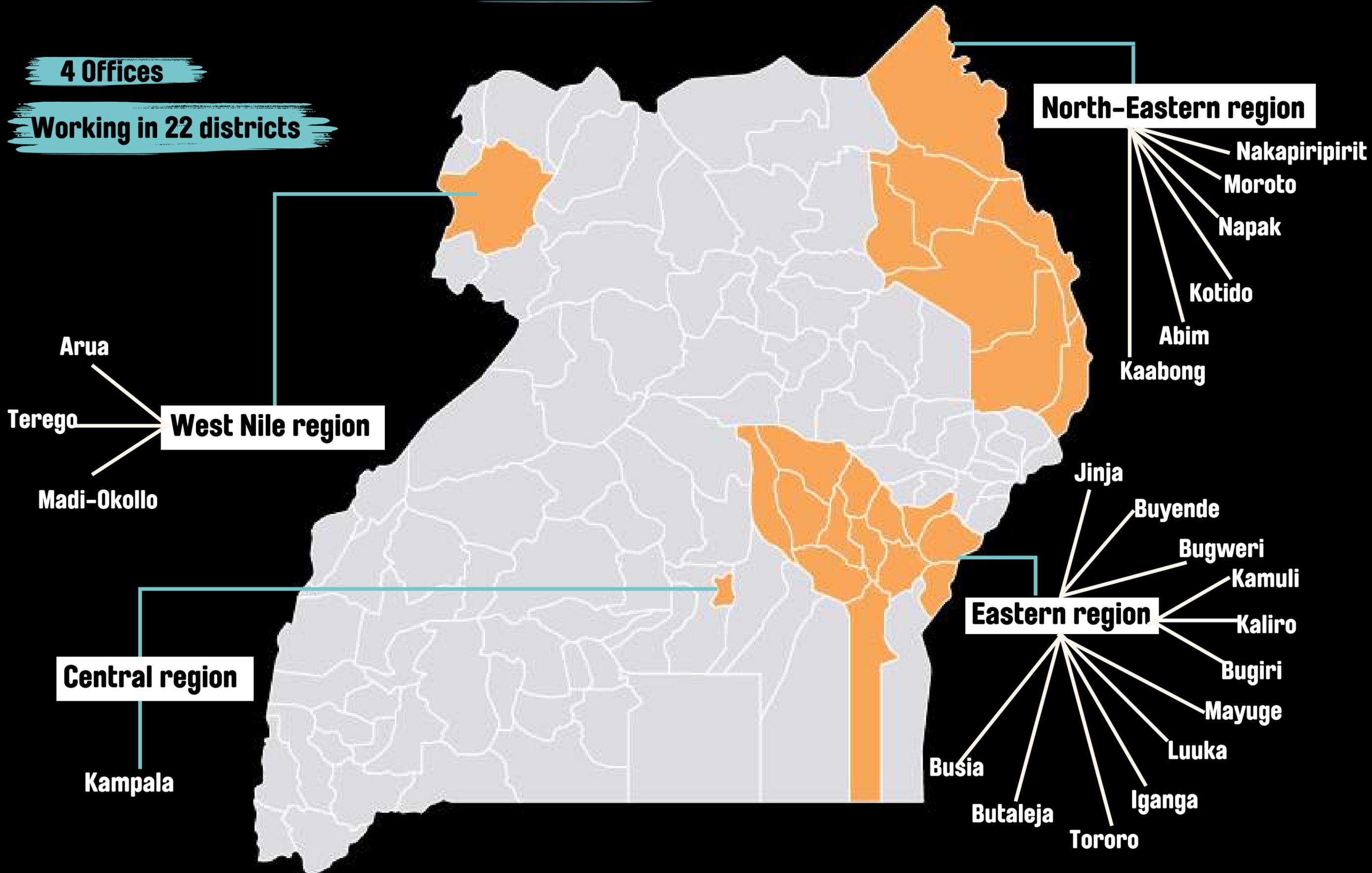
in the communities reached directly and indirectly through our interventions. These have been supported by the Volunteers to multiply change in their communities.



Areas of operation

4 Offices

Working in 22 districts



Program Highlights

Taking Climate Change to School (TACCS) project

Restless Development Uganda's youth-led research "Living in the climate crisis", revealed that lack of information and education about the environment and climate change is a major barrier to young people's adaptation efforts.

As children and young people are increasingly exposed to climate risks, having a solid understanding of the causes, and how to respond is vital to equip them for both the present and future.

To bridge this knowledge gap, Restless Development, Makerere University and the University of Cambridge implemented the TACCS project in four primary schools and one teachers' training college in Uganda.

As a result, **580** pupils and students became advocates for climate change education in their schools and communities. As part of our efforts to combat climate change, **1400** trees were planted to restore forest cover.



During a debate under the TACCS project, a student from Magwa Primary School in Jinja District, Uganda explains the dangers of polythenes.

We Lead program

We Lead is an innovative programme that aims to realise long-lasting improvements to the SRH-R of young women in nine countries across Africa, Central America, and the Middle East.

Within the We Lead consortium, Restless Development is the key expert when it comes to youth leadership, meaningful youth engagement, capacity strengthening of youth leaders and youth CSOs. In line with the latest programme mid-term evaluation (MTR), Restless Development has delivered impact on the following:

Youth Collective, through elevating and recognising youth power, youth-led support and learning, youth-led spaces and opportunities, and youth-powered funding. In line with the latest programme mid-term evaluation (MTR), Restless Development has delivered an impact on the following:

- Vibrant and resilient SHR-R movements across 9 countries: Strengthened the capacity of 101 youth organisations across the 9 countries to power up youth-led change in their communities, through contextualised youth-led methodologies.
- Highly localised innovative advocacy driven by young women: 86% of the members of local organisations have engaged in lobby and advocacy at local levels.
- Improved access and utilisation of SRHR information and services: 72% of the young women noted that, as a result of their involvement in We Lead and the improvement in access to SRHR information and services, they now used SRHR information and services more frequently.



The Uganda Community of Action (CoA) during a training in Kampala, Uganda.



The Nigerian Community of Action during a Youth-Led Research and Meaningful Youth Engagement Training in Nigeria.

SHE SOARS project

Sexual and reproductive Health economic Empowerment Supporting out-of-school Adolescent girls' Rights and Skills

We conducted Youth-led research on the impact of Gender and social norms on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of Out-of-School adolescent boys and girls. This has informed the implementation of the social norms transformational activities together with the gatekeepers in the communities.

Countering Corruption through Youth-Led Budget Advocacy (CCYBA)

We held an East African Community regional dialogue on the East African Country Budgets and their responsiveness to supporting economic empowerment for the youth. The legislators of East African Legislation Assembly (EALA) committed to setting up an EALA Youth Caucus and a Regional Youth Council to fully engage in advocating for youth priority budgeting at the East Africa level.



Yakut, a Young Accountability Advocate (YAA) on the CCYBA project, implemented in Busoga region in Eastern Uganda.

Spotlight On Programs

SHE SOARS project

Sexual and reproductive Health economic Empowerment Supporting out-of-school Adolescent girls' Rights and Skills

SHE SOARS, a 7-year program funded by Global Affairs Canada, aims for gender transformative change in Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia. Implemented with CARE, Centre for Reproductive Rights & Youth Coalition, it provides adolescent sexual reproductive health rights (ASRHR) life skills, and financial literacy for out-of-school adolescent girls in specific districts of Uganda, directly supporting over 123,000 adolescents.

SHE SOARS aims to enhance the enjoyment of health-related human rights for marginalised and vulnerable women and girls, focusing on out-of-school adolescent girls. It provides evidence-based sexual and reproductive health information, tackles gender-based inequalities, improves health services, and empowers young people, especially girls, in making decisions about their lives and bodies.

Key achievements of the program

- Youth-led research highlighted the impact of gender and social norms on the ASRHR of out-of-school adolescent boys and girls. Findings indicate a lack of SRHR knowledge among a higher proportion of young women (53%) and young men (34%) compared to young mothers (10%) and young fathers (1%). The study underscores the importance



A health worker during an SRHR outreach organised by Restless Development in West Nile, Uganda.

of ASRHR services in addressing various needs such as preventing unwanted pregnancies, protecting against STDs, accessing counseling services, practicing family planning, and managing menstrual hygiene. This research has informed the implementation of social norm transformational activities within communities.

- 1,289 community members (455 male, 834 female) received SRH rights awareness messages and support to access SRH services during community outreaches.
- Four Youth Advisory structures were set up in the 4 districts of Operation and 51 members were trained to advocate for improved SRHR services and information sharing for adolescents and young people.
- A total of 102 Village Health Teams were trained on gender/youth responsive inclusive and comprehensive ASRHR to enable them deliver SRHR information to adolescent out of school girls and boys.



During an outreach in Nakawa Division in Kampala which is one of the SHE SOARS project implementation areas.

Spotlight On Programs

We Lead program

Uganda has 16, vibrant and resilient organisations that are a part of the SRH-R movement. The movement has triumphed through the shrinking civic space, collaboratively working together to uphold the plight of young women and empowering them to lead SRH-R. Key achievement of the programme in Uganda;

- Youth-led actions due to gained skills and knowledge.
 - Due to increased SRH-R knowledge, a group of peers took the lead in organising HIV awareness campaigns within Gulu communities. They aim to shift the narrative surrounding HIV and advocate for increased support towards people living with HIV. “ We lead taught me how to be brave! HIV does not kill but if you are not brave enough, people’s ignorance might kill you”.... Young leader on the programme, 22 years, Gulu District”.
- The Peer Pals Movement in Terego and Arua District is a key result of this programme. Through their collective efforts, the peer pals initiative led by Nile Girls Forum shares information,, refers fellow peers to HIV/SRHR/GBV services, and engages with policymakers to protect and uphold the rights of displaced young women.
- Findings from the MTR evaluation show that health service providers are stepping up to support young women however due to the long distances, many of the young women especially those with disability struggle to access these facilities.
- 1,289 community members (455 male, 834 female) received SRH rights awareness messages and support to access SRH services during community outreaches.



Rahma, a youth researcher with the We Lead programme, interviews a respondent during a research session in Kampala.

Spotlight On Programs

Social Action and Analysis (SAA)

Restless Development under the SHE SOARS project uses Social Action and Analysis (SAA), which are group discussions held weekly in communities under the SHE SOARS project to help participants identify negative social norms in the community, and how they impact the lives of both men and women negatively and as well discuss and find ways to go about them.

During these dialogues, we discovered that many adolescents face forced early marriage due to the norm of equating girls with wealth. Additionally, women lack decision-making power on critical issues affecting their well-being at household and community levels. We'll continue supporting dialogues to promote positive change.



A youth researcher from the SHE SOARS project, during a Social Action and Analysis dialogue in West Nile, Uganda.

To address these, spontaneous commitments were made by some of the gatekeepers in the dialogue meetings to address some of the identified norms.

“ I pledge to work with these committees to change the mindset of young people to focus on productive activities that can keep them away from engaging in risky behaviours such as gambling and sex for money and other material benefits.” LC 1 chaperson of Nyio Village in Oluko Sub County Jenifer

“I will sensitize the community about the dangers related to sexual offences such as early and forced marriage and as well support the victims to access the required services”,

– Police Constable Atibuni Felix from Aii-vu sub county in Terego district.



SAA dialogue session with Marize Farmers group in Uleppi Saun County

Events and Celebrations

Day of the African Child (DAC)

The Day of the African Child (DAC) annually commemorates the children involved in the 1976 Soweto Uprising, initiated by the Organisation of African Union, now the African Union, in 1991. The 2023 theme was "Rights of Children in the digital environment".

DAC serves to inform key stakeholders about issues affecting children's rights, including their sexual and reproductive health rights and aspirations within their communities.

Restless Development organized a children's parliament in Madi-Okollo district, where youth researchers presented a petition on challenges in accessing SRHR services. The Resident District Commissioner (RDC), guest of honor, committed to presenting the petition to relevant technical groups for action.

This engagement highlighted the importance of duty bearers addressing issues directly affecting children and young people, leading to follow-up actions on unfulfilled government priorities.



International Youth Day (IYD)

Restless Development, along with partners like Uganda Red Cross Society and CARE International, joined Arua city council in commemorating the youth week.

Restless Development led various activities including community outreaches, dialogues, and a youth parliamentary debate.

Health workers provided integrated youth-friendly SRH services during the outreaches, including HIV and STI screenings as well as birth control methods. The Youth Advisory Structure (YAS) members addressed issues raised by young people regarding their health rights and services, which were integrated into the advocacy agenda.

A youth parliament session in Arua city discussed topics such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, and youth participation in leadership, guided by motions and informed by Restless Development's Youth Led Research.

Franco, a volunteer that supported livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 67)

Restless Development served as an official organizing partner for the CSW Youth Forum and Intergenerational Dialogue, playing a pivotal role in shaping the five key recommendations for inclusion in the Agreed Conclusions and the Youth Forum Program. This platform also facilitated connections for five youth advocates to numerous speaking engagements.

We also hosted a parallel event that brought together young feminist voices from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, Central America, and Africa, alongside representatives from the Malala Fund.

This gathering provided a unique opportunity for participants to share their digital activism experiences with CSOs, funders, and other feminist organizers. Our Youth Advocates spoke in multiple sessions such as the Youth Forum, Young Feminist Caucus Launch, the feminist futures event by YP Foundation, Global Fund for Women, UN Women, Generation Equality among others. They also participated in the Dutch Feminist Policy Pub Quiz which gave them an opportunity to understand feminist foreign policy and how this affects the flow of funds to youth organizations.



Primrose (center), Senior Youth Collective Manager at Restless Development with We Lead advocates at the CSW Youth Forum.

Research and Learning

State of Youth Civil Society Report

We led a comprehensive youth-led research initiative resulting in the "[Young, Feminist and Fearless – Holding the Line](#)" report, focusing on the pivotal role of feminist movements in fostering equity, safety, and freedom worldwide.

Through interactions with young feminists from 82 countries, including 127 individual interviews, 20 focus groups, and analysis of 847 survey responses, we delved into the experiences and perspectives of these activists. Specifically spotlighting India, Iran, Lebanon, Uganda, Honduras, Brazil, and Sierra Leone, we gathered extensive qualitative data to illuminate the work of feminist movements in these regions.

The report, launched at the Women Deliver conference, was shared with stakeholders such as donors, governments, and civil society to prompt actionable responses based on its key findings.





“

As a young leader, I value sexual health counselling as an important aspect of my work and I know it has touched the lives of many girls

–Faridah

Faridah, a psychotherapist with the Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC) in Uganda. One of the organisations under the We Lead Community of Action (CoA).

IMPACT STORIES

JENIFERS'S STORY

“Fear of speaking about sexuality to adolescents by parents jeopardizes their future aspirations”

Jenifer is a 67-year-old retired primary teacher. She is one of the Social Analysis and Action (SAA) group members under the SHE SOARS project in Dadamo sub-county. She has five children and one adopted child, making her a mother of six. She raised them alone after separating from her husband who suppressed her in the marriage and evicted her.

While in the SAA dialogue session, which are group discussions held weekly in communities under the SHE SOARS project to identify negative social norms in the community, Jenifer expressed her sadness on the tragedy she went through in her early 20s and 30s.

“If I had known that it is normal to talk about sexuality to young people, my 14-year-old, by then, in primary seven would not have fallen prey to defilement which led her to drop out of school.”

Jenifer lamented how she had been a teacher but feared to discuss sexuality like puberty, menstruation and life skills with her daughters.

“I felt that speaking about it would trigger their curiosity and in turn push them to engage in sexual activity.”

According to Jenifer, the SAA dialogues have allowed her to share her experiences with young mothers and fathers, which will hold them accountable for teaching their children about sexuality. Currently, she is engaging and educating parents in her neighborhood, both group and non-group members on the need to create a conducive environment for their children, to feel free to speak and discuss puberty, menstruation management, HIV/Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) prevention, managing peer groups and providing life skills. She believes that this will protect them from unwanted pregnancy, and early marriages, build their confidence, and eventually achieve their educational aspirations.

“I want to thank Restless Development for training a good SAA facilitator in our community. Through the SHE SOARS project, I believe there will be a significant impact on families' mindsets regarding sexual reproductive health. In creating awareness of the negative social norms that prevent young women and girls from accessing SRHR services, the members of this group are enabling the future of our young people to be brighter.



Jenifer, an elder and a member of the SHE SOARS project Social Analysis and Action group in Dadamo City in West Nile, Uganda.

BWIGULA PRIMARY SCHOOL STORY

Improved performance among the girls as a result of full school attendance.

Bwigula Primary School is one of the schools benefiting from the Universal Primary Education program, which was introduced by the Government of Uganda, that aimed at having all the 5-14 year old children attend primary school without paying fees. It is located in Bugweri district, Eastern Uganda, with a population of 600 pupils.

Originally, the school faced challenges with insufficient pit latrines due to its large student population. In due course, the girls' pit latrine collapsed, leaving the school with no alternative but to permit girls to share facilities with boys. This situation caused discomfort for the girls, particularly during menstrual periods, leading to increased absenteeism from school.

The headteacher informed the government about the problem, and it was supposed to be addressed in the budget for the 2021/22 financial year. However, by the last quarter of that year, the government had not taken any action on building the new pit latrine. This added to the school's concerns because the girls' attendance kept decreasing.

“It was in the second month towards the end of the financial year, that Restless Development Young Accountability Advocates were conducting field monitoring visits on the government projects as per the budget plans. This presented an opportunity for us to express our concerns to them.”

said the Director of Studies..

The Young Accountability Advocates under Countering Corruption through Youth-led Budget Advocacy programme engaged the district sectoral heads on the matter and presented their findings from the monitoring visits to the District Youth Working Groups. A week later after Restless Development had visited, the school received a contractor who started the construction of the girls' pit latrine.

“We now have a five stance pit latrine for the girls. They are now comfortable and their school attendance is 100%. With this, we believe their performance will improve.” says Deputy Headteacher.



The before and after pit latrines of Bwigula Primary School that were recently constructed as a result of CCYBA projects, ensuring accountability for its leaders.

YOUTH COLLECTIVE

The aim of the Youth Collective is to build and strengthen Youth Civil Society, supporting the sector to thrive.

The Youth Collective is a global community for young people and youth-led organisations with 4000+ members, 359 of these are youth-led/focused organisations in Uganda. The Youth Collective provides connection, training and funding through innovative initiatives like the Leadership Labs and Donor Dialogues. It is also a directory and a network of youth civil society organisations, able to be discovered by others and connect with each other.

We have continued to use the Leadership Labs methodology to strengthen the Youth Collective Members on topics of their choice. We conducted a virtual leadership lab in July 2023 titled "Gender Equality More than just buzzwords" for 80 youth civil society organisations including Uganda members. The lab was led by representatives from youth CSOs from Nigeria, Lebanon, and Uganda who shared expertise on gender and social inclusion, and how gender transformative approaches can be included in the work led by youth civil society. 78% of those who responded to the evaluation felt their expectations had been met, and all participants reported gaining new knowledge applicable in their contexts.

In 2023 we facilitated three virtual global leadership labs with 102 youth CSOs that are members of the Youth Collective.

The leadership labs provided safe, inclusive and peer led spaces that connected youth civil society members to share their leadership skills and tools. Through the labs, CSOs attained practical tools to mobilise for additional resources effectively, how to navigate adult-youth partnerships to be successful in their advocacy efforts and helped shape ideas on lobbying the UN, governments and relevant stakeholders for better education, including sexual rights education for all. According to the 2022 annual youth collective survey, youth civil society noted that the collective had played a pivotal role in facilitating the progress of their organisations. They also highlighted the invaluable learning opportunities afforded by the collective and praised its inclusive ethos;

"Myself and other members of the collective have been able to gain funding and connections" - Member - Youth Vision (Organisation)

"There is great learning and inclusive nature of the youth coalition." - Member - MACO NETWORK UGANDA.

After several years of consistent growth, we are now on a mission to accelerate the Youth Collective's network, to increase membership to 7000, with a target of raising funds to co-design and deliver programmes with the youth collective members.



Flavia, a young female researcher on the We Lead Programme who participated in gathering data through in-person conversations with rightsholders, on sexual health, in Jinja - Uganda.

POWERSHIFTING

At Restless Development, we take a power shifting approach. We see the growing inequalities and injustices in our world. We are intentional in our efforts to shift power; enabling young people and communities who have previously been marginalised to lead change.

Under We Lead, we documented the power shifting model. The model was developed with two learning questions in mind:

- What is power shifting according to Restless Development and other key stakeholders taking part in the We Lead programme?
- Powershifting in practice: How and to what extent does power shifting take place under the We Lead programme?

Some of the key learnings included;

- Local ownership initiatives as core strategies of power shifting in the programme were overall positively appraised by rightsholders and are perceived to facilitate implementation: **”localization and contextualization of the ToC or for the interventions that the COA is actually implementing makes it much easier for them to implement it, because it increases their sense of ownership of those programmes.”** localization and

The initiatives have also allowed the identification of new pathways for change for the COAs: **“it has also opened our eyes to new areas in which we should be looking at to create change.”** (Consultation with COAFs).

Rightsholders consulted expressed appreciation for activities designed to strengthen local COA organisations, namely: participatory grant making whereby **“COAs have a have a say on who gets funding and what priorities are considered for funding”** trainings that allowed **“participants to discuss and problematise their specific contexts and the challenges faced** and We Lead’s efforts **“to build conditions to link regional and International advocacy to specific local contexts.”**

Prioritising safety and happiness requires a bit more concerted effort and attention. Young leaders on the programme stressed that in addition to physical security and mental health there should be more considerate effort to prioritise digital safety.



Judith, the SHE SOARS program research intern for Kampala region.

POWER SHIFTING CHECKLIST

We've created the Power Shifting Checklist to guide the work that we do and to help others that want to ensure all young people have the power to lead.

1. PRIORITISE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Trust young people to lead from the outset.
- ✓ Support youth-led organising.

2. PRIORITISE SAFETY & HAPPINESS

- ✓ Protect the health and safety of young people.
- ✓ Support youth happiness and wellbeing.

3. TRAIN, SUPPORT & RESOURCE YOUNG LEADERS

- ✓ Plan Ahead. Provide and resource tailored inclusive training and support to all young leaders.
- ✓ Compensate fairly. Ensure no young person is doing unpaid work, or is out of pocket due to their commitment.
- ✓ Fund locally led youth groups and organisations.

4. BE OPEN, DYNAMIC AND ACCOUNTABLE

- ✓ Learn. Invest in monitoring and evaluation and build a culture of learning.
- ✓ Ensure Dynamic Accountability. Let young people participate fully, be transparent and provide a continuous feedback loop.

5. INTENTIONALLY SHIFT POWER

- ✓ Recognise Intersectionality. Acknowledge that everyone has a unique experience of discrimination – and be intentional about removing barriers for every young person.
- ✓ Let communities lead their own development.
- ✓ Let young people be holistic leaders, to inform, influence and deliver their own futures.

6. BE RESTLESS: FLEX, INNOVATE & CREATE

- ✓ Youth Power is not bound by existing systems or the status quo. Give young people the space to flex, innovate and create new ways to have impact.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS





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