Restless Development
Independent Review Panel Feedback

Accountability Report 2019-20
Review Round November 2021

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Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

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22nd November 2021

Dear Alex Kent, dear Kate Muhwezi,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

The fifth accountability report by Restless Development is very comprehensive and demonstrates a strong commitment to dynamic accountability as highlighted by the Panel in many areas across the report.

The innovative approaches to identification and engagement of stakeholders are commended by the Panel. In this regard, the development of the Youth Principles (C2), the stakeholder mapping and Youth Collective programme (D1), and the approach of the Resilient Realities research (F1) have been flagged as **good practices**. The Panel has also noted very positively Restless Development approaches to staff and volunteers development and empowerment (H1, H2 and H3).

The Panel did not find major areas for improvement and suggests that the next interim report addresses progress, challenges, and lessons learned in the reporting period (A3 & B2), main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response (E3), and protecting confidentiality and anonymity of those involved in complaints (J5).

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel

Restless Development's Accountability Report 2019-20
Review Round November 2021

Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation
The opening statement by Restless Development CEO Perry Maddox, reflects on the major forces shaping the world; the pandemic's impact on the most vulnerable and the murder of George Floyd. Young people leading Restless Development's response to those forces, and shaping the strategy are emphasised as they demonstrate dynamic accountability in practice. Key highlights are shared including youth-led adaptation to the pandemic, changes in leadership, and work on anti-racism. The statement highlights the strategic commitment to dynamic accountability, and shares key developments on areas for improvement flagged by the panel in the previous report. The opening statement is inspiring and demonstrates that decisions are based on meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

Cluster A: Impact Achieved		
A. The impact we achieve		
A1	***Mission statement and theory of change*** The vision and mission are shared. It is mentioned therein that the theory of change is based on a new model built and led by youth, which "will hand back the ownership of development", however it is not explained how. The response would have been strengthened by sharing or linking to the theory of change.	*3*
A2	***Key strategic indicators for success*** The Results Framework outlines the desired impact, long and short term outcomes and indicators for four goal areas. The indicators' broadness allows flexibility for the country offices (Hubs) to develop their own indicators suiting local contexts and with inputs from young people and communities. The main aims of Restless Development's global reporting system are outlined, and examples of reports are shared. A new online system, DevResults, is used for data collection.	*3*

	The Results Framework and learning questions are a very logical and comprehensive overview. It looks like there is a lot of data collected, particularly quantitative data. Referencing the opening statement by the CEO on powershifts it would be good to understand and explore the extent to which this data services upwards accountability to the board vs. data that is of high utility to partners and stakeholders. The plan to review the results framework with partners seems like a very good development and in the next reporting cycle it would be good to hear more about how this has gone and how it has changed your internal processes. Additionally, to what extent are the learning questions developed with partners? The reporting is very impressive and comprehensive, the Panel appreciates the space for storytelling at the end. It would be good to understand more about how the report is used and what decisions are taken as a result of these reports. (e.g. is there any kind of management response by quarter?)	
A3	***Progress and challenges over the reporting period*** The response outlines progress in two key targets for the whole organisation and lists some achievements against the strategic outcomes outlined in the Results Framework mentioned above. The challenges faced were mostly related to the Covid-19. The unequal access to devices and data meant inability to reach out to many young people, and for those programmes able to reach target populations, digital fatigue and maintaining engagement were key challenges. Examples of Hubs' responses to these challenges are shared. There is a good selection of examples of progress which is clear and accessible, and within the constraints of the reporting page limits. The panel would have liked to see more assessment on the challenges to accountability in the period, given unequal digital access.	*3*
A4	***Significant events or changes regarding governance and accountability*** The International and UK based teams were restructured following the financial shock provoked by the pandemic and it accelerated changes that the agency committed to, such as increasing diversity (especially women in leadership positions) and representation across teams. Anti-racism commitments and progress against them have been published. A global anti-racism group has been established to lead the work. Changes described are impressive and in line with the changes the sector needs to see. The Panel commends the racial justice commitments and	*4*

	points this as a potential good practice to be shared across the membership, if the commitments are ratified by people of colour within the organisation.	
B. Positive results are sustained		
B1	***Sustainability of your work*** The [Programme Principles (pp. 14)](#) outline Restless Development's approach to programme implementation and sustainability sustainability. Examples of programme models that have proved to be effective vehicles for sustainability are shared, including the [Youth-led Research model](#) and the [accountability models](#). The [Youth Collective](#) initiative is described as an example of ensuring sustainability of youth-led change beyond the work of Restless Development. It is also mentioned that insights and learning on sustainability are gathered from evaluations, which include sustainability as one of the evaluation criteria, and an example of this is shared. The panel notes positively the impressive examples of sustainability shared here. In future reports, it would be great to see evidence from evaluation on sustainability.	*4*
B2	***Lessons learned in the reporting period*** The report outlines programmatic systems aiming at understanding what has worked and what has not: learning questions, reporting systems, annual reviews by each Hub, [annual volunteer survey](#), and youth-led research. Two examples of learnings gathered are shared along the steps taken to act upon these learnings. However it would have been good to understand how the list of learning products/processes is impacting decisions across the organisation systematically, i.e. are there any processes in place to ensure decision making is informed by these learnings?	*3*
C. We lead by example		
C1	***Excellence on strategic priorities*** Examples of Restless Development playing a leadership role and guidance to other organisations are provided, including supporting the Danish Representative's office in Ramallah in the implementation of their youth agenda. Also examples of Restless Development playing a membership or coordinator role in working groups are shared.	*4*
C2	***Expertise is recognised and welcomed by peers and stakeholders***	*4*

	Examples of Restless Development's expertise recognised by governments, institutions, partners and young leaders are provided. Also the outcomes of the collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs are shared, which are the development of the Youth Principles. The Panel commends the great examples shared and points the youth principles and the Restless Development's support on the development process as a good practice. The principles are accessible, easy to understand and come from vivid experiences of youth. The Youth Principles were created in partnership with Restless Development by 12 young co-researchers.	
C3	**Inclusivity, human rights, women's rights and gender equality** The report explains the organisation's approach to diversity, equity and inclusion and racial equity within the organisation and in the programmatic work. The global Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy outlines goals for diversity, inclusion culture, and external partners. Concrete commitments were made following a global listening exercise in the surge of the BLM and other movements fighting racism. At the programme level, gender principles guide the design and delivery of work. A Gender Committee with staff across the Hubs works on better understanding how programmes can become more gender transformative. Inclusion and participation is also emphasised in programmes through commitments including making reasonable adjustments to projects. An example of disability inclusion is shared. The Panel would like to see more on how the organisation identifies and engages stakeholders that are at risk of exclusion; as well as more about the challenges that are faced in this area of work. While there are impressive strides forward, it is important to communicate about the setbacks.	*3*
C4	**Minimising negative impacts on stakeholders** Restless Development's Safeguarding approach and policy are easily found on the website. It is stated that continual learning and adaptation through listening is crucial. Safeguarding ownership shifted to the Hubs allowing a tailored approach to case management and incident response. The Code of conduct and Programme Principles provide further guidance and commitments to do no harm and uphold the organisation's values. The report also highlights the creation of new risk assessments to better address safeguarding in the context of the pandemic.	*4*

		The code of conduct is for all staff and volunteers, it is also for all contractors and short term consultants? It would be great to hear more about any challenges and how Restless Development has overcome these.	
C5		**Responsible stewardship for the environment** The Environmental Principles outline the commitment to protect the environment through five focussed ways, including managing the organisation's carbon footprint. Data from the staff survey on staff understanding and awareness of the organisation's environmental impact are shared along measures to improve them. Data from a Quality Assurance framework on the proportion of Hubs achieving environmental protection related KPIs is also shared. Estimates on carbon footprint are provided for the reporting period and previous one, which the Panel assume have been calculated using the new carbon footprint tracker (it has been rolled out in 11% of Hubs). The carbon footprint tracker is a great example of an organisation taking its environmental commitment seriously.	*3*

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

D. Key stakeholders are identified with great care

D1		**Key stakeholders and how they are identified** Key stakeholders are listed, and statistics on stakeholders reach and engagement are provided. The creation of the Youth Collective is highlighted, as it includes a large group of civil society members from all over the world, which is led and co-owned by young people which is Restless Development's main stakeholder group. The report also describes how the definition of youth can vary and how the organisation adapts to context. Furthermore, other mechanisms such as stakeholders mapping, analysis exercises, consultation and co-design exercises are mentioned as they support stakeholders to contribute to shape the organisation's direction of travel. The stakeholder mapping and youth collective programme, where young people are part of reaching out to wider audiences, is commended by the Panel and flagged as a good practice.	*4*
D2		**Reaching out to those impacted or concerned by your work** It is emphasised that long term community engagement by young leaders is underpinning the organisation's strategic model. The Design	*4*

	Protocol that guides programmes' design is described. An annual review process is a key mechanism for engaging with young people and communities, and examples on how it was adapted to the Covid-19 context are provided. The youth-led research is also highlighted as an opportunity to engage with key stakeholders on issues defined by them.	
D3	**_Maximising coordination with others operating in the same space_** It is stated that partnerships are based on alignment of values, visions and goals. Furthermore, there are partnership guidelines that guide practical development of partnerships and set minimum standards. Examples of work in consortia are shared, including the Development Alternative. Examples of working with other actors at national and local level are also shared.	*4*
E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders		
E1 & E2	**_Stakeholder feedback & Stakeholder engagement_** Restless Development provides avenues for stakeholders to provide feedback and feed into the decision making processes. Formal and informal are listed categorised by stakeholder type, internal and external. Examples on how feedback has led to changes in practices, are provided. The importance of listening, learning and adapting in the context of Covid-19 in order to provide the most value to young people and communities, is emphasized. Data from the latest annual volunteer survey is shared, which demonstrates a strong engagement with volunteers. Stakeholder engagement is also demonstrated at a wider strategy level, and the Big conversation exercise is shared as an example.	*4*
E3	**_Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response_** Examples of likes and dislikes from staff and volunteers are shared. The Panel notes positively the feedback shared and the actions Restless Development will take. How will the organisation close the feedback loop?	*3*
E4	**_People and partners have gained capacities that last beyond your immediate intervention_** Results from external evaluations show how Restless Development's programmes have strengthened stakeholders capacities. Examples from programmes in Nepal and Zimbabwe are shared. The Panel notes positively the good examples shared. In future reports, it would be great to see evidence of longer term impact through the evaluation work.	*3*
F. Our advocacy work addresses the root cause of problems		
F1	**_Evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address_**	*4*

	The belief that young people are experts in their own reality underpins Restless Development's approach to advocacy work. An example of work in India is shared to illustrate the approach. Advocacy work is informed by own national work in Hubs, youth-led networks, youth consultation, and youth-led research. The Resilient Realities youth-led report explored how youth civil society responded to the Covid-19 crisis and produced recommendations for donors and governments, some of which are shared. Very interesting examples of innovation in research and participation, supporting young people to share their lived experience. The Panel commends the approach of the Resilient Realities research and points it as a good practice.	
F2	***Stakeholders support your advocacy work and value changes achieved*** Young people also directly lead Restless Development's advocacy work. Several examples of young leaders partnering with a diverse range of organizations, including other Accountable Now members, the UN and the OECD, are shared. The Panel notes very positively the inspiring examples of youth led advocacy and next time it would be great to include their feedback on these processes and also any outcomes that have been achieved.	*4*
G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety		
G1	***Availability of key policies and information on your website*** 'Radical Transparency' is part of the Dynamic Accountability model that Restless Development applies. The dedicated webpage shares documents and information relating to governance, finance, programmes, policies, and performance. Also principles and commitments underpinning anti-racism, gender and environment work. The Open Information Policy, available in the website, sets out the information that Restless Development will make publicly available. The organisation is part of IATI.	*4*
G2	***Pay scale, gender pay gap and top salaries*** The salary scale, publicly available, aims to ensure fair and comparable wages across locations. It is being reviewed to remove the "international/national" remit distinction. A Values and Behaviour Framework guides the mapping of roles against the scale.	*4*

	Ratio between top and bottom salaries are provided. It is mentioned that a gender pay gap analysis was performed but the data is not shared beyond stating there is "a positive pay gap in favour of women". The Panel notes positively that the information shared is transparent and accessible.	
G3	**_Ensuring privacy rights and protecting personal data_** A [Privacy Statement](#) sets out how Restless Development keeps personal data safe and secure. The International Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible and has delegated implementation to the Senior Leadership Team, who ensure all staff understand and are equipped to meet their responsibilities. The Panel notest that the privacy policy is clearly communicated and accessible, an example of best practice in transparency.	**4**
G4	**_Largest donors and their contributions_** The five largest donors and their contributions are shared in a table.	**4**

Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness

H. Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best

H1	**_Recruitment and employment is fair and transparent_** A Global recruitment and induction policy is used by all Hubs, and is guided by the organisation's values. Staff age and gender demographics are shared in a chart, which shows a higher ratio of women in senior positions. A [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) strategy outlines initiatives to strengthen diversity in the workplace. Data from the annual survey shows staff positive perception of the organisations valuing and encouraging diversity. An action plan is in place to improve representation and as part of it, a large percentage of roles have moved from the international teams to the Hubs. In future reports, The Panel would like to hear more about the challenges faced by Restless Development and they are overcome.	**4**
H2	**_Staff development_** It is stated that flexibility, time and space is given to staff to prioritise wellbeing and grow. Data from the staff survey on themes related to performance management and professional development are shared. [Global Performance and Development Guidelines](#) aim to enhance capabilities and build new skills based on the needs of the organisation, the role and the direction where an employee wants to go in their career.	**4**

	An e-learning platform is available to all staff, who must undergo some mandatory training. The approach of Restless Development to Performance Management is explained. The Panel notes positively the very impressive results from the staff survey on views around development, particularly in performance management and work life balance.	
H3	**Safe working environment** The report highlights the swift adaptations and response to the Covid-19 to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. A Code of Conduct, a Dignity at Work Policy and an Employee Handbook aim to ensure a workplace free from bullying and harassment, and an environment that facilitates mutual respect, collaboration, openness, safety and equality. Furthermore, safeguarding policies ensure that robust measures are in place to respond to issues. 'Safeguarding preparedness' has been shifted to the Hubs, thus moving to a tailored approach. A whistleblowing process is explained on the website. Does the organisation have an external mechanism for whistleblowing, that would further protect those wanting to speak out against harm (e.g. third party managed mechanism)?	**4**
	**I. Resources are handled effectively for the public good**	
I1	**Resources are acquired in line with your values, globally accepted standards and without compromising independence** An Ethical Funding Policy sets out criteria for accepting funding from private sector organisations. A *Bid/No Bid process* is also in place to guide whether to submit a proposal for programme funding. In annual reports income, donors and corporate partners are outlined. The Panel notes positively the commitment to not compromise values on fund-raising operations. In future reports, it would be great to hear more about any innovative practice in fundraising that Restless Development is piloting.	**4**
I2	**Monitoring of progress and re-allocation of resources** Quarterly and annual global programmes reports based on data from Hubs are used to track progress against strategic objectives. The new online reporting system and the narrative provided by Hubs enhance the ability to use the data to inform decision-making. It is highlighted that the restricted nature of much of the funding, limits the flexibility to redirect resources.	**3**
I3	**Minimising risk of corruption, bribery and misuse of funds**	**4**

	The introduction of a FInancial Manual that makes explicit links between values and financial policies, reduces the risks of funds misuse. Beyond the external audits, Restless Development runs a global internal audit programme that focuses on processes and controls, and staff are trained. Several systems to prevent fraud and bribery are in place, including compulsory training for all staff. In future reports, the Panel suggests sharing lessons Restless Development may have learnt on previous misconduct cases, that have shaped policies and procedures.	

J. Governance processes maximise accountability

J1	**Governance structure and recruitment of trustees/board members** The Global Board of Trustees and National Boards are responsible for the strategy, operations, risk management and financial management of the organisation. Key principles guiding the governance are listed, including the registration of Hubs as independent entities rather than as INGO branches. Restless Development is registered and regulated by the [Charity Commission](#) in the UK. The areas in which the Trustees support the Senior Leadership Team are listed. The CEO's performance was reviewed through a 360 assessment. It is explained that the Trustees do not have financial remuneration and that they can serve for two terms. The Global Board of Trustees has shifted from being London based to global virtual meetings, which has opened the recruitment process and thus enabling greater diversity. The Panel would like to see in future reports the organisational charts, and any targets on diversity and representation for Board composition.	**3**
J2	**Board oversight of adherence to policies, resource allocation, potential risks, and complaints processes** FIve Board Sub-Committees focus on different areas to discuss and decide on mitigation measures to risk. The Finance and Audit Committee responsibilities and ways of working are shared in the report. It is stated the Board plays the most senior role in reviewing and responding to concerns or complaints.	**4**
J3 & J4	**Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (internal and external)** It is stated that a new community complaints response mechanism has been introduced. The [whistleblowing mechanism](#) is described in the	**4**

	website and provides a channel for anonymous reporting of wrongdoing by internal and external stakeholders. The Global Employee Handbook is also publicly available and includes internal complaints handling descriptions and what employees might expect when raising grievances. The different channels for raising complaints are linked in the set of safety, security and safeguarding policies. Data on complaints received is shared and categorised in two groups: those received through the whistleblowing mechanisms and fundraising complaints.		
J5	**Protecting confidentiality and anonymity of those involved in complaints** Commitment to confidentiality and protecting anonymity is set out on the whistleblowing policy, and an extract from it is quoted in the report. The response would have been strengthened by providing an example or more information to illustrate how the policy is applied in practice, so that the readers could see evidence of outcomes achieved by the policy Additionally, understanding how Restless Development balance the need for anonymity with the need for transparency would also have further strengthened the response.	*3*	

K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments

K1	**The governing body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises** The report describes several mechanisms that are in place to ensure that Restless Development's management teams are held to account. Annual performance reviews include a 360 assessment for senior staff, and the annual agency survey includes questions relating to strategic commitment to dynamic accountability. The Quality Assurance Framework, which is applicable to all Hubs, is also described. The Panel appreciated the information on how management performance is assessed, but points out information on how the Boards performance is assessed hasn't been addressed. The Panel also notes that the answer would be strengthened by sharing any learnings as a result of the reviews.	*3*
K2	**Inclusion of staff in discussing progress toward organisational accountability** It is stated that dynamic accountability is applied internally too, and staff and volunteers are involved in decision making. A distributed leadership approach favours agency and innovation over bureaucracy. Several examples in which staff is involved in accountability discussions, including the production of the accountability report, are shared.	*3*

		The answer would be strengthened by examples of how staff have been involved in the accountability reporting, the associated discussions and actions.	
	K3	**_Scope of this accountability report and influence over national entities_** The scope of the report is explained. It is stated that "the International Unit is empowered by the whole agency to ensure that Restless Development is a high performing agency, sustainable business and achieving our strategy". The answer would be strengthened by examples or learning that have happened outside of the headquarters.	*3*