

Funding Manual

Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism

AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective

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1. Introduction

AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective (AU-EU YVL - PoC) is a four-year programme co-funded by the European Union to create an inclusive society in Africa and Europe that responds more to the needs of youth. This goal is being achieved through:

- equipping young people with the skills to advocate for their concerns at the local, regional, and continental levels;
- engaging institutions and decision-makers to integrate youth concerns and voices in governance processes.

This programme is implemented by **Oxfam, Restless Development, Search for Common Ground, Youthmakers Hub, and ComDev Africa.**

2. AU-EU Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism (YV-TPFM)

On 8 June 2026, the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective will launch the second call for proposals, inviting youth-led organizations and groups to apply for small grants. The grants will support the implementation of initiatives by youth-led organizations and groups across the 15 intervention countries of **Cameroon, Burundi, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso** and **Belgium**. Youth initiatives in the mentioned countries can apply for funding to implement their ideas and solutions linked to global challenges.

This funding manual describes the purpose of the **Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism (YV-TPFM)**, the grant sizes, eligibility, selection criteria, and application and awarding processes.

2.1 Why the Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism

Young people represent over 60% of the African population and face numerous challenges that limit their ability to realize their dreams and aspirations. Many, for instance, are not in employment, education, or training; others cannot voice their needs; and others are faced with conflicts, political instability, and poor healthcare.

The **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective (AU-EU YVL - PoC)** programme recognizes that youth must be equal partners in shaping actions to attain the global aspirations of sustainable development, equality, and peace. They must also be equal partners to achieve the regional vision of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens, representing a dynamic international force.

Upon this, the programme initiated the **Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism (YV-TPFM)** to support the implementation of their ideas and solutions linked to global challenges, learning, sharing, and collaboration among youth across Africa and Europe. The fund also supports youth, especially those in hard-to-reach communities, to have their voices and solutions reach policy and decision-makers at different levels, including the European and African Union.

2.2 Grants sizes

The grants will range from **€1,000** to **€10,000** per collective or youth-led initiative. There will be three categories: **10 small (€ 1,000)**, **10 medium (€5,000)**, and **10 large (€10,000) grants**.

The grants will be awarded or made available twice in the programme implementation period. In the first and third year, the funds will be given to 15 (fifteen) youth-led organizations or groups; in the third year, 15 additional youth-led organizations or groups will benefit from the grants. In total, 30 small grants will be made available.

Duration of grants

Each grant will last for 6 to 12 months maximum.

2.3 Who is managing the grants?

Restless Development Uganda will manage the grants. **Restless Development** is a legally registered entity with the NGO Board in Uganda under permit Number 09855. Restless Development is a non-profit organization that supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. It also hosts a growing youth collective of 185 youth-led organizations across countries. Restless Development is committed to creating an agency that paves the way for youth-led change through power-shifting. Restless Development programming focuses on 4 impact areas, i.e., education and livelihoods, gender and sexual rights, voices and democracy, and climate justice.

As these are powershifting funds, co-designed by young people for young people, the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) holds decision-making authority in the selection process.

The grants will be managed in line with the principles of funding youth power, which include:

- A. Putting young people in the driving seat: a committee of **Youth Advisory Board** members will review and approve the grant applications. This will ensure that decision-making power is in the hands of young people and reflects their priorities;

- B. Making the application process easy and accessible: the calls for proposals, application forms, assessment forms, and an outreach strategy will be suggested by the Youth Advisory Board members to ensure that youth perspectives are integrated into the application process. For instance, an online application form will be developed in three different languages (English, French, and Arabic), and some information awareness meetings will be conducted, as well as webinars explaining the application process.
- C. Funding traditionally marginalized and excluded groups and individuals: priority will be given to funding applications from underrepresented groups (e.g., rural youth, minority communities, or young people with disabilities). Actively reach out to these communities through partnerships with grassroots organizations.
- D. Investing in young people beyond finances: grantees will identify capacity- building needs and which mentorship programmes will be tailored to. Grantees will also be networked to existing opportunities for capacity building and knowledge sharing, including access to the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab App** platform.

3. What should my proposal for the grant focus on?

Your proposal should have activities or interventions that fall under the categories below.

- a. Awareness campaigns challenging discriminatory acts and promoting inclusion at local or national or subregional and continental levels.
 - i. Examples include youth organizing campaigns to raise awareness about specific discriminatory practices in their communities using social media, art, and public events to share their message.
- b. Youth-led initiatives that demonstrate how the voices and priorities of hard-to- reach young people can be integrated into national, sub-regional, continental, and cross-continental advocacy. Examples include:
 - i. Hackathons, which are events where young people come together to collaborate to identify solutions.
 - ii. Investigative research resulting in increased participation of young people in decision-making processes, policy reviews, and formulation.
 - iii. Development of policy briefs and dialogue events with decision-makers.
- c. Advocacy initiatives targeting power holders at national, regional and continental levels with specific “asks” such as policy or programming

change.

- i. For example, coalition/social movement building focuses on initiatives aligned with the national youth plans and the AU agenda 2063.
- d. Initiatives that foster stronger youth civil society advocacy at country, sub- regional and continental and cross-continental levels.
- e. Youth-led initiatives to increase collaboration between the African youth in the diaspora and youth groups in Africa.

3.1 Additional funding priorities

a. Target groups

Please note that proposals targeting youth groups representing hard-to-reach communities, young women, and other marginalized populations facing barriers to participation in social, economic, and political spheres will be given priority. Priority will be given to youth who are living with disabilities, lack formal education, belong to indigenous communities, are young women, migrants, refugees, rural youth, and young people living with HIV, among others. In your proposal, we want to learn more about how you ensure inclusivity and actively engage diverse groups of young people in your work.

b. Diversity

At least 50% of your target group should consist of young women or minority individuals, with at least 10% being young people with disabilities or led by young people with disabilities.

c. Sustainability

Your proposal must outline how your initiative or main activities will continue existing after the grant period ends. Specifically, explain how you see the continuation of activities or how the outcomes of your efforts will drive lasting change beyond the project's conclusion.

4. Applying for Grants

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for the grants?

The Grants have the following eligibility criteria:

- a. Your organization or group must be youth-led, with decision-makers aged between 15-35 years. The founder should have been below the age of 35 years old at the time the organization or youth group was founded, and at least 70% of the staff or volunteers should be young people under 35 years old, with a focus on underrepresented or marginalized youth.

- b. You must be a registered youth-led organization or group, NGO, association, trade union, collective, or network/alliance of these entities.
- c. Your organization or group must be based in one of the following 15 countries: Cameroon, Burundi, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, and Belgium.
- d. You must have proven experience working with marginalized groups/underserved communities.
- e. The proposed activity must occur in one or more of the 15 countries listed above.
- f. The deadline for applications is 29 June 2026, 23:59 (EAT).

4.2 Steps to apply for the grants

STEP	ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION
GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS		
Step 01	Responding to the Call for Proposal (CFP)	<p>A CFP is released annually; an organization or youth group has up to four weeks to respond and submit their application.</p> <p>Applications will be made through a provided link or an agreed collection point in specified countries in the CFP.</p> <p>During the CFP phase, applicants are encouraged to join the online community of the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective - all relevant links are available here: bit.ly/m/aeuyouthvoiceslab.</p>
Step 02	Online events and other support to grantees	<p>To provide additional support to applicants, an online session will be scheduled before the CFP is launched and application deadline to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer clarity and examples of the types of initiatives eligible for application.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the minimum eligibility requirements and the application assessment process. • Address any remaining questions from potential grantees. <p>Additionally, in-person information and awareness meetings will be held in selected countries with umbrella organizations.</p>
GRANT SELECTION		
Step 03	Longlisting and Application Assessments	<p>All grant applications must be submitted in either English, French, or Arabic and should address the specific CFP you are applying to. Please note: You can only apply to one CFP at a time and may submit only one application. Only the first application will be considered if multiple applications are submitted to one or more CFPs.</p> <p>Once all applications are received, the Youth Advisory Board of the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective, in collaboration with the Restless Development team, will conduct a screening process that includes the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the eligibility of each application. • Evaluate each application based on the submitted narrative and financial proposal according to the established selection criteria. • The highest-scoring proposals will be notified, and we will then engage in a due diligence and organizational assessment process, which will take approximately five weeks.
GRANT AWARD		
Step 04	Offer of Grant Award and Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant award process will begin once the due diligence and organizational assessment are completed successfully. • Successful applicants will receive an official grant award notification, after which a Grant Agreement will be signed. The goal is to notify organizations by early October 2026. • Following the signing of the Grant Agreement, the first financial transfer will be made, and an Inception Meeting will be held with selected

		<p>grantees in November 2026 to discuss the project proposal and outline the next steps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial transfer will be made in a single payment for smaller grants below €5,000 and two installments for large grants of €10,000. Please note, the payment modalities can change based on the due diligence reports. The transfer schedule will be aligned with the proposed planning and milestones outlined in the grant proposal. • Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and encouraged to engage with the broader program, particularly in the AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective online community. They will also have the option to request a brief assessment of their application to provide feedback by the end of the review process.
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4.3 To submit your application, use the official AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective website.

Applications must be submitted through the official AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective Grants section.

- **Read the full grant information here:**
<https://bio.aueuyouthvoiceslab.eu/grants>
- **Complete and submit the application form here:**
<https://bio.aueuyouthvoiceslab.eu/grantsapplication2026>

4.4 Narrative application question focus

The application form will guide you through the process, including specific questions and instructions.

The application consists of the following sections, all of which must be completed. Please follow the instructions carefully, as your application will be assessed based on your responses. It is important to adhere to the suggested length and page limits:

- a. Organization/Youth Group Information and Contact Details
- b. Additional Organization/Youth Group Details
- c. Project Relevance and Justification
- d. Deliverables & Project Activities
- e. Capacity

- f. Monitoring and Evaluation
- g. Risk Management
- h. Sustainability of the Project
- i. Project Budget
- j. Additional Questions (optional)

NB: standardized downloadable template for project budget shall be provided.

4.5 Budget Minimum Requirements

- a. You will use the budget template included in the application form.
- b. Each budget item must be clearly described, with all columns for each budget line filled out. This includes specifying the cost per category, the number of units, and the unit value for each item, as per the instructions provided. The budget should reflect costs for the entire project.
- c. The budget must be presented in Euros, and all costs and unit values should be rounded to the nearest euro.
- d. For Human Resources costs, indicate the percentage of time for each position and specify whether the role is full-time (FTE) or part-time.
- e. Budget costs should adhere to the principles of Reasonable, Allowable, and Allocable:
- f. Reasonable: Costs should be fair and in line with market prices, neither excessively high nor low.
- g. Allowable: Only costs that are deemed acceptable should be included.
- h. Allocable: Costs should be directly traceable to the approved budget outlined in the proposal.
- i. All costs incurred during project implementation must be verifiable through the grantee's records and necessary for the successful completion of the programme.

Additional information;

- j. **Staff Cost Rules** – Consultants should not be treated as staff costs. Staff costs should be supported by signed employment contracts and calculated based on actual time allocated to the project (e.g. Monthly Rate × % of time allocated to the project/FTE). Supporting documentation during the reporting period (and not application stage) should include payroll records, payment receipts, and timesheets where applicable. Staff costs should reflect actual time worked on the project and not fixed lump-sum allocations.
- k. **Exchange Rate Rules** – The applicable exchange rate should be the EU monthly InforEuro exchange rate and should be applied consistently throughout budgeting, implementation, and financial reporting.
Link to the rates [InforEuro, the exchange rate of the Euro currency](#)
- l. **Shared Cost Allocation Rules (HR and Operational Costs)** – Where costs are shared across multiple projects or funding sources, the allocation methodology should be fair, reasonable, consistently applied, and adequately documented.

Please note:- for each of these requirements, more explanation will be provided during the information session webinars that will be announced before the call for proposal advert goes out and during the submission period. Secondly, the question and answer section will also provide further clarification.

4.6 What makes a successful application?

- a. Applications submitted on time.
- b. Properly filled and completed applications in line with the application template.
- c. Applications that fulfill the eligibility criteria in section 4 - above.

4.7 What are unsuccessful factors?

- a. The application does not meet the criteria - see eligibility criteria.
- b. Application not in the right format or key questions left unanswered.
- c. Unreasonable costs (cf. financial guidelines).
- d. In general, the purchase of motor vehicles, land, or buildings.
- e. Poor presentation or incomplete application.

5. Overall grant management

All grants under the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective** focus on capacity development and aim to connect young people across Africa and Europe. Being a part of these grants is much more than just receiving financial support!

Restless Development will manage and coordinate the grants. As a grantee, you will be paired with the Programme's Manager, your primary contact throughout the grant process.

You can expect regular communication from **Restless Development** through email and online calls. Together, we will explore how coaching and mentorship can enhance your work, learning, and capacity development needs. Your main contact will also be available to assist with any practical questions related to grant implementation, spending, and more.

The grants are designed to foster connections among young people from different countries. We will facilitate interactive learning exchanges within your grantee cohort and beyond monthly. Additionally, the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab App** will allow you to access creating learning opportunities and engage with other grantees across the **AU- EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective** programme.

The **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab - Power of the Collective** also organizes face-to-face and virtual Learning Events. As a grantee, you will be invited and welcome to attend these events and share your knowledge and experiences with peers from Africa and Europe.

6. Grants Agreement and Disbursement Guidelines

The Grant Agreement is a binding document specifying the project duration

and the awarded grant amount based on the approved application, work plan, and budget. It also details the grantee's obligations under the grant, including reporting requirements, adherence to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) policies, conflict of interest disclosures, and other terms and conditions.

Cost Verification:

All expenses incurred during project implementation must be verifiable through the grantee's records and demonstrably necessary for the programme's execution.

Grant Disbursements

For grants amounting to **€5000 - €10,000**, disbursements will occur in two installments:

1. First Disbursement

The initial disbursement will be made upon fulfillment of the following conditions/milestones:

- Full execution of the Grant Agreement and all annexes.
- Approval and sign-off of the budget and work plan.
- Submission of a completed Bank Information Form.
- Submission of a completed Grantee Information Sheet.

2. Second Disbursement

The second and final disbursement will be processed upon achieving the following milestones:

- Submission of receipt acknowledging that you received the funds and corresponding bank statement for the first disbursement.
- Submission and assessment of the quarterly narrative report.
- Submission and assessment of the variance report.
- Demonstrated progress towards achieving objectives of the youth-led initiative.
- Submission of a formal request for the second and final disbursement.
- Upon utilization of 75% of funds received.

These guidelines ensure accountability, transparency, and alignment with the grant's objectives.

7. Details on assessment criteria

The **Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism** Grants are competitive, application-based funding opportunities designed to support a wide range of youth-led organizations/groups. To receive funding, organizations must submit an application that undergoes review through an open and transparent assessment process.

Selection Process

1. Screening Applications

Restless Development will lead the initial screening of applications against the eligibility criteria. This process is expected to take one week, though it may be extended depending on the volume of applications received.

2. Longlisting

Eligible applicants will be grouped by country to ensure equitable representation across the 15 intervention countries.

3. Application Assessment

Shortlisted applicants will undergo an assessment by the YAB and Consortium partners. A pre-designed assessment tool will be used to evaluate and score the various elements of each proposal.

4. Notification and Contracting

The highest-scoring proposals will be notified and required to submit additional forms and details to facilitate contracting.

5. Organizational Capacity Assessment

A preliminary evaluation of the applicant's capacity will be conducted through an Organizational Capacity Assessment to ensure their readiness to manage the grant.

6. Site Visits (if applicable)

Site visits may be conducted where necessary to verify governance and accounting protocols or review existing programs. These visits may involve Restless Development's country offices and on-ground support from YAB members, where feasible.

This structured process ensures fairness, transparency, and the effective allocation of funds to deserving youth-led organizations.

8. Statement on Integrity

The **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective** upholds a strict "zero-tolerance policy" for all forms of misconduct, including sexual, financial, or interpersonal offenses. This commitment is enforced through the policies and practices of Oxfam, Restless Development, Search for Common Ground, Youthmakers Hub, and ComDev Africa. Safeguarding, financial management, and interpersonal behavior are integral to agreements and programmes involving partners, grantee organizations, suppliers, and contractors.

Organizations receiving funding from **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the**

Collective must implement robust mechanisms to address misconduct allegations.

These mechanisms must encompass prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting of issues such as:

- Safeguarding misconduct, including sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, or child abuse.
- Corruption-related misconduct, including fraud, theft, bribery, money laundering, terrorist financing, aid diversion, or nepotism.
- Interpersonal misconduct, including bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination.

Before signing the grant agreement, an organizational assessment will be conducted to collaboratively review your organization's policies, code of conduct, and mechanisms for addressing misconduct. This assessment will consider the organization's size and the grant amount, and it will help identify any potential capacity development needs related to misconduct prevention and response.

Organizations receiving funding from the **Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism** are required to report any allegations of misconduct related to the overall **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective** programme or its grantees to the Programme Manager. All reports will be thoroughly investigated and, if substantiated, addressed within a reasonable timeframe, following Restless Development's policies.

If the concern involves a **Youth Voices Third-Party-Funding Mechanism** grantee, the respective Restless Development Programme Manager will oversee the investigation and resolution according to their established procedures. All reported cases and actions taken will be shared with Oxfam, the lead contract-holder with the donor.

In cases where a complaint cannot be handled by the respective partner organization or if it is unwilling to address the matter, Oxfam, as the lead agency, will take responsibility for managing the process. All partner organizations are committed to handling complaints with a survivor-centered approach, ensuring the survivor's wishes, safety, and well-being are prioritized at every stage while maintaining respect for due process.

If your concern relates to the functioning/inappropriate action of any member of the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective**, the programme's Consortium Manager will coordinate the investigation, following Oxfam's relevant policies and processes.

If the concern is directly related to the behaviors of the Consortium Manager, it

will go to the **AU-EU Youth Voices Lab – Power of the Collective** Steering Committee.