



# Annual Report

2023 - 2024



**DIVERSE YOUTH NI**

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# OVERVIEW

This past year, Diverse Youth NI has reached incredible milestones in advancing our vision for a more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming Northern Ireland. Our growth reflects the dedication of everyone involved in empowering BAME young people and promoting equality across communities.

We have expanded our programs to support more young people with resources, opportunities, and safe spaces to thrive. Strengthening connections with schools, community organisations, and stakeholders has allowed us to celebrate diversity and foster inclusion.

A key highlight has been the creation of leadership opportunities for BAME youth, enabling them to play an active role in shaping decisions that impact their lives and communities. By equipping young people with tools for advocacy and self-expression, we are empowering the next generation of leaders to champion diversity and inclusion.

None of this would be possible without our funders, whose generosity drives our growth and innovation, and the community leaders who amplify our message. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, staff, and especially the young people we serve, whose energy and resilience inspire us every day.

As we reflect on this year's achievements, we reaffirm our commitment to advocating for BAME youth and ensuring their voices are heard. Together, we will keep building a brighter, more inclusive future.

Sincerely  
Israel Eguaogie  
Chairperson



## Other Diverse Youth NI Management Committee

- Mr Augustine Egiomo
- Mr Valentine Ekwueme
- Mr Ayodeji Aboyade
- Mr Israel Eguaogie
- Mr Michael Adeyeye
- Mr Victory Agbontaen
- Mr Shuaib Jeetun
- Ms Kowther Osman
- Ms Funmilayo Bliss Tolani



# Vision & Mission

## Mission

Our Mission focuses on creating an inclusive environment where BAME youth not only thrive but also celebrate their cultural heritage, with commitment to core skill enhancement, confidence building, and active pursuit of equality, while actively challenging discrimination.

## Vision

“Our Vision is to ignite and equip the next generation of BAME leaders while fostering social cohesion, respect, and mutual understanding among all communities in Northern Ireland.”



# Projects Highlight

## In 2023-2024

**Funded by The National Lottery  
Community Fund: £58,070  
Young People Learn, Integrate,  
and Thrive**



Since its launch in August 2022, the Young People Learn, Integrate, and Thrive project, funded by the Big Lottery, has focused on creating spaces where young people can flourish. This initiative has allowed us to employ a part-time staff member, secure essential resources for activities, and support our invaluable volunteers by covering their expenses.

The project reached its conclusion in August 2024, having enriched the lives of many young people through structured activities and providing them with a supportive hub for personal growth.



# Highlights In 2023-2024



## **Education Authority Grant: £1,500 Nurturing Skills and Empowering Youth**

With a generous £1,500 grant from the Education Authority, our youth engaged in a range of skill-building workshops. From cake-making and creative writing to leadership and mentoring, participants acquired both practical and interpersonal skills, preparing them to be proactive, well-rounded individuals.

## **The Executive Office (TEO) Focus Groups: £2,575.65 for a Platform for Youth Voices**

Along with Queen's University, Diverse Youth NI facilitated Good Relations focus groups sponsored by The Executive Office (TEO). These sessions offered young people, divided into age-specific groups, a platform to express their perspectives on building harmonious communities. Members of Diverse Youth NI travelled to Downpatrick for a joint gathering with Youth Initiative members, fostering cross-community relationships and dialogue around respect and community cohesion.



# Highlights In 2023-2024



## Fully Unfiltered Podcast: A Space for Authentic Voices by Warner Music: £3,916.19

Starting in early 2024, the "Fully Unfiltered" podcast project has become a vibrant platform showcasing the diverse voices of Northern Ireland's BAME communities. Generously funded by Warner Music as part of a youth culture and identity initiative, the podcast has delved into topics such as makeup artistry, sustainability, and mental health. Despite challenges, it has successfully amplified authentic perspectives from young people. Looking ahead, the project aims to broaden its scope to explore new and engaging themes, continuing its mission to empower and connect its audience.

## Queens University Young Storytellers: £814 Queens University Welcoming New Communities: £1,000

Diverse Youth NI hosted a youth-led podcast, Young Black History Tellers, generously supported by Queens University.

Diverse Youth NI also celebrated cultural diversity themed - Welcoming New Communities which the Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded through Queens University Belfast.



# Highlights In 2023-2024

**Funded by Belfast City Council: £4,595.75  
For Newcastle Residential 2023**

The Belfast City Council has supported initiatives aimed at nurturing community involvement and development. The Good Relations Residential facilitated a transformative two-day program in Newcastle, providing young people with the opportunity to engage, learn from one another, and spend time away from home in a supportive environment. By fostering dialogue and understanding, the program helped participants build connections, develop valuable interpersonal skills, and gain a deeper appreciation for diversity within their community. This initiative highlights the Council's commitment to empowering young people and promoting social cohesion.



## Collaboration with Opera House - Setting the 'Stage' for BAME young people

Collaboration of Diverse Youth NI partnered with the Opera House Belfast to provide young people with firsthand stage, opera, and theatre experiences. Through immersive workshops and professional performance environments, the initiative aimed to build confidence, nurture creative skills, and celebrate diverse talents, offering a supportive space to explore their potential in the arts.



# Highlights In 2023-2024

**Funded by Raspberry Pi Foundation: £1,500  
Empowering Young Minds through  
Coding: Scratch Programming at Diverse  
Youth NI (Coolest Project Bursary)**

Diverse Youth NI hosted Saturday activities for young people from BAME and diverse backgrounds, including art, crafting, and coding. Scratch programming sessions, led by Inioluwa, introduce 7-12 year-olds to coding, with recent workshops teaching basics and interactive storytelling projects. Participants reported boosted confidence and creativity, with plans to explore advanced digital skills in future sessions.



## BAME Youth Leadership in Politics Training: Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders

The "Leadership in Politics" program, funded by the Education Authority, empowered 17 BAME youth to develop skills in public speaking, negotiation, and policy advocacy. Through workshops, discussions, City Hall tour and Stormont tour, under the mentorship of notable political leaders like Councilor Paul Doherty and Kate Nicholl MLA, participants gained political insights and were inspired to pursue leadership roles, emphasizing the need for diverse representation in Belfast's politics.



# Highlights

## In 2023-2024



### Hi-M8 BAME Youth Mental Health Campaign - End of Project Celebratory Event

The Hi-M8 BAME Youth Mental Health Campaign - End of Project Celebratory Event on 4th May 2024 at Shaftesbury Community Centre was a powerful gathering, bringing together a large number of BAME young people to share their voices and perspectives on mental health. BBC Children in Need representatives joined the celebration, recognising and applauding the incredible achievements of young mental health champions who led the campaign. The event also transformed into a vibrant cultural canvas, with participants enjoying a rich array of foods from around the world, reflecting the diversity and unity of the community.

### Hi-M8 BAME Youth Mental Health Awareness Project - Funded by BBC Children in Need - £50,000

The Hi-M8 BAME Youth Mental Health Awareness Project has made strides in advocating for mental health within BAME communities, featuring a documentary, a transformative Gala night of cultural celebration, multiple political endorsements, and a residential event.. The project raised awareness, dismantled stigma, and empowered youth through initiatives like the Hi M8 campaign booklet. Plans are underway to continue advocating for mental health equity in BAME communities. Since the project started before FY 2023-24 - a part of the fund - £22,500 was paid during this FY.



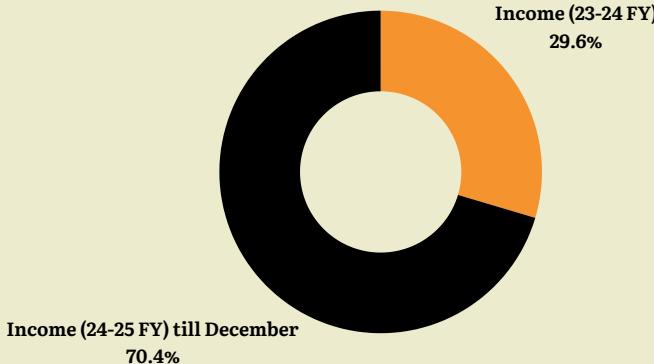
# Performance Review 2023 – 2024



The year 2023-2024 has been a landmark period for Diverse Youth NI, showcasing substantial growth, strategic development, and impactful community involvement. Diverse Youth NI successfully participated in several projects, with a commendable number of projects still ongoing. These initiatives have spanned various community-focused areas, emphasizing inclusivity, education, and youth empowerment. The sustained momentum in project delivery demonstrates the organisation's ability to manage multiple programs effectively while ensuring quality outcomes.

One of the most notable achievements during this period is the significant growth in our organisational structure:

- We expanded from one part-time staff member supported by a small group of volunteers to a dynamic team of four staff members and more than ten volunteers.
- This growth has directly improved our operational capacity, allowing us to engage with more beneficiaries and strengthen our programs.



Our emphasis on fundraising campaigns has been a pivotal factor in driving this transformation. These efforts not only ensured financial sustainability but also bolstered community trust and stakeholder confidence in our mission. The success of these campaigns reflects the dedication and creativity of our team and supporters, laying a solid foundation for future development. As we continue into the next year, Diverse Youth NI remains committed to building on these achievements. Our ongoing projects provide a platform for deepening our impact, while our strengthened team and resources position us to explore new opportunities and expand our reach.

# Performance Review 2023 – 2024



Net Income Between  
1/4/2023 and 31/3/2024

**£83,210.76**



Net Expense Between  
1/4/2023 and 31/3/2024

**£97,052.49**



Deficit for the Financial  
Year

**£13,841.73**



Fundraising Target  
for 2024-2025

**£250,000**



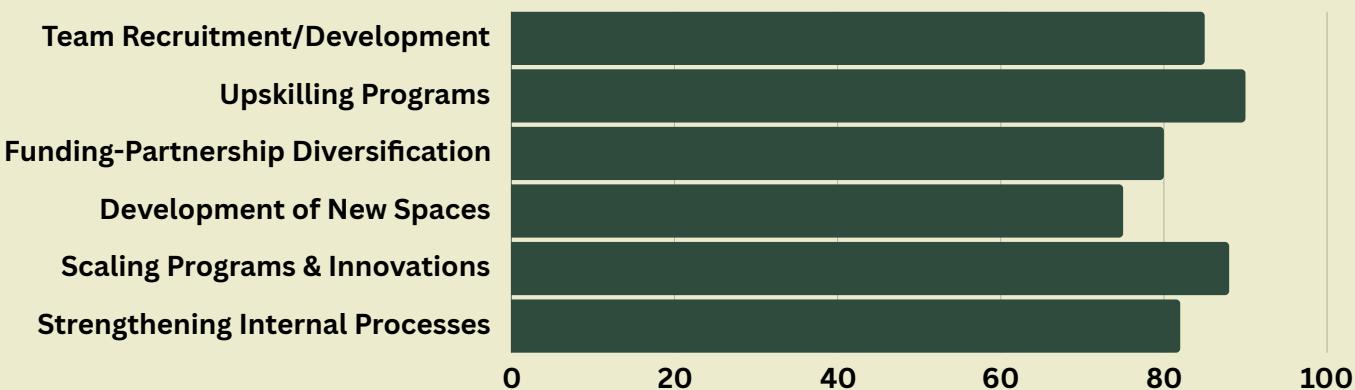
Fundraising Income  
for 2024-25 (so far)

**£197,910.75**

# Projections for 2025



As we approach 2025, Diverse Youth NI is focused on expanding our team of staff and volunteers, ensuring they have the capacity and skills to meet the growing needs of young people. Through targeted upskilling and new partnerships, we aim to enhance our service delivery while developing new spaces and resources to create a more inclusive and accessible environment. Our commitment to strengthening staff capacity and diversifying resources positions us well to support an increasing number of youth in the years ahead.



- Looking ahead to 2025, we're aligning volunteer recruitment and upskilling efforts with the growing needs of our youth, enhancing service quality, empowering our team, and strengthening community ties for long-term impact and retention.
- We are actively working to diversify our funding sources and improve our project proposal strike rates, setting ambitious goals for 2025 to secure the resources needed to innovate and scale our programs in response to the increased demand.
- By strengthening our internal processes and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, Diverse Youth NI will be in an excellent position to adapt to the needs of young people and support them with the services, mentorship, and resources they require to thrive.
- Drawing from the previous AGM, Diverse Youth NI had projected to secure £250,000 from fund raisings for various projects. However, Diverse Youth NI was able to secure only £83,210.76. Coming into the financial year 2024-25, we have again set the target of securing £250,000 from fundraising.

# Current Initiatives

## Youth Empowerment Leadership Programme

Funded by: Coca-Cola/Irish Foundation

Amount Awarded: £12,000

Diverse Youth NI is also proud to introduce the Youth Empowerment Leadership Program (YELP) 2024, which has seen the creation of a cohort of nine young champions, each specializing in different focus areas including technology and innovation, culture and community, climate action, and organisational management. This groundbreaking scheme, sponsored by Coca Cola, is shaping a new generation of youth leaders equipped to make a significant impact in their chosen fields.

## Youth Climate Action

Funded by: Energy Saving Trust

Amount Awarded: £40,000

One of the ongoing standout projects has been the youth climate action program, funded by the Energy Savings Trust, which has provided young people from BAME communities in Belfast with the knowledge and skills to become climate champions. This initiative has inspired the next generation of environmental leaders by equipping them with the tools to advocate for climate action in their communities.

## Bridging Literacy Gap

This is an educational enhancement plus programme.

Funded by: JJ Charitable Trust

Amount Awarded: £15,000

Our Education Enhancement Plus Program, generously funded by the JJ Charitable Trust, has been running every Saturday, offering underprivileged youth vital after-school support. The program exposes participants to core subjects such as biology, chemistry, and physics, sparking curiosity and inspiring future doctors, engineers, scientists, astronauts, and more.

# Current Initiatives

## Educational Institutions Collaboration

### **Ulster University Belfast**

Diverse Youth NI has forged a transformative partnership with Ulster University to empower BAME communities in Northern Ireland, driving social inclusion and economic opportunity. This collaboration has achieved remarkable success through the completion of two ICT training cohorts, utilising the University's state-of-the-art infrastructure and resources. By equipping underprivileged BAME individuals with essential computer and technology literacy, the program has provided vital employability skills, creating pathways to brighter futures

### **Queen's University Belfast**

Diverse Youth NI has been actively collaborating with Queen's University Belfast to create inclusive spaces and promote diversity through impactful events such as the "Bridging the Gap" panel and storytelling sessions. This partnership has played a pivotal role in fostering a culture of belonging, contributing significantly to Queen's University Belfast's recognition as a University of Sanctuary. By amplifying Black and Ethnic Minority voices and facilitating intergenerational dialogue, Diverse Youth NI continues to be instrumental in driving meaningful change within the university and beyond.

### **Maynooth University Ireland**

The partnership between Diverse Youth NI and Maynooth University reframes the challenges faced by migrants in Northern Ireland as part of a broader 'shared Ireland' phenomenon, emphasizing their relevance across the island. Maynooth University has been instrumental in facilitating the establishment of Diverse Youth Ireland, helping them expand their impact onto the larger canvas of Europe and the globe. Together, they have elevated the voices of BAME migrants by bringing Diverse Youth's work to academic platforms and global stages in Brussels and Istanbul, championing migrant rights across the UK and Europe.

# Activities So Far In 2024-25



- **Crosslinks 24/25:** Fostering Empowerment and Community for Youth.
- **Strive Peace Plus:** Promoting Youth-Driven Peace and Understanding in partnership with Youth Initiatives.
- **Express Yourself Project:** Empowering BAME Youth Through Skill Development and Creativity.
- **Unity Through Diversity:** Empowering BAME Youth and Strengthening Community Bonds.

- **"What Does Home Mean to You?":** Celebrating Cultural Heritage.
- **Art for Change:** Advocating Through Creativity.
- **North Star Production:** Showcasing Poetic Talent on Stage.
- **Visit to Stormont:** A Step Towards Advocacy.
- **Little Green Thumbs:** Empowering Youth to Reimagine Environmental Stewardship.
- **Summer of Creativity and Adventure:** Pickey Fun Park, Jungle NI, Belfast Activity Centre trips funded by Radius Housing Project.



# OUR FUNDERS FOR 2023-24



**HSBC**



**COMMUNITY  
FUND**



**WARNER  
MUSIC  
GROUP**



**Coca-Cola HBC  
Ireland & Northern Ireland**



**Raspberry Pi**



**Belfast  
City Council**

**Centra**  
LIVE EVERY DAY

**phf** Paul Hamlyn  
Foundation

Supported by  
**BBC**  
**Children  
in Need**

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& Wales no. 802052 and Scotland  
no. SC039557

# OUR PARTNERS FOR 2023-24



*YouthAction*  
NORTHERN IRELAND



**Maynooth  
University**  
National University  
of Ireland Maynooth



**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**



iAssist-Ni



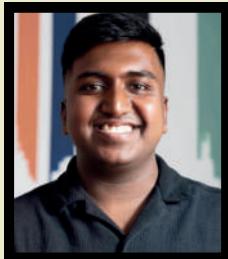
**POLICE  
SERVICENI**



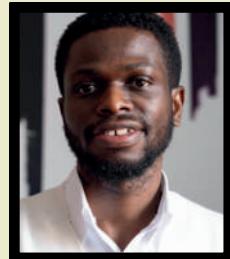
# Meet The Team



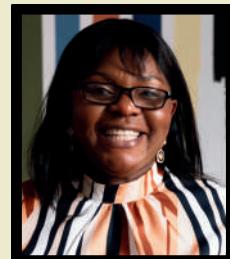
**Tiwalade Olatunbosun**  
Volunteer



**Abhinov Shyju**  
Policy & Civic Engagement Officer  
Youth Support Worker



**Dr. Prince Okorie**  
Operations Manager



**Alexis Ifenyinwa Ekwueme**  
Office Manager  
Senior Youth Worker



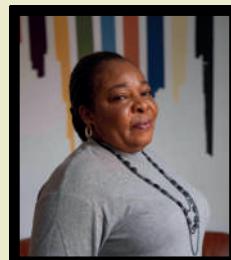
**Funmi Bliss Tolani**  
Volunteer



**Omotoyosi Ogunlende**  
Arts Coordinator/Youth Support Worker



**Israel Eguaogie**  
CEO & Chairperson



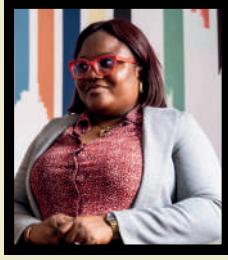
**Maureen Nwosu**  
Volunteer



**Abudurazak Victor Ilegar**  
Media Coordinator/Youth Support Worker



**Inioluwa Olaosebikan**  
Youth Support Worker



**Abiola Akano**  
Volunteer



**Oluwaseyi Oluwalana**  
Volunteer



**Kowther Osman**  
Integration Support Worker



**Derek E. Egioze**  
Lead Project Coordinator/ Youth Support Worker





At Diverse Youth NI, we are dedicated to empowering young people from all backgrounds, fostering inclusion, and creating opportunities for leadership and growth.

Join us as we build a brighter, more inclusive future together...!!

Stay Connected with Us:

 **Facebook:** Diverse Youths

 **LinkedIn:** Diverse Youth NI

 **Instagram:** @diverseyouthni

 **(formerly Twitter):** @DiverseNI

 **Email us:** info@diverseyouthni.com

 **Visit our website:** <https://diverseyouthni.com/>



**Together, we inspire, connect, and create lasting change.**

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