

Impact Report

2022

2023



Cover photo by Superdry: Fabrics of Colour photo shoot 2023

NOWANS
COMMUNITY TRUST



Photo by Daniel Folley : Community End of Year event 2023

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Introduction

Nowans Community Trust was founded in 2010 and works to but not exclusively with orphans, young people, Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities, and marginalised communities in the UK, and in Kenya, in ways that strengthen both, culturally, socio-economically and through education.

Over the past nine years, our organisation has dedicated its efforts to developing and refining our UK program. Consequently, our work in Kenya has been temporarily paused during this period. To ensure effective implementation and sustainability, we made the decision to prioritize outlining of a clear strategy for our initiative in Kenya before pursuing international projects. We firmly believe that this approach will ensure long-term sustainability for our work in Kenya, and we eagerly anticipate resuming our efforts and making a positive impact in the local community soon.

After our founder successfully led the African Community Foundation Gloucestershire organisation, from there was the recognition of the importance of amplifying communities voices and promoting inclusivity in the UK. Lives of Colour consultancy was then established with the aim of collaborating with businesses and statutory agencies to promote and champion diversity and educate organisations on the importance of diversity and inclusion. The consultancy and brand plays a vital role in promoting, contributing to and supporting our charitable work. Additionally, our community initiatives are dedicated to elevating the voices of ethnically and culturally diverse communities through education, events and training with a focus on creating equitable futures in Gloucestershire and beyond.

Our vision is to 'create a world of curiosity that allows everyone to learn, celebrate and embrace our differences'.



Photo: Elephant in the Masai Mara, Kenya

Since then, we have witnessed a remarkable evolution in our work. We have been on an incredible journey of growth and progress. We believe that every journey, be it a personal one or one undertaken by an organisation or project, consists of three distinct phases; the beginning, the middle, and the take off point. Throughout this there will be encounters with various individuals, organizations, and ideas. Lives of Colour has also experienced these stages and is now prepared 'for take-off'.

In the beginning, we laid the foundation and set our intentions through our I-MMGRATE exhibition. We gathered ideas and formed a vision of the barriers faced by our communities and how best to overcome them. This was a crucial stage where clarity and purpose were established. As we progressed, we encountered obstacles and challenges, often referred to as the "muffler" or middle phase. It is during this stage that perseverance and resilience are tested. It has been our moto to stay focused on goals and maintain belief in our abilities to serve our communities.

Finally, the take-off phase represents the culmination of the teams effort. It is the moment when hard work and dedication pay off, and we witness the realisation of our vision. This phase is the growth expansion and the achievement of milestones. Our growth and achievements over the last couple of years through community projects, partnerships and governance has been instrumental to this.

It is because of your efforts that we are here and are able to take note of this moment. We want to thank you for this. We welcome 2024 and are ready for the opportunities to work with you through our array of themes and projects.



Message from our Founder: Florence Nyasamo-Thomas



Photo by Grazia : Swimmers of Colour 2023

Our Story So Far

Our Mission

Lives of Colour was founded as a consultancy, and in 2018 the community initiative and brand aspect was introduced to further support our UK community-based program under Nowans Community Trust. Our mission is to elevate the voices of ethnically and culturally diverse communities through education, events, and training with a focus on creating equitable futures in Gloucestershire and beyond. Since our inception we have fostered collaborations and co-produced impactful work with individuals, community groups, global businesses, and statutory agencies.

Our projects have encompassed a wide range of areas, including

- Advice and guidance
- Health and wellbeing
- Community voices
- Community engagement, and
- Racial justice and systemic change

These areas inform our strategy and the specific areas of our work, locally within the five themes. These collaborations have not only provided us with valuable insights but have also allowed us to employ a multifaceted approach to driving positive change.

We curated the I-MMIGRATE exhibition, which aimed to provide communities with a platform to amplify their voices and experiences. Building on that success, we co-hosted the BLM vigil that saw over 5000 in attendance during 2020, in Cheltenham as part of the global movement for change after the death of George Floyd in the US.

We then hosted our '#Real Change' campaign featured by BBC Points West which led to the Cheltenham Change Conference in November 2020 and as we transitioned into 2021/2022, amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic, we recognised the importance of innovation for survival. In response we embarked on a diverse range of projects that specifically served the needs of ethnically and culturally diverse communities in Gloucestershire, in a way that has never been done before, ensuring inclusivity, and providing something for everyone.

**These projects including
Culture Fest, Cheltenham
Alliance for Race Equity,
Fabrics of Colour, Swimmers
of Colour, Podcast Network,
Young Leading and Black**

Our Goals

Through these projects we have had the privilege of working alongside global businesses, statutory agencies in a close collaboration with communities. The projects have provided us with a unique opportunity to identify and address the barriers faced by ethnically and culturally diverse communities in rural areas in the UK. Within the last couple of years we have reached over 3000 residents within Gloucestershire.

Our ultimate goal is to have the capacity and resources to reach 100,000 residents in Gloucestershire by 2028. We are driven by a deep commitment to serve the diverse needs of every individual, business, and organisation within our communities. Our comprehensive range of projects and initiatives are designed to address the specific requirements of each person at various stages of their lives. Whether its by providing support and opportunities for individuals, offering valuable resources and training for businesses, or collaborating with other organisations, we strive to be a reliable and inclusive entity.



Photo by Daniel Folley: Governance Team

We have had the privilege of gaining a deep understanding of the concept of co-production, including positive aspects, challenges, and potential pitfalls. We have witnessed first-hand the power of consulting and actively listening to our organisation's needs but also the needs of the community we serve. We strongly believe that effective co-production involves engaging stakeholders from all levels right at the beginning of each project, regardless of the size of the organisation. It requires being open to change and the ability to adapt one's plan to overcome challenges as they arise.

In practice, this means actively seeking input and collaboration from community members, acknowledging their expertise, and valuing their perspectives. E.g. *'We need a large area to work and a safe space to build a community for everyone involved on the Fabrics of Colour project'* this was feedback from the focus group who were part of the trial to scope out space for our Fabrics of Colour project. It has enabled us to take note of the tremendous impact that comes from harnessing the collective wisdom of diverse voices and incorporating their insights into our decision-making processes.

This has enabled us to acquire essential learning tools and have made significant strides in advocating for equity and social justice through our programs. We are committed to continuously improving our co-production practices, ensuring that power dynamics are addressed, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone's voice is heard and valued. By doing so, we can foster meaningful change and work towards building stronger, more equitable communities.

Our 2022/23 Strategy

Our strategy has always been to use a multifaceted approach for change, community empowerment and development by bringing together businesses, statutory agencies and individuals within the community working alongside one another.

These have led to our organisation growth through:

- **Collaboration is key:** By working with individuals, community groups, businesses, and statutory agencies has been instrumental in helping us drive positive change. Collaboration efforts have allowed us to leverage diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise, resulting in more impactful outcomes. Example: Fabrics of Colour project with Superdry.
- **Co-production an essential element:** In our journey, we have recognised the importance of co-production, which involves actively involving community members in the decision-making process. By valuing their input and incorporating their voices, we can create initiatives that truly meet the needs of diverse communities. This is seen throughout our Swimmers of Colour project.
- **Addressing barriers:** Our projects have shed a light on the specific challenges faced by ethnically and culturally diverse communities in rural areas. This understanding has enabled us to design targeted interventions and support systems to combat challenges and barriers faced by our communities. We have set up our racial, social justice and system change program, the Cheltenham Alliance for Race Equity to support statutory agencies for systemic change, using our ten-point Action Plan to address some of these issues. We have learned that building resilience within our communities and implementing innovative approaches are crucial in combating racial and social injustice.
- **Continuous learning and Improvements:** We acknowledge as an organisation that learning is an ongoing process. We continually evaluate our approaches, adapt to new challenges, and seek opportunities for growth. Feedback from our community and focus groups is very much appreciated and continue to enrich our learning. This commitment to learning allows us to refine our strategies and increase our impact over time.
- **Advocacy for equity and social justice:** Our experiences have reinforced our dedication to advocating for equity, equality, and social justice in all aspects of our work. We firmly believe that everyone deserves equal access to opportunities and rights, and we will continue to be a strong voice for positive change. Through our partnership with University House London, we can support our communities with legal advice on Family Law, Housing, Employment and Welfare Benefit.



Photo: Fabrics of Colour workshop 2023

Some of our projects

Projects	Details	Outcome
Culture Fest 22/23	Community engagement celebrating the world of music, art, dance, food & fashion.	Has culminated to two annual events with 1000's of people attending bringing communities from different backgrounds together for a celebration of diverse cultures.
Cheltenham Alliance for Race Equity 22/23	Racial and social justice for systemic change to addressing some of the barriers faced with communities within statutory agencies.	Professionals and communities have come together to work towards systemic change within statutory agencies and institutions.
Fabrics of Colour 22/23	Health and wellbeing project bringing women together to celebrate heritage through fashion and African print.	Handmade garments with women learning tailoring and design skills. Exposure through Superdry LinkedIn social media for International Women's Day, Photoshoot and Runway video by Superdry.
Podcast Network 22/23	Conversations & exploration of experiences & issues facing black community through I-MMIGRATE & Mangrove.	We have had teachers, community professionals reaching out to share their perspectives with a wider reach on social media
Swimmers of Colour 22/23	'On the move' keeping women active through exercise and learning to swim.	We have seen 10 women be water confident, 30 on the waiting list and community as far as Birmingham and Coventry reaching out wanting to join our classes.

Achievements

Over the last few years, our organisation has achieved remarkable success in despite its size. We have experienced significant growth in the numbers of volunteers, trustees, fundraising efforts, and outreach. However, due to the increasing demand for our services, there is now an urgent need to expand our capacity in order to effectively deliver our programs. These achievements we have attained so far can be attributed to our resourcefulness and creativity, agility and adaptability, and our organisations commitment to a community-centred approach. Additionally, our collaborations and partnerships have played a crucial role in our accomplishments.

Resourcefulness and creativity:

Despite our relatively small size and limited resources compared to larger entities, we have achieved remarkable results. This has been possible through our resourcefulness and creativity, as we constantly think outside the box and find innovative solutions to challenges. Our dedicated team of volunteers and sessional workers have played a crucial role in ensuring the success of our projects. Additionally, our fundraising efforts have been highly successful, with doubling our annual income from £27,000 to £63,000. This increased funding has enabled us to deliver 12 impactful projects, positively affecting the lives of many individuals within our Gloucestershire communities.



Photo by Daniel Folley: GE Aviation Stand at Culture Fest 2023

Agility and adaptability:

We can be more agile compared to larger institutions and businesses we work alongside, due to the size of our organisation. This means decisions can be made quickly that enable us to respond to changing needs and circumstances, adjusting our strategies, and taking advantage of emerging opportunities. It has meant to adapt our approaches as we continue to navigate our journey and finding best ways to deliver our community events, example, our Podcast Network.

Community-centred approach:

Our strong connection to the communities we serve means that we understand their specific needs, aspirations, and the challenges of our audience. It means that we can tailor our projects and programs to meet these needs for example: 'Let's Speak on It' event. Community engagements and our community voices projects ensure that our work directly aligns with the needs and aspirations of ethnically and culturally diverse communities and that we continue to empower and serve them.

June 2023

Culture Fest 25 volunteers join us from Spirax Sarco, building our capacity on the day.

Achievements

Collaboration and partnership:

The size of our organisation has given us the flexibility to leverage collaborations and partnership to amplify our impact. We recognise the power of collective efforts and as such seek opportunities to work with likeminded businesses and organisations to expand our reach, access to additional resources and create synergetic outcomes. Our community engagement event Culture Fest is supported and sponsored by Spirax Sarco, their volunteers increased our capacity to deliver this event enormously resulting in a smooth and enjoyable outcome.

Celebrating milestones and successes:

This year we have achieved significant milestones that deserve celebration. These milestones include partnering with corporate businesses, organising a successful Trustee Away Day, receiving an invitation for our founder to No. 10 Downing Street, being awarded the Points of Light Award No. 2158, hosting a memorable Community End of Year celebration, showcasing the Fabrics of Colour runway, and achieving success with our Swimmers of Colour project. These achievements have not only inspired many but also boosted the morale of our dedicated volunteers. Additionally, they have attracted support and recognition from various stakeholders.



Photo by Daniel Folley : Spirax Sarco volunteers at Culture Fest 2023

October 2023

Celebrating the recognition through Points of Light Award no. 2,158 in the UK, awarded to Lives of Colour by the Prime Ministers office for the impact within our community over ten years.

Acknowledgements

We are deeply aware that our growth and achievements would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our communities, partnership organisations, dedicated team, and trustees. In addition, I would like to extend a special mention to one of my mentors, Helen Lovatt. It was an absolute pleasure spending time with her and learning from her guidance. I would also, like to express my gratitude to all the friends of Lives of Colour who have supported us throughout our journey, While they might not be mentioned individually, their contribution have been invaluable and instrumental towards our success.

On behalf of our team, we want to thank our sponsors and partnership organisations, to mention a few;

- Spirax Sarco for the continued support and empowering us to host Culture Fest.
- Superdry for the runway, photo shoot experience, and space for our Fabric of Colour project.
- Cheltenham Borough Council Engagement team for always being there for us and Cllr. Flo Clucas for her contribution, support and commitment towards the formation of the Cheltenham Alliance for Race Equity.
- Cheltenham Literature Festival for our Conversations of Colour videos, with guest authors.
- Highnam Court for welcoming us and hosting our Trustees Away Day and stakeholders event.
- GCHQ for exhibiting our I-MMIGRATE exhibition for two consecutive years 2021 and 2022.
- Shurdington Cof E Primary School and Pittville School for Exhibiting the I-MMIGRATE exhibition.
- John Lewis and Partners, Cheltenham for sponsoring our Community End of Year event 2023.

I also want to thank our Youth Advisory Board Member Lydia Heywood and Taylor Watson for their continued support, our volunteers especially Jordan Hailwood for hosting our Mangrove podcast and for the work with Foss Creatives for producing our podcasts.

Dr Rachelle Haynes for taking on the mantle of MC at Culture Fest since its inception two years ago.

Mary Mackie for hosting our community End of Year community event for two years consecutively and the encouragement given to the women's group.

To our interim (chair) Dr Lauren Denkins, Sarah Pickering for keeping everyone informed about our activities through our monthly newsletter 'A Burst of Colour' and to our Trustees and friends for their support and encouragement.

The Jollygood design for our logos and publicity materials. Daniel Folley our photographer and Emerald Motion Media for the Highnam Court event video. Evenlode Films for the Cyber & Apprentice and Swimmers of Colour videos. Ramy Mousa (YourVisionOurPassion) Media, for being there and capturing those moments at the Cheltenham Literature Festival and other events for over five years.

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Photo: Young Leading & Black Summer Pilot 2022

Spirax-Sarco Engineering plc



JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS



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We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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