

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



REIMAGINING THE WORLD

FOR WOMEN OF COLOUR

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LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS



As we reflect on 2024, we're filled with immense pride and gratitude for the journey GirlDreamer has taken this year. From nurturing bold ideas to creating tangible impact, this has been a year of reflection, innovation, and resilience.



For me, seeing our community expand globally has been a deeply moving experience. From scaling our Dream Fund to onboarding new leaders in the sector, every milestone reminds me why we began this journey—to create an ecosystem where women of colour thrive unapologetically. This year, I've been inspired by the way our collective work has fostered a renewed sense of agency and power among the women we support.
— Kiran.





This year has been about truly listening and learning what it means to share leadership. Watching GirlDreamer grow and adapt alongside our community has been such a grounding experience. From working together to shape our initiatives to meeting changemakers around the world, I've realised more than ever that the best ideas come when we stop assuming what's needed and start asking. Hearing the stories of strength and resilience from the women we support has been a powerful reminder that representation and opportunity only mean something if they're created with the people they're for.
— Amna.



Together, we celebrate every person, partner, and funder that has contributed to making GirlDreamer a driving force for change. As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to building a future where women of colour are at the forefront of innovation, leadership, and impact.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for dreaming with us.

With gratitude and hope,

Kiran & Amna
Co-Founders, GirlDreamer

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



80%

of GirlDreamers improved their ability to apply for additional funding



£54.8K

Distributed via the Dream Fund and Community Collaborations



4,400+

People directly and indirectly impacted by



82%

of GirlDreamers across all programmes and events reported an increase in confidence in their abilities as a leader



56%

of Dream Fund grantees securing additional funding within

6 MONTHS



340

Attendees across

17

Community Collaboration and GirlDreamer events



4.7*
5

Average rating for the improved ability and capacity of GirlDreamers to support their community after being on a GirlDreamer programme



105

Opportunities submitted by

83

different organisations, shared on our Opps page, with 1,700+ page visits



15.5K

combined social media following



GirlDreamer ADVISORY BOARD

Comprised of thirteen women of colour from across the UK, the GirlDreamer Advisory Board supports GirlDreamer to navigate towards social relevance, progressiveness and genuine authenticity. Meeting quarterly, the Advisory Board check, challenge and propel GirlDreamer's plans, projects and direction. Work they have advised on includes the Dream Fund, the UK Women of Colour Census, the Dream State App, initiatives and events (such as 'Pitch Your Collab'), and generally adapting to the evolving needs of the community.

With their deep insights into GirlDreamer's work, community and the broader global context, the Advisory Board are invaluable in championing GirlDreamer's mission.



Roshni Natali (Chair)
Corporate Communications Professional



Chloe Lewis
Strategic Adviser at Office for Students



Rabia Mirza
Freelance Consultant



Mariam Ali
Data Analyst at Nest



Priyanka Roychoudhury
Quantitative Insights Lead at Gamble Aware



Abimbola Oladipo
Market Strategy at Stripe



Amber Shand
Software Engineer at Skyscanner



Aderonke Ademola
MA Criminology and Social Research



Kajol Desai
Sport & Social Impact Enthusiast



Jessie Auguste
Software Engineer



Zainab Al-Farabi
DEI Manager at Kinglsey Napley LLP



Shirin Shah
DEI Consultant and Co-founder of SASS



Alyaa Khalid
Executive, International Development



REFLECTION AND STRATEGY

This year has been one of reflection and recalibration at GirlDREAMER. As an organisation deeply rooted in the lived experiences of women of colour, we have felt the ripple effects of shifting social dynamics within our community and the sector at large. It has been a year of learning, adapting, and prioritising what matters most: real, tangible support for young women of colour navigating an ever-changing world.

One of the biggest shifts we have observed is in the behaviour and engagement of our community. Social changes that span identity, safety, and opportunities have greatly impacted how young women of colour show up and engage with organisations like ours. A collective drop in energy levels, exacerbated by external uncertainties, has made it clear that our community's needs are evolving, shaped by the challenges of today's world. Where once there was an abundance of hope and opportunism, we've observed a quieter, more cautious approach to pursuing dreams—a reflection of the broader climate of instability and precarity.

We've also noticed how the demands of the social sector with things like reporting, KPIs, and funding requirements, are moving further away from addressing the immediate, real-time needs of impacted communities. This widening gap has been a critical reflection point for us. Sitting at the intersection of these two worlds, as both advocates and women of colour ourselves, has highlighted a unique challenge: how do we ensure that the voices and needs of our community are not overshadowed by the administrative requirements of operating in this space?



It is this duality—of being part of the community we serve and working within the structures that support it—that gives us both clarity and responsibility. By Q3, we chose to lean into that responsibility by slowing things down. We have taken a step back to reflect, re-strategise, and ensure we are delivering impact in a way that truly aligns with the needs of our community today. This means adapting our programmes, shifting our focus to quality over quantity, and allowing time to listen deeply to what our community is telling us—beyond the metrics and reports.

We believe that slowing down is not a sign of stepping back but of stepping forward with intention. As we reimagine our role in the ecosystem, we remain committed to creating spaces of safety, authenticity, and growth for young women of colour, ensuring that our work is not only relevant but transformative.

This year has reminded us that while the world may change, our commitment to our community remains unwavering. We are excited to continue building a future where the dreams and aspirations of young women of colour are not just supported but celebrated.

Next year, our focus will be to centre the human experience in all that we do, balancing the demands of the sector with the needs of the people who inspire our mission.



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REFLECTION AND STRATEGY

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Photo Credit: GirlDreameer

IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Impact measurement is key to understanding the extent to which our programmes and initiatives are creating change. GirlDreamer has developed a framework to understand our key social impact goals and the metrics needed to measure progress against them.

Using the Theory of Change framework, GirlDreamer has identified seven core principles that underpin our social change work across all areas. These principles guide us to measure what really matters when investigating the impact that we have achieved.

GirlDreamer tracks impact by conducting post-intervention surveys and gathering feedback for each of the programmes and events that we hold. The questions we ask are guided by our core impact principles, with different programmes often targeting different impact goals. We also collect feedback on how to improve our programming and to better understand the needs of our community. These learnings will help to guide our decision making and programme schedule to ensure that GirlDreamer activities are beneficial to community members and reflect their changing needs and priorities, always. The feedback we gather also helps us to iterate and improve our measurement and data collection processes, enabling us to respond to changing demands and adapt our methodology to gain the most meaningful results.

The Seven Principles of Impact for GirlDreamers:

- 1 Awareness** - understanding of possibilities and opportunities that are available.
- 2 Context** - understanding the context of challenges you may face and learning how to better move through the world as a WoC.
- 3 Aspiration** - belief in your potential to achieve things beyond society's expectations.
- 4 Agency** - belief that you have the power to make decisions that shape your future.
- 5 Community** - connecting with likeminded people who share life experiences and can provide support.
- 6 Action** - implementing these learnings by taking tangible steps to achieve specific personal and professional goals.
- 7 Leadership** - taking ownership of your community and creating new networks and organisations to serve the underserved.



OUR IMPACT

DreamFund



“You have been an incredible support! The access to each of the guest speakers and their networks has been invaluable.”

The Dream Fund is a micro-funding initiative to support grassroots women of colour-led initiatives with small amounts of unrestricted funding to support their ventures. The Dream Fund supports organisations ranging from social businesses to community organisations, media projects and charities.

In 2024 we supported 23 organisations through the Dream Fund. We were able to increase our funding pots this year due to collaborations with the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe, as well as with BBC Children in Need through the We Move Fund. This year we further developed our holistic support offer by providing additional masterclasses and peer-to-peer learning sessions so that grantees could better connect and learn from each other.

Organisations funded this year worked in a wide range of fields including tech for good, social services, childcare, conscious fashion, feminine hygiene and therapeutic healing. 90% of grantees agreed that being part of the Dream Fund improved their ability and capacity to support their community. Dream Fund organisations directly impacted 492 people in 2024, with a further 3,831 people impacted indirectly.



£50K

Distributed to

23

Dream Fund organisations

56%

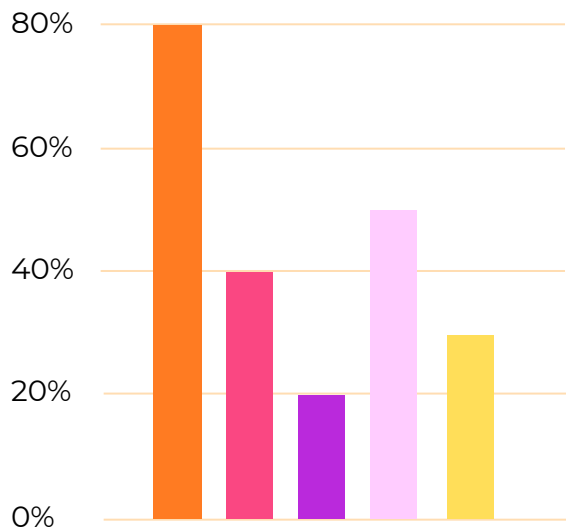
of grantees secured additional funding within 6 months of participating in the Dream Fund

522

People directly impacted by Dream Fund organisations, with a further 3,894 people impacted indirectly



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- 80% Pay for additional resources for my organisation
- 40% Create additional capacity for my organisation (human support)
- 20% Sustain my organisation for 6 months or more
- 50% Sustain my project for 6 months or more
- 30% Kickstart an idea

A lot of the funding was used to increase access to opportunities, through funding things like travel and expenses and through providing subsidies. Some organisations used the funding to further their digital footprint to improve their marketing, and others used it to facilitate in-person trainings, workshops, and networking events. This demonstrates the diverse need that exists in the GirlDreamer community, across a range of sectors and locations.

70% of GirlDreamers agreed that gaining this funding has increased their confidence in applying for additional funding, with 56% of organisations having secured additional funding within 6 months of participating in the Dream Fund, and a further 33% in the process of applying.



Gaining this funding has increased my confidence as a leader



Gaining this funding has improved my ability and capacity to support my community



Gaining this funding has increased my confidence in applying for additional funding



“The funds went toward development of a website - we have already had contacts through the website despite not actively promoting it yet. Having a professional website feels essential for any modern organisation so it's been incredibly important in terms of giving us a platform to start building from.”



“The funding has truly made a difference for our group. It has enabled us to develop our workshops and resources in ways we couldn't before... This allows us to create even better, more tailored, and impactful workshops that have the potential to engage participants even more. Overall, the funding has significantly increased our capacity and improved both the quality and impact of our work.”



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Events

A big part of our work at GirlDreameer is fostering a sense of community and connection. To this end we sometimes run our own local community events, however limited team capacity means that we are often unable to run as many events as we would like. Therefore, we took the decision to collaborate with members of our community to run their own events, providing them with sponsorship to help with implementation and promoting their events on our platforms.

We know that face-to-face interactions are rarer to come by and that they can often form the foundations for deeper connections. The decision to fund community events as well as managing our own has enabled us to multiply our impact, reaching more people, more regions and a wider range of topics than last year.

Overall, this partnership approach with our community has allowed us to further our mission of creating more psychologically safe spaces for young women of colour, and in the wake of a year of much social and political unrest - it was a welcomed and needed direction for GirlDreameer to take.



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LETTERS FROM FOUNDERS

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Photo Credit: Cardamom Community

01 GirlDreamer Events

At the beginning of the year, we ran an online vision boarding session. 15 people joined our workshop to learn how they could be the “goal getter” version of themselves. We led an immersive 90-minute session where GirlDreamers were encouraged and motivated to reimagine a life that felt inspiring to them. This included creating and intentionally designing a board that they could look at each day and remind themselves of the life they’re working towards.

In March, during the islamic month of Ramadan, we hosted our first ever GirlDreamer Iftar at our offices in Birmingham. An intimate group of 12, both Muslim and from other faiths, gathered to break fast and share an evening meal together. This event had been in the pipeline since the pandemic, and so we were delighted to have the opportunity to share an evening in faith, spirituality and good company. GirlDreamers left with new friends and new memories.

We also hosted a ‘Mafia’ games night for a group of GirlDreamer alumni who wanted to catch up with their friends in a fun and informal setting. The game of ‘Mafia’ was chosen after it had become a staple at GirlDreamer retreats, a surefire way to get the room laughing and create intimacy with new friends and old. The games night brought together 13 people in the historic setting of Somerset House on a Spring evening in London to gather, play, and connect over pizza. This type of social connection event is something that we will strive to do more of in 2025.

Whilst community connection opportunities and events are a popular ask amongst our community, we have sometimes found it challenging to keep up with the demand as a small team heavily focused on programming. Due to constraints around capacity, we hadn’t created as many opportunities for community events as we’d hoped, whilst simultaneously realising there were many requests via our Dream Fund for events specifically.

Therefore, we took the decision to partner with our community, as they had the capacity but lacked the resources and we faced the opposite problem, to tackle this head on. As a result, we created GirlDreamer Community Collaborations, where together we create more safe spaces for women of colour.



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02 Community Collaborators

In 2024 we ran our first ever Community Collaborations initiative, providing small pots of funding for local community events catering to women of colour across the country. GirlDreamer had a high level of interest for this opportunity, and so we carefully selected a curated list of events that represented different pockets of the GirlDreamer community.

The events ranged from film screenings to book clubs, live music showcases to craft workshops, mindfulness sessions to networking events. The common thread between these events was that each provided an opportunity that centred women of colour, sharing a space that prioritised psychological safety and community connection.



“100 percent of respondents to our post-event survey said they learned new skills or knowledge at the event. We also witnessed a lot of meaningful discussion and informal networking outside of structured activities, suggesting that people connected over shared values.”



“The sponsorship allowed me to pay emerging artists a union wage plus their expenses. It also meant that the ticket prices were lower than usual and this made it more accessible to attendees.”



16
Events funded across

5
Cities across the UK

90%
of grantees feel more optimistic and confident in their abilities as a leader after gaining this funding

315
People attended Community Collaboration events throughout the year

EVENTS

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The intention behind these Community Collaborations was twofold. Firstly, the purpose was to multiply the opportunities for women of colour in the GirlDreamer community and beyond to connect and benefit. Secondly, the intention was to support and platform the event organisers to further their work and enable them to provide more and better events in the future.

I feel more confident and optimistic in my abilities as a leader after gaining this funding



Gaining this funding has improved my ability and capacity to support my community



Gaining this funding has increased my confidence in applying for additional funding



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EVENTS

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Photo Credit: Black Girls Bookshelf

Here is some of the feedback some event attendees gave about their experiences at these various gatherings:

“

Thank you Tamera for putting together such a beautiful collection of films for the Cold Islanders film club. I feel inspired to write and create. I feel like my ancestors sailed from the Caribbean to be with me today to bring me warmth and comfort, to ease my sorrows of the weekends anti-immigrant riots. I'm glad my grandparents came here from Jamaica all those years ago. Now I'm here, and I'm ready to shake up babylon with my creativity. There's such complexity in our stories. I want to see more of it. I want to feel more of it. Someone get me a pen... - Attendee, Film Screening, Cold Islanders

“

Loved every part of the workshop! A very cute and wholesome evening with a bunch of girls who were all so welcoming. Thank you Anu for being such a lovely host! Will definitely be coming back ❤️
- Participant, Candle Making Workshop, Kera London.

“

I loved the choice of options and variety of workshops and talks that were happening at the event.
- Participant, Workshop, Ahista Stories

“

It was a great session to connect with others and I also came away tangible/ practical tips of how to reduce my overconsumption.
- Participant, Workshop, Ahista Stories



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OPPORTUNITIES

A key part of our work is bridging the gap between access and opportunity.

Our way of doing this is through our Opportunities service. Here, we advertise a range of opportunities including job opportunities, events, scholarships and trusteeships, as well as internal GirlDreamer programme opportunities.

In 2024 we shared 105 opportunities on our Opps page, securing partnerships with a range of organisations to help them to broaden their outreach. We partnered with 83 organisations including Trustees Unlimited, which shared a wide range of opportunities from their extensive partner network through our Opps service.

83 ORGS

105 OPPS

Trustees Unlimited



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Photo Credit: Kera London

FINANCES

This year, our Dream Fund took centre stage financially and we secured our first international fund.

Thanks to the Alliance for Gender Equality in Europe, we secured £120,000 to fund 40 more organisations via our Dream Fund and increase our capacity-building offer.

Our core funding also increased by 25% from the previous year, enabling us more stability as we increased our full-time team size by one.

We were also able to utilise 10% of surplus funds to create our Community Collaborations and begin sponsorship support at GirlDreamer.

2024 also meant we entered the final year of most of our core funders and have begun conversations of continuation funding or seeking new funds to continue our core operation costs over the next 3-5 years.

Overall, our financial position has remained strong with grants and sponsorships, with a view to increase our earned-income in 2025 and beyond through a new Head of Partnerships role being created.



£120,000

TO FUND

40

ORGANISATIONS

CORE FUNDING
INCREASED

25%

10%
OF SURPLUS FUNDS TO
CREATE OUR COMMUNITY
COLLABORATIONS

3-5

YEARS WITH NEW FUNDS

FINANCES

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LEARNINGS

2024 has been a strong year, as you can see from all the above. We've pivoted, re-directed and adapted as the year went on and tried our best to move with the constant changing times.

However, that didn't come without its challenges and we definitely found ourselves in tough moments throughout the year. Our approach was to take those moments and learning opportunities and here's a few things we learned:

01 Just because you reflect the community you serve, it doesn't make you an expert.

Sometimes the assumption is that we'll always "get it right": and we'll always know the best thing to do or course of action to take because we reflect our community and therefore our actions come naturally. Whilst it definitely allows for a deeper understanding and connection to our community and the challenges at hand, it's still important to remember that women of colour are not a monolithic group. We have learned to always ask, and never assume, even if you 'think' you get it or if something has worked before. The world has changed too much for presumed repetition.



02 Real life events trump ... everything.

With 2024 being an extremely pivotal moment in history for marginalised groups, it has had a knock on effect on the engagement level, general energy and enthusiasm of our community. This means we too have faced challenges trying to engage our community in our work as they are directly impacted by world events. Therefore, when something happens, in any part of the world, our community feels the effects of it and that (rightly) means they prioritise their wellbeing, their families, their own communities and their safety first. This then means they can't attend an event, turn up to a programme session or might miss deadlines to applications. We have learnt that we need constant contingency plans and can't programme too far in advance. This has created a greater need and opportunity to partner and collaborate with our community and not just serve, so the responsibility and the power is shared.

03 Our community knows what they want ... and it's not what we think.

There's a misconception that skills and training development is needed for underrepresented groups, but time and time again, we have been shown this year that it's not. What has come out strongly, is the need for access and resources. Simply put, marginalised groups often know exactly what they need and it's usually not what's offered. Therefore a disconnect is growing between what charities and non-profits are offering and what's really wanted. We have fallen victim to this to meet our own funding requirements, but a bigger question has emerged - if people are able to directly articulate their needs, why as a sector do we often assume or use outdated data or a complete lack of data, to fill the gap? We have learned this lesson this year and have committed to doing what needs to be done for the benefit of those who we serve and will work with the sector to open up to what needs changing sector-wide and systemically.



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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

At GirlDreameer, our journey to champion women of colour and create lasting social impact would not be possible without the unwavering support of our incredible community of funders and supporters. Your belief in our vision and mission fuels our work and inspires us to push boundaries every day.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our funders, partners, and individual supporters who have stood by us, providing the resources, encouragement, and trust that enable us to deliver transformative initiatives. From backing our Dream Fund, to equipping women with board-level experience, to advocating for inclusion and community healing, your contributions have a direct and profound impact on the lives of so many.

To our core funders, thank you for your continued investment in our vision. To our partners, thank you for collaborating with us to innovate and amplify change. To every individual donor, thank you for being a part of our ecosystem of change-makers.

Your generosity is the foundation of our progress, and with you by our side, we look forward to scaling new heights and achieving even greater impact in the years to come!

Together, we are creating a social impact ecosystem where women of colour can lead, thrive, and dream big.



We got amazing feedback and many people wanted a second session. New connections were made and many people shared their own experiences with anxiety and needing to slow down. We also emphasise cultural context and history, and had handouts that outlined the meaning of the art they were learning.



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FOR MORE INFO
girldreamer.co.uk