

# The Agency Southampton

Our story...

2024-2025







# Welcome to The Agency Southampton

The Agency is a creative entrepreneurship programme enabling young people aged 15-25 from some of the most underserved areas in the UK to develop social change projects based on community needs and their desire for change. The programme was brought to the UK in 2013, through a partnership between Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), Contact and People Palace Projects (PPP), and came to Energise Me and Southampton in 2021. The Agency Southampton is currently supported by BAC, Energise Me, and Blagrove.

The Agency supports young people to create youth-led social enterprises, events and projects that will have a positive and long-lasting impact on their local areas. It does this through facilitating young people to have the self-confidence, skills and a creative mind set needed to be protagonists in their lives and the world around them.





## 2024 - 2025

We started the year with 22 young people, who attended 24 sessions in Cycle 1.

13 young people pitched their project ideas to an external panel made up of a Southampton rap-artist, local Imam, theatre director, and local business owner.

3 projects received £2,000 each, and the panel were so impressed by the pitches, that 2 further projects secured donations to launch in 2025!



**“I learned how to grow my confidence and deliver something that I am really proud of.”**



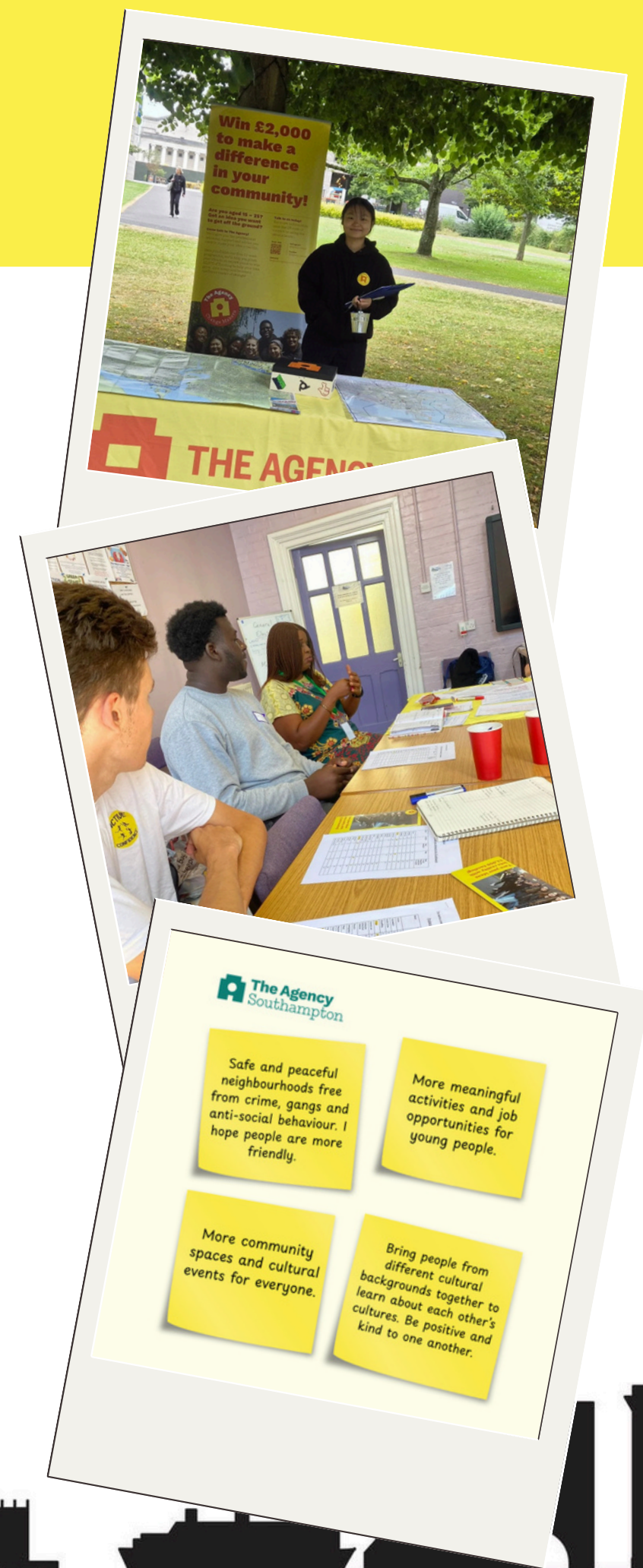
# Community Research

Summer 2024 saw our very first Southampton Community Research project. Agent Alumni Yulu and Zarka, supported by Nik and Natalie spoke to members of the community in a local park, and conducted two focus groups.

They found that Southampton residents were concerned about:

- Litter and community cleanliness
- Substance misuse and drug dealing
- Anti-social behaviour
- Food poverty
- Affordable housing and cost of living.

You can read more about the community research project here:  
<https://wearetheagency.co/community-research>





# CHRIS: Harvest of Hope

Harvest Of Hope empowers communities with nourishing food and culinary skills through workshops and food distribution, aiming to alleviate hunger, reduce food waste, and inspire healthy cooking.

Working alongside a professional chef, Chris designed menus and delivered fun cooking workshops and activities for seven weeks, for young people aged 11-14. His sessions were at capacity every week, and over thirty people came to his celebration event, including the friends and family of the participants.

Chris also presented his project to the Southampton Food Partnership, who were so impressed that they invited him to join the partnership, becoming their youngest member.

**“My project is very important as a lot of the SO14 community deal with being in a lower income family, so having a place where they can learn new skills and make friends while taking food home for their families to try is a great thing to have.” - Chris**





## FIZA: Empress HER

Empress HER is a girls-only community project that creates a safe, empowering, and supportive space for girls aged 11-18, with a particular focus on those from ethnic minority backgrounds. The project uses a mix of creative arts, sports, and mental wellbeing activities to help girls build confidence, make new friends, and feel a strong sense of belonging and sisterhood.

Initially, Fiza launched her project at Northam Community Centre, but had a very low number of girls come along. Undeterred, she worked with Agent Alumni Zarka to re-design her posters, change the venue to somewhere more accessible, and change the timing of her sessions. 24 girls aged 11-18 came along to her Easter holiday sessions!

**“Many of [the participants] came from ethnic minority backgrounds and shared that this was the first time they had experienced a space designed just for them.**

**“Empress HER has proven that there’s a real need for safe, empowering spaces for girls in our community—and this is just the beginning.” - Fiza**





# HIBAH: Veil of Valour

Empowering young women to take control, stay strong, and thrive: mentally, physically, and emotionally. We're all about building resilience, mastering self-defence and levelling up in self-care and confidence.

Working with Limitless Martial Arts, a local gym, Hibah launched a series of Saturday workshops. And on week one over 20 girls signed up to learn some self-defence skills and boost their confidence through physical activity.

It was challenging to balance her life outside of The Agency with delivering the project, but Hibah built a fantastic relationship with the team at Limitless, never gave up on her desire for change, and continued to deliver sessions through the summer.

**“Race continues to be the most frequently recorded motivating factors of hate crime in Southampton... I would love to celebrate the amount of girls who have showed up and enjoyed coming to the sessions.” - Hibah**





## ZIZI & AAYAN: Beyond the Block

Empowering young people with resilience and knowledge, through relatable and realistic comics that show the consequences of getting involved in gangs, drugs, and knife crime.

Together, Zizi and Aayan set out to create a comic book to educate children on the reality and consequences of getting involved with gangs, drugs, and knife crime. They wanted to destroy the glorified image that young people hold towards gangsters and drug misuse. While not initially funded, their project so impressed one of the panel, that they were awarded “wild card” funding to go ahead in cycle 2. The Agency Southampton team pulled together to support Zizi and Aayan, as they didn’t have a Producer.

They commissioned a local art student, Lisa, to illustrate their story, and shared it with their network, including youth support charities and the local youth justice team.

**“[I’d tell new Agents] Make sure to squeeze all the juice out of your networks. If your network is too small, reach out to people.” - Zizi**

**“And plan, especially even the smallest steps. Always trust the process as you can always get through it.” - Aayan**





# HANA: Culturenecct

A culture day with different performers and stands, representing different cultures, to celebrate diversity, foster unity, and embrace the richness of cultures through shared experiences and meaningful connections.

Hana felt that there was a need for more connection between the different nationalities and cultural groups living in SO14 and wanted to put on an event to build bridges, help people learn new things about each other, and reduce prejudice.

Hana struggled to turn her vision into reality, and reflected that time management and prioritisation was a challenge, but learned a lot from her experience. The event showcased different foods, henna art, and poetry that talked about the experience of Black and brown people in a majority white country.

**“[The best bit was] Watching the performers or seeing the people who did come enjoy themselves.**

**“Next time I want to get an outdoor event or a venue with more footfall.” - Hana**





## Agent Alumni

Throughout 2024-2025, Agency Alumni continued to support The Agency Southampton, and expand their own networks.

- 10 Alumni were employed to lead the street recruitment of new Agents
- 5 Agent Alumni took part in the community research project in summer 2024, as researchers and focus group participants
- 4 Agent Alumni supported the recruitment for a new Assistant Facilitator.

As well as supporting with recruitment of Agents and staff, Agent Alumni brought their expertise to Cycles 1 and 2:

- Chris and Zarka joined the 'fake panel' day, where Agents pitch their idea for the first time to a panel
- Chris, Zarka, and Ali all came in during both cycles and supported with the facilitation of the sessions
- Lorena, Rougui, Abbie, and Rimu all visited to share advice, tips, and encouragement for panel day
- Abs and Yulu started as Junior Assistant Facilitators on alternate Saturdays, and Yulu stayed on as a Producer for Cycle 2.

## Chris's story...



Chris's project, Active Confidence, was funded in 2023-2024.

This year, he has been part of the Southampton delegation to The Agency national gathering, delivered energiser games to new Agents, and added his expertise to the 'fake panel' day.

Chris has also started an apprenticeship with ActiveMe 360, and is flourishing, growing in confidence and skill. In June 2025, Energise Me invited Chris to take a paid coaching role at the Hampshire School Games Festival, leading 90 primary school children in cricket games.



## Agent Alumni

The skills and networks that they have developed throughout their experience with The Agency Southampton have also allowed our Agency Alumni to jump into other brilliant opportunities:

- 2 Agent Alumni, Chris and Kirsty, from 2023-2024 attended the National Gathering in Chester, and met Agency creator, Marcus Faustini
- Braids by Blacks continue to grow their business and have thriving client base (IG: @braidsbyblacks)
- Kirsty had her prom and 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, which she was able to attend with confidence. She has also started a college course in football coaching, taking her one step closer to her dream job!
- Ali and Zarka have both joined The Agency National Steering Group, to help shape and inform the direction of the organisation.

**“In 2025, I’m embracing growth – welcoming opportunities, challenges, and the chance to learn and evolve.”**

**- Zarka**

## Mohammad's story...



Mohammad was an Agent in 2023-2024.

Although his project was not selected for funding, he enjoyed his experience.

Mohammad has now had his asylum claim approved, has completed a public services course at college, and has found full-time work.

Through The Agency's networks, Mohammad has been put in contact with the youth offending service in Southampton, to act as a mentor to other young Afghan asylum seekers and refugees.







## For more information...

You can email Nik Tubbs, Project Manager for The Agency Southampton:  
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**The Agency is a Battersea Arts Centre and People's Palace Projects programme that was brought to the UK in partnership with Contact.**

**National Network funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.**

**Current national partners include: Contact, Energise Me, New Lodge Arts, Octagon Theatre and Storyhouse.**

**The Agency is a programme originally conceived by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro where it is delivered by Agência de Redes para a Juventude.**

**The UK pilot (2013-15) was funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.**

**Cover photo: Bounty Vegah.**





