




afrocats

Impact Report
2023



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Creating change together

I am proud to have founded Afrocats 20 years ago. The idea for Afrocats came when I was at university whilst I was managing my campaign to help get my stay.

My mother's words resonated with me: *“Why are you doing this to my family? My daughters are going to contribute to this society.”*

I did not know it then, but she was correct.



My motivation is the memory of my family becoming activists to campaign for us to get our stay. This action demonstrated the power of communities coming together and having a voice.

As we look forward to the next five or ten years of Afrocats we will continue to listen and act on what the communities we work with tell us they need so they can achieve their dreams.

But we cannot do it alone. We need the support of others so we can continue to create change.

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported our journey thus far.

Magdalen Bartlett - CEO and Founder

Who we are

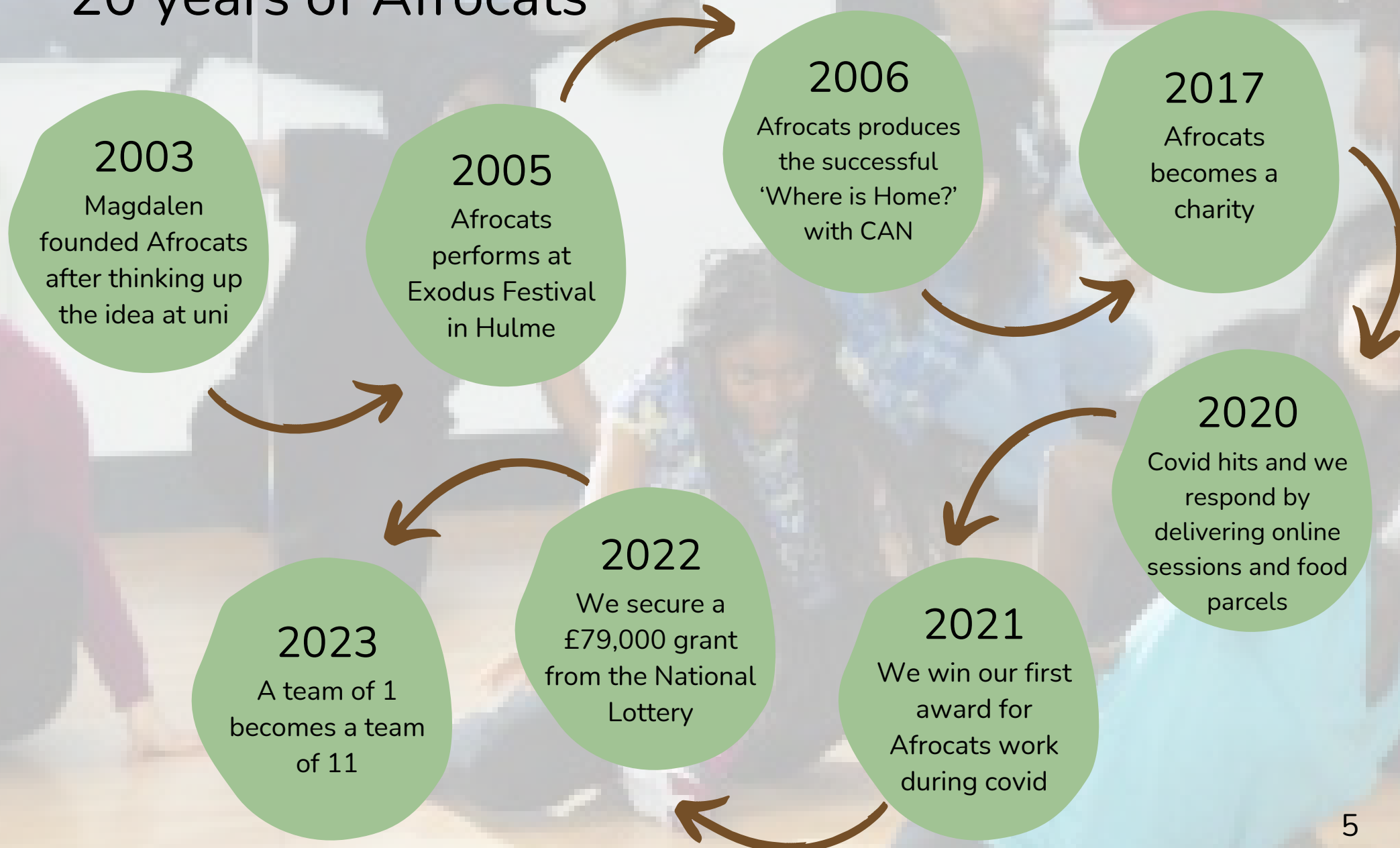
We're a Black-led charity that supports people in Manchester who face exclusion because of their immigration status, class, age, cultural inexperience and education.

Our vision is an inclusive society for people seeking sanctuary and diverse young people.

Our mission is to build agency, aspiration and opportunity to improve life chances.



20 years of Afrocats



Keisha's story

Keisha Thompson is the CEO and Creative Director of Contact Theatre. She joined Afrocats in 2005 and performed at Exodus Festival and in *Where is Home?* for Afrocats.

“I joined Afrocats when I was 15. Connecting with dances from various African and Caribbean countries really supported me in understanding, respecting and celebrating my heritage.”



Our team

Thanks to National Lottery funding we have been able to upscale our programmes and the development of the Afrocats team to support the growth of our charity. Established as a charity in 2017, we have grown from a team of one to now a team of 11.

Our board of Trustees is 100% female with 67% representation from Black Asian minority ethnic communities.

Our workforce is also 100% female, with 60% of our staff from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds.



A snapshot of our year

Our work is guided by our theory change which helps us achieve positive outcomes for the health and wellbeing, development and inclusion of the communities we work with.

27
commissions

Worked
with 215
women

£3500
donations
raised

Worked
with 1322
young
people

214
events for
young
people

Shortlisted
for 4
awards

189
events for
adults

Worked
with 11
diverse
facilitators

Inclusion in the arts

In 2023 through our partnerships, we were able to create opportunities for people seeking sanctuary and diverse young people to experience Manchester's rich cultural offering. This included:

7 visits to the theatre

2 projects in art galleries

4 dance performances



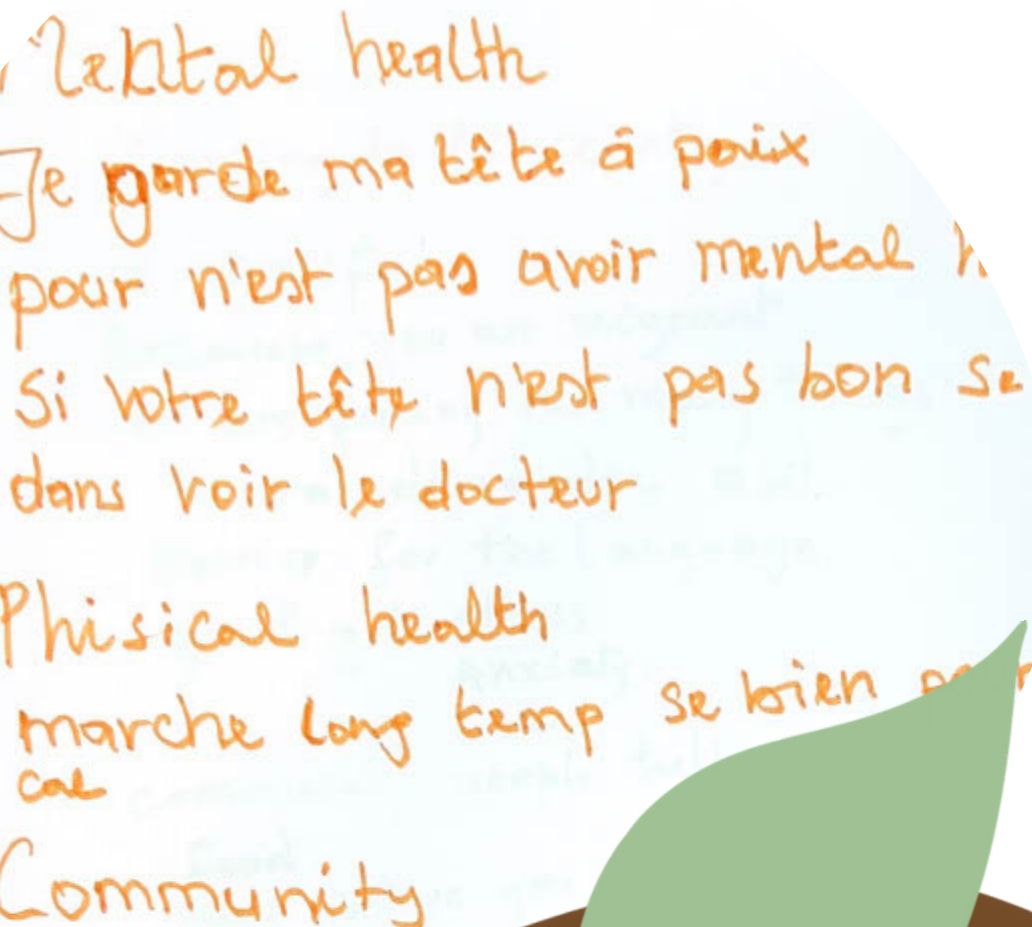
Museums and Me

Thanks to funding from Art and NESTA we were able to run a pilot project with the Whitworth to explore how playful museum interventions can enhance and increase parent-child interactions to support early years development goals for families living in disadvantage.

We worked with 24 families who were new arrivals to the city to increase inclusion in gallery spaces, supporting their integration into the city. One dad commented 'being in this environment will broaden my sons' horizons'.

Bassajamba x Afrocats

This year we worked on a social research project with women seeking sanctuary in Manchester to support the development of their digital skills, improve inclusion and wellbeing.



Mental health
Je garde ma tête à paix
pour n'est pas avoir mental h
Si votre tête n'est pas bon se
dans voir le docteur

Physical health
marche long temp se bien
cal

Community

Through the project, we heard from the women about their experiences with the Home Office and the effects waiting for your Asylum to be approved had on their mental health. Language consistently came up as a barrier to accessing work and education.

We used consultancy, questionnaires, and visual arts research techniques to identify the support needed by these women, specifically in the areas of health, well-being, and navigating UK Governmental systems.

Consequently, this information will be used to inform the entire Natives of the World program regarding the content of workshop facilitation that Afrocats will offer in the future.



Creative expression

This year we worked with over 1000 children across our projects and commissions. Including providing much needed creative activities for children living in hotels.

Our core BBC Children in Need funded programme, Youth of the World, has seen our young people develop skills in arts and crafts, drumming and dancing.

We ended the year with our winter showcase where the young people got to share their new skills.



Addressing barriers in primary healthcare

Working with Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, the Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN), and Ardwick and Longsight Primary Care Network we explored ways to improve maternity care for women from Eastern African backgrounds living in Longsight.

We connected women from the Little Lions network with professionals and front-line services from across the health and social care network. The women were able to ask questions about their health and through discussions, they learned new ways to improve their lifestyles.



Senait's* story

"Before Afrocats we just sit around at home doing nothing, now we come to the group, we have fun. We can practice speaking English, and dance as well.

"The best thing about attending this group is receiving vitamin D because before I was very tired, with no energy now I am taking Vitamin D I don't feel as tired as before

"Here you can get help, ask about anything you want, before I did not know about Surestart, I only hear about Sure Start here. In this group you can get support if your child can't speak, we now know about speech therapists. My wellbeing has improved!"

Shimming and shaking our way to a healthy life

This year, with funding from The Big Life Group, We Love Manchester and The Charity Service we've got women seeking asylum across Greater Manchester shimmying and shaking to improve their wellbeing.

And, thanks to the expansion of our team we've been able to deliver more dance sessions than ever.



Mary's story

The first few times we met with Mary, she spent most of the session seated only when invited or challenged to do so she would stand. By the end of the 8 weeks, she would opt to do the full session standing, only taking a moment for a seat when we were working with meditation or self-massage.

Her energy in the sessions was infectious, often providing music recommendations, she would then create a social dance atmosphere between herself and the other participants.

Mary told us: “At our age we get so stiff but the movement... is nice and very energetic. It's nice to feel apart of a group.”

Come rain or shine, we walk!

We introduced our Sunday afternoon walking sessions following requests from the women to provide a space where they could form new friendships whilst improving their health and wellbeing.

Thanks to funding from Sport England and the Canals and Rivers Trust, we explored Manchester's extensive canal network. Showing the women new places to visit has encouraged their love for Manchester and has also given them something to look forward to every Sunday.



A huge thank you to all our volunteers, artists, partners, donors and funders who helped us make a difference in 2023

SUPPORTED BY



the Whitworth



Healthy Heart Grants





Get involved

We want to see people thrive because they have been able to integrate fully into society.

But we can't do this alone, we need your support.

Join us and help make meaningful change.

afrocats.org.uk/support-us



A charity that provides a safe space
for refugees and people facing social exclusion in Manchester

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