



KAKOU

2024

Impact Report



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Co-creating a fairer future through innovation, inclusion, and community

Kakou exists to design and deliver opportunities that empower communities - especially those who are underrepresented in technology, the arts, and education. Our purpose is simple but ambitious: remove barriers, amplify voices, and create lasting change through collaboration and creativity.

We believe impact is about more than running activities - it's about listening, learning, and responding to what our community needs. That's why we work alongside local people, grassroots groups, and partner organisations to co-design projects that reflect lived experience and deliver real benefits.

For some, our purpose means accessible music-making through BSL signsinging. For others, it's inclusive hands-on STEM learning in schools or creative coding workshops. And for many, it's the shared experience of connecting at a Chesterfield SOUP event, or seeing their idea funded and supported to grow.

As a Community Interest Company, all our profits are reinvested for public good. Every decision, partnership, and project is guided by a single question: Does this help build a more inclusive, connected, and resilient community?



2024 highlights



24 volunteers
1568 volunteer hours



89 events produced



941 meals provided
cooked using surplus supermarket
food which would have gone to
waste



18 external impact
projects supported



491 unique
participants

SROI Ratio (including wellbeing)
£41.10 generated for every £1 invested

Kakou - All of Us Together

Kakou was founded in 2016 as a social enterprise with a clear commitment from day one: profits for purpose. Our name, Kakou - a Hawaiian word meaning “all of us together” - reflects our belief that real change happens when communities co-create solutions.

Drawing on over two decades of R&D experience in electronics, software, and design, we set out to bridge the gap between technology, creativity, and community engagement.

With expertise in electronics, software, firmware, and mechanical design, we deliver inclusive innovation across industries. Our services include bespoke electronic and software product design, digital accessibility audits, inclusion training, and sustainability consultancy - all informed by human-centric design principles.

From our base in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, we've grown into a trusted partner for the VCSE sector, offering not only hands-on community STEAM programmes but also technical consultancy, event production, and capacity-building for other non-profits.

Today, Kakou continues to combine design excellence with a deep commitment to social impact, ensuring that technology and creativity serve people - never the other way around.



Inclusion

We believe everyone should have equal access to technology, creativity, and opportunity.



Collaboration

We co-create with communities, partners, and stakeholders - not just for them.



Creativity

We use creative problem-solving, design thinking, and storytelling to shape meaningful, human-centred solutions.



Purpose

Every decision we make and every project we take on is guided by its potential to generate positive social and environmental impact.

Certified



®

Corporation

Our B Corp journey so far

We became a certified B Corp in November 2019, reflecting the purposeful way we do business.

In November 2019, Kakou Technologies became the UK's first engineering firm to be certified as a B Corporation, reinforcing our commitment to balancing profit with purpose and embedding social and environmental responsibility at the heart of our work.

B Corp certification measures performance across five key areas: Governance, Workers, Community, Environment, and Customers. It's a legally binding framework that ensures we remain accountable, transparent, and focused on delivering positive impact for all stakeholders.

When we first certified, we scored 88.1, a solid starting point that highlighted our strengths while revealing opportunities for growth. By the time we recertified in 2022, our B Impact Score had soared to 144.2 - well above the median score of 50.9 - reflecting robust performance across all areas of the assessment.

Our next recertification will take place at the end of 2025. The process is rigorous and time-intensive, but that's precisely why it matters. It pushes us to continuously improve, to embed sustainability and inclusivity deeper into everything we do, and to keep raising the bar for ourselves and the communities we serve.

For Kakou, being a B Corp isn't just a status - it's a commitment to ensuring that every project, decision, and partnership moves us closer to a fairer, more sustainable future.

You can learn more about B Corp and view our full B Impact Score at bcorporation.net



Governance

Our governance approach integrates ethical leadership, quality assurance, and environmental stewardship into every aspect of our operations.

We are committed to ESG principles - embedding environmental, social, and governance considerations into decision-making, project delivery, and stakeholder engagement. As an ISO 9001 certified organisation, we maintain rigorous quality management systems to ensure our services meet the highest standards.

Our headquarters are in a BREEAM-rated building, featuring on-site recycling, composting, and solar panels. These facilities align with our drive to minimise environmental impact while creating a healthy, sustainable workplace.

In our design process, we use CAD modelling to verify and refine products before manufacturing - reducing waste and resource use. PCB prototypes are repurposed for community STEAM education activities, extending their life and inspiring the next generation of innovators.

Our digital infrastructure is equally responsible: our servers run on 100% renewable energy, ensuring that even our online footprint reflects our commitment to sustainability.

Through these measures, governance at Kakou is not simply about compliance—it's about accountability, transparency, and leading by example in building a better, more sustainable future.

Making a Difference



Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do

As Chesterfield Champions, we work with Destination Chesterfield to promote our town and region as a vibrant place to live, work, visit, and invest—supporting the local economy and community pride.

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to creating an inclusive workplace where every team member has the support they need to thrive and feel they belong.

Through our role on the steering committee of the Chesterfield Cultural Education Partnership, we help ensure that everyone has access to creative, healthy, and culturally rich experiences - raising aspirations, building skills, and empowering people to make positive, lasting change.

CHESTERFIELD CHAMPIONS





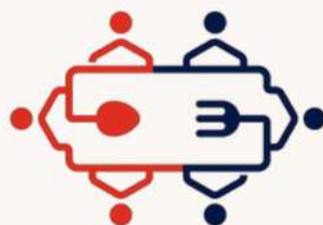
Supporting Grassroots Initiatives

Kakou is proud to act as a fiscal host for two inspiring community projects: Chesterfield Community Roast and Pain Inspired - both registered Warm Welcome Spaces.

By providing financial administration, governance support, and secure funding channels, we enable these initiatives to focus on what they do best - serving their communities.

Chesterfield Community Roast brings people together over shared meals, tackling social isolation and food insecurity, while Pain Inspire delivers peer-led programmes and activities to improve the wellbeing of people living with chronic pain.

Acting as a fiscal host allows us to amplify their impact, reduce administrative barriers, and help ensure every pound raised goes further in creating positive change.



THE
CHESTERFIELD
COMMUNITY ROAST



PAIN IN-SPIRED
SUPPORT GROUP

A Moment In Our Shoes



A Moment in Our Shoes is an evolving, empathy-led initiative by Kakou designed to break down barriers and foster understanding between people of all abilities.

First launched during National Inclusion Week 2024, the project invited participants - including community members, local leaders, and decision makers - to step into the daily experiences of people with disabilities.

Using tools such as vision-altering glasses, impaired-hearing headphones, and mobility aids, participants navigated real-world spaces, gaining a deeper appreciation for the challenges others face every day.

The project is not a one-off event - it's part of a continuing programme of activities and installations that will run throughout Chesterfield and the surrounding region. Future events will explore new lived-experience scenarios, expand accessibility awareness, and build partnerships with local organisations to influence positive change in public spaces, policy, and community design.

By combining immersive experiences with storytelling, film, and discussion, A Moment in Our Shoes aims to leave a lasting imprint - not only on individual perspectives, but also on how our communities prioritise inclusion in the future.

<https://amios.kakou.org.uk>

A Moment In Our Shoes

Inclusion Day - 24th September 2024



Kakou Talk

Kakou Talk is our regular podcast series dedicated to shining a spotlight on the incredible work of third sector organisations, creatives, and changemakers in our local area.

Each episode offers a platform for guests to share their stories, celebrate successes, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing our communities.

Hosted by members of the Kakou team, the conversations are warm, informal, and inspiring - covering topics from grassroots arts projects and inclusive education to social enterprise and community activism.

Past guests have included leaders from local charities, cultural practitioners, and business champions who are making a tangible difference across Chesterfield, Derbyshire, and South Yorkshire.

More than just a podcast, Kakou Talks is part of our broader mission to amplify voices that deserve to be heard. By recording, sharing, and promoting these conversations, we help connect people, spark collaboration, and inspire others to get involved in creating positive change.

You can listen to Kakou Talks episodes via our website and podcast platforms, and join us in celebrating the people and ideas that make our community thrive.



<https://open.spotify.com/show/4U6VR2WqQG7jsLydLlWTk?si=l3fdlc9715034dl0>

Sustainability Goals



THE GLOBAL GOALS

Kakou is committed to working towards achieving the UN SDGs. Over the past year our activities have made a social impact contributing towards the following goals.



Community Collaboration



Our Engagement Programme

At Kakou, collaboration isn't an afterthought – it's the foundation of how we work.

Our Community Collaboration programme is designed to bring together local people, grassroots groups, and sector partners to co-create projects that meet real community needs.

Through this engagement approach, we connect with schools, charities, local authorities, and cultural organisations to identify shared goals and design inclusive activities that benefit everyone.



This Girl Codes

Kakou once again partnered with Junction Arts to deliver This Girl Codes - a heritage technology programme that empowers girls and young women to explore coding, electronics, and digital design in an inclusive, inspiring environment.

Our role as technical advisors included developing hands-on workshops, providing specialist equipment, and guiding participants through real-world applications of coding and electronics.

We introduced creative coding projects that blended art, storytelling, and technology, giving participants the opportunity to design interactive experiences and bring their ideas to life.



BSL Signsinging

As part of our Derbyshire Inclusive Sound Collective (DISC) programme, we run regular BSL signsinging sessions - combining the beauty of British Sign Language with music to create a fully inclusive performance experience.

These sessions are open to both beginners and fluent BSL users, offering a space where Deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing participants can come together to learn, share, and enjoy music in an accessible format.

By using BSL as an expressive performance art, signsinging not only promotes inclusivity in music but also raises awareness of Deaf culture and language.

Our workshops focus on building confidence, fostering creativity, and encouraging collaboration between participants of all abilities.



Chesterfield SOUP



Kakou hosted two Chesterfield SOUP events in 2024, bringing together community members over a shared meal to support local grassroots projects.

SOUP is a simple but powerful idea: attendees donate at the door, enjoy soup and conversation, then hear short pitches from local people with ideas to improve the community.

At the end of the evening, everyone votes, and the winning projects receive the pooled donations to kickstart or grow their initiatives.

Across our two events this year, six community projects were micro-funded - ranging from neighbourhood wellbeing activities to creative workshops and social inclusion schemes.

Beyond the funding, SOUP connects people, builds networks, and inspires collaboration, helping turn small ideas into tangible, impactful action.

Chesterfield SOUP is part of our commitment to community-led decision-making, giving local people the power to decide which ideas get the support they need. It's also a celebration of creativity, generosity, and the belief that when we invest in each other, we all thrive.



SocialFuse Festival



The third annual SocialFuse Festival was a celebration of Derbyshire's Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector - co-designed with our community and anchored in the theme of Regeneration.

Across a week of activity, the festival blended hands-on workshops, fringe events, and a central conference day to connect changemakers, creatives, and community organisations, inspire collaboration, and explore new ways to build resilient, thriving communities.

The Conference at Chesterfield Studios featured keynote speakers, interactive workshops, and discussions on storytelling for social change, inclusive arts, and wellbeing in enterprise. Lunch was provided by local social enterprise Saffron Kitchen CIC, reinforcing our commitment to supporting purpose-driven partners.

The SocialFuse Meetup transformed Chesterfield Studios into a cabaret-style networking space where volunteers, business owners, B Corps, and social entrepreneurs connected and shared ideas.

Throughout the week, pop-up events brought the festival to life across the region - ranging from the Biz Buzz speed-networking, restorative yoga sessions, and open discussion circles, to a Community Big Sing with inclusive BSL SignSong workshops.

The festival's design reflected our belief that regeneration happens together. By offering both in-person and online opportunities, SocialFuse Festival 2024 reached a broad and diverse audience, fostered meaningful connections, and showcased the creativity and resilience of Derbyshire's VCSE community.

A summary of the Festival can be found at <https://festival.socialfuse.org.uk/socialfuse-festival-2024/>

SocialFuse Festival



Design and Consultation



Access MiniGuides

Kakou is proud to collaborate with AccessibleUK, a Chesterfield-based, world-renowned access consultancy, to create Access Miniguides - concise, practical resources that help venues, event organisers, and community groups improve accessibility for all.

These pocket-sized guides cover essential topics such as wheelchair access, visual and hearing accessibility, and sensory-friendly considerations. They are designed to be quick to read, easy to apply, and impactful in real-world settings.

Access Miniguides can already be found in Kelham Island (Sheffield), Bolsover, and Chesterfield, with over 300 guides installed across the UK. They have been used to inform venue layouts, enhance signage, and create more inclusive environments for visitors and participants.

By combining our community engagement expertise with AccessibleUK's specialist knowledge, we're helping more organisations take tangible, achievable steps toward true inclusion.

Learn more: www.accessminiguide.co.uk



DataDraw

In November 2024, we began conversations with Junction Arts to co-develop DataDraw, a creative technology project that gamifies the collection of audience participation data - such as the demographic and engagement information often required by funders like the Arts Council.

By blending game mechanics with data capture, DataDraw transforms what is often a dry administrative task into a fun, interactive experience for audiences. Participants engage with playful prompts, visual interfaces, and feedback loops that make sharing their information easy, accessible, and enjoyable.

For organisations, this approach not only improves response rates but also provides richer, more accurate insights into who they are reaching.

We successfully secured Innovate UK funding to take the project forward. This support will enable us to prototype and pilot DataDraw in live arts and cultural settings, integrating Junction Arts' participatory arts expertise with Kakou's inclusive design and technical capabilities.

DataDraw's ultimate aim is to make compliance with funder requirements more engaging, while also strengthening the connection between cultural organisations and their audiences.



Feeling Connected – Branding Consultation

As part of our ongoing collaboration with Derbyshire Voluntary Action, Kakou provided a branding consultation for their Feeling Connected project – an initiative aimed at reducing social isolation and building stronger community networks.

Our role included reviewing existing brand assets, identifying areas for clearer messaging, and creating fresh visual concepts that better reflected the project's mission and values.

We advised on typography, colour palettes, and imagery to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and consistency across print, digital, and event materials.

In addition to visual identity work, we supported Feeling Connected by producing social media marketing content, facilitating Feeling Connected Socials for community organisers, and offering the use of our Ticket Tailor account free of charge to streamline event management.

Through this work, we helped strengthen the project's public presence, making it easier for community members, partners, and funders to recognise, engage with, and support the Feeling Connected brand.



All Hands on The Don - App Development

Kakou provided specialist consultancy and digital development for the All Hands on The Don project - a community-led initiative focused on restoring, protecting, and celebrating the River Don and its surrounding environment.

Our consultancy work involved mapping project needs, advising on accessible digital engagement strategies, and ensuring the technology would be inclusive for diverse community users. Drawing on our experience in human-centred design, we worked closely with the project team at Don Catchment Rivers Trust to translate environmental goals into practical digital solutions that engage residents, volunteers, and partner organisations.

We also led the design and build of a bespoke app to support citizen science, volunteer coordination, and community storytelling along the river. The app allows users to log environmental data, share images and observations, access educational resources, and find opportunities to get involved. By combining interactive features with simple, accessible navigation, the platform encourages participation from all ages and abilities.



The Rectory



Our Social Impact Hub



In January 2024, we began laying the foundations for the community ownership of The Rectory, starting with a meeting with Building Bridges in the Community to explore partnerships and possibilities.

By March 2024, we had submitted our application to the Community Ownership Fund to purchase The Rectory and transform it into a gastro-pub and social impact hub – a central, fully accessible space addressing the current lack of affordable venues for VCSE organisations to meet, collaborate, and host activities.

The project's vision combines hospitality with community impact: reinvesting profits back into the business, prioritising sustainability and local suppliers, and incorporating features like a Changing Places facility, a lift to the first floor, and a video podcasting and broadcasting suite equipped for accessibility.

However, the general election in June 2024 put all Community Ownership Fund decisions on hold.

We continued our planning and partnership-building, and in December 2024 we received confirmation that the decisions made under the previous government would be upheld.

We were formally offered the funding – marking a pivotal moment for The Rectory's future.

2024 was about securing the foundation. 2025 will be about bringing the vision to life.

Our Collaborators



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Feedback

“

Before I found this group, I felt invisible. Now I feel like I belong - and I actually believe I can manage my pain and still live a good life

”

“

It was inspiring to see so many people coming together to support local ideas. I met collaborators I'd never have found otherwise.

”

“

Wearing the vision goggles was a wake-up call. It made me realise how many spaces I take for granted that just aren't accessible to everyone.

”

“

Seeing Deaf and hearing people perform together was beautiful. It's the kind of inclusion we need more of.

”



We're driven by feedback.

Fancy a chat? Send us an email
hello@kakou.org.uk



Follow our progress on socials
[@kakoutechuk](https://www.instagram.com/kakoutechuk)

