



2025 Annual Report



#SoulFoodFor Migrant Youth



Contents

1. A Word from the President	2
2. Who We Are	5
- Mission	
- Vision	
- Aims	
- soul food at a Glance	
- Child & Youth Protection Policy	
- Principles & Values	
3. Cultural Excursions & Events	10
- Breakdown of Excursions & Activities	
- Activity Highlights	
- Events - soul food service	
4. Professional Development Program	24
- Program Breakdown	
- After the Program	
5. Communication & Our Team	29
- Digital Communication	
- Team: Leadership & Volunteers	
6. Financial Resources	33
- Financial Reporting	
- Sources of Funding & Donations	
- Breakdown of Expenses	
7. Looking Toward the Future	39
- Our Mission Continues: Future Ideas & Projects	
- A Heartfelt Thank You	

A Word from the President



Kryssandra Heslop

Co-Founder, Creative Director & President



As the world grew more hostile and uncertain for migrants, refugees and those working alongside them in 2025, we followed the lead of young Soul Food members, choosing to stay grounded in optimism and forward-looking action. We continued to learn, grow and adapt, navigating new challenges while making steady progress.

This year, we adjusted our focus by experimenting with ways to improve our efficiency and make our work more sustainable, while remaining attentive to the realities of operating with limited resources. In doing so, several members of our team gained greater autonomy, which allowed us to organize more cultural excursions than ever before. We continued meaningful partnerships with cultural institutions such as the Goethe-Institut and its library, where our relaunched book exchange program now has a fixed home, providing young members with a place they can visit independently to check out books from our collection. We also began new partnerships, including with LinkedIn, which young members were particularly excited about.

Young Soul Food members shaped much of what we did. Their requests—to travel, attend a concert by an artist they grew up listening to, or simply to practice their language skills—helped guide our programming and priorities. Some of this year’s most meaningful moments came from witnessing the longer trajectories of young people we support. Many arrive in extremely difficult circumstances, sometimes experiencing homelessness, living undocumented and navigating life on the margins of society. In 2025, we supported several young members, who after such challenges, went on to enroll in prestigious schools such as Ferrandi, sign professional contracts through our professional development program and regularize their immigration status—partly thanks to our support and the documentation provided to French authorities. These outcomes reflect the tangible impact of sustained, long-term engagement.

As we move into the coming year, the focus on Soul Food’s sustainability remains central. Maintaining this level of activity will require resources, partnerships and long-term commitment. This work continues only through the trust, engagement and support of those who choose to stand alongside us. We remain hopeful that this support will continue to grow. Thank you to all who contribute in big and small ways. We appreciate everything you do.

With gratitude,

Kryssandra Heslop

“Balla told me that he was very impressed by how carefully the judge read each letter, including the one from soul food, and the others I asked for from Yoga and Sport with Refugees and Ten Belles. Our letters were really taken into account to assess their situations. Kassim told me the exact same thing.”

- François, soul food co-founder (when speaking about the positive judgements received by two young soul food members from a judge regarding their minority status)



soul food: Who We Are



At Soul Food, **we believe in the value of kindness, community and art.** We believe that everyone has the **equal right to beauty and creativity.** Everyone has the right **to be inspired.** These beliefs are at the core of our mission to expose young migrants and refugees to art and culture, in an effort to **form safe creative spaces** conducive to the type of inspiration required to sustain them as they make their way through a world that is often judgmental, cruel and unfair.

We hope that in doing so, they will learn, grow and anchor themselves to something they find inspiring, that will then allow them to bloom into their full potential. We believe that this will also allow them to integrate into their (new) local communities in a natural, productive and positive way.

Mission

Soul Food's mission is to **expose young migrants (and refugees) to cultural events and artistic environments**, such as concerts, dance performances, artists' workshops, and museums, in an effort to provide **intellectual and cultural stimulation**, foster **creativity**, facilitate **positive integration** experiences, and encourage novel levels of autonomy in their new home country. We work towards these goals with the hope that with each new cultural experience, migrant youth will not only make new friends and forget about their problems, but also feel like a part of local culture and life, instead of like someone who is watching from the outside.

Rather than attempting to force young migrants to forget their past and country of origin, we encourage them to discover different cultures, and find their own level of balance between these. We show them that **culture is not mutually exclusive.** This is done partly by embarking on cultural excursions, creating safe spaces for **open dialogue** and opportunities to meet locals and **experience art, music and food** as they do. We also work to achieve this via our professional development program and cultural community events, giving young migrants the opportunity to learn and exchange with prestigious professionals, join open-minded teams and contribute their cultural knowledge and perspectives via **creative collaborations** with chefs and artists.

Vision

Through our work, we **promote sustainable and positive integration** within immigrant communities in France. We envision a France with museums, restaurants, theatres, and concert halls full of **people from all over the world**; not only tourists, but migrants, refugees and locals too. We also envision a world where migrants and refugees have this type of **positive visibility**, and not one where we only see them sleeping in tents in crowded cities and refugee camps. We are **changing the narrative** as we actively promote **positive, authentic representations** of them.

Aims

We aim to help **provide access** to museums, theatres and other cultural spaces, as well as prestigious professional opportunities in cultural fields, to young migrants and refugees from all over the world. We also strive to fill in the excessive time gaps left by the French administration system, with intellectual and cultural stimulation through our excursions and activities. **We use art as a form of informal education** and aim to **encourage autonomy** through these methods.

Main Goals

1. Promote positive integration for migrant and refugee youth
2. Provide equitable opportunities to young Soul Food members
3. Change the narrative surrounding migrants and refugees

Principal Activities

1. Cultural excursions & artistic activities
2. Professional Development Program
3. Cultural community events

“What really motivates me to do excursions with soul food... When I’m with soul food, I feel really safe.”

– Balla, young soul food member

Young Members at a Glance

- 1.** Young migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors, aged 14-22
- 2.** The majority are from French-speaking West Africa, with profiles shifting over time and currently including many from Guinea, but also from The Gambia and other countries
- 3.** Most learn to read and write in French when they arrive in France, some don’t speak French and some speak English
- 4.** They have to go to trade school if they wish to stay in France¹
- 5.** The majority experience museums, *haute cuisine* and other forms of art for the first time via Soul Food

2025 Highlights

- 1.** Trip to Arles: a multi-day cultural trip centered on photography and exploration, offering young members the opportunity to travel to a new destination in the south of France
- 2.** LinkedIn collaboration: a new partnership focused on professional development, which generated strong enthusiasm among young members and opened pathways to new skills, tools and networks
- 3.** *Voyagers* exhibition: a photography exhibition bringing together photographs taken by young Soul Food members during Soul Food trips and the professional photographer, Cornelius Kaess
- 4.** Soul Food Festival: 7th birthday celebration that included music, culinary collaborations with restaurant professionals we’ve been working with for years, art workshops, and more
- 5.** Young members’ trajectories: witnessing several young Soul Food members who arrived in extremely difficult circumstances make significant progress over time, including getting into prestigious schools, signing permanent work contracts through our professional development program and developing greater confidence and autonomy

Child and Youth Protection Policy²

Our Child and Youth Protection Policy is grounded in the core principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring that we uphold the rights and safety of young Soul Food members. We continue to review this policy and ways that we can further adapt to maintain a secure environment and prioritize their well-being.

¹ We mostly work with young people who arrive in France as unaccompanied minors. Once here, their goal is to benefit from their rights as minors in France. Part of this process is getting an education, but they must choose a trade, go to trade school, get an internship, then an apprenticeship, and eventually permanent work contracts. If they would like to earn higher qualifications, such as university degrees, they have to figure out a way to do this on their own. In this way, the current system makes it virtually impossible for these young people to achieve more.

² The Soul Food Child and Youth Protection Policy can be found on our website.

Principles and Values

1



Protect and maintain the safety of our young members and all children we interact with

2



Promote kindness, tolerance, understanding, and intercultural dialogue

3



Stimulate creativity in ourselves and others

4



Ensure that Soul Food is always a safe space

5



Help others whenever possible

6



Encourage sustainability, mindfulness and eco-responsibility

7



Cultivate youth agency and participation

8



Provide equitable, dignified opportunities to our young members



Cultural Excursions & Events



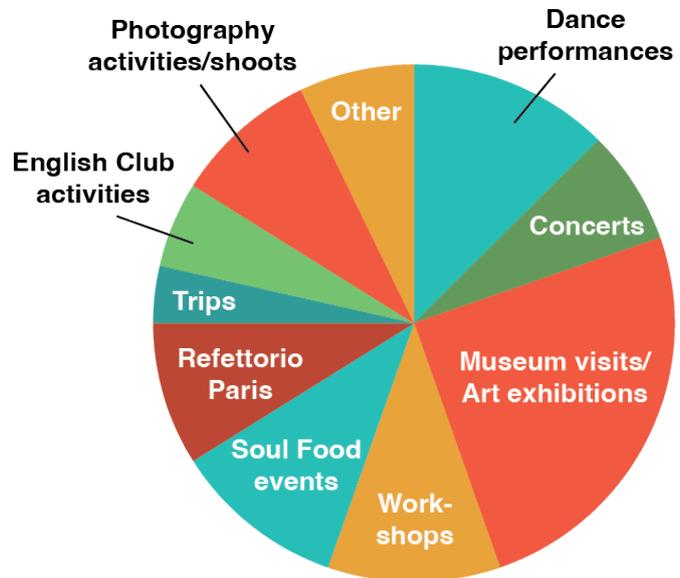
Breakdown of Excursions & Activities

In 2025 we organized many enriching cultural excursions around France. Our programming included **42** cultural excursions and activities. Since our first one in February 2018, we've gone on **313** in total!

We adapt our programming regularly to respond to the interests and needs of young Soul Food members. In 2025, we organized a higher number of excursions, while maintaining a strong focus on photography. We increased the number of exhibitions and dance performances we attended, placed greater emphasis on English Club activities and relaunched our book exchange program.

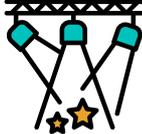
Often, our initiatives overlap. For instance, sometimes when we go to exhibitions, the visit is followed by a workshop inspired by the art we've just seen. When analyzing our programs, we count all cultural excursions once, even when we do multiple activities.³ Our total number of cultural excursions reflects this. However, in the breakdown of participatory and observatory activities, we sometimes count them multiple times to demonstrate the different types of creative experiences we've facilitated.

Cultural Excursions



Observational Activities

This year, we went to:

7	5	5	14	1
Dance performances	Gastronomic dinners at Refettorio Paris ⁴	Concerts	Art exhibitions ⁵	Contemporary art fair
				

³ The exception to this is when excursions last multiple days, in which case we count each day separately, as typically there are different young members and volunteers present, as well as different activities. We counted our one-day trip to Rouen as one cultural excursion, but we broke up the different activities of our Arles trip because it lasted several days and we did several longer activities each day.

⁴ One of these meals was at Atica, a restaurant offering an immersive gastronomic experience. We were invited by the Refettorio for a meal that they co-hosted with Atica.

⁵ Art exhibitions include guided tours, museum and gallery visits. On one occasion, young Soul Food members guided a tour of their own art exhibition, *Common Ground*, which was on view from November 2024 to January 2025 in the Goethe-Institut Library.

Participatory Activities

In addition to observing art, we continued to create this year. Our participatory cultural excursions and activities included:

- 1 Professional development workshop series with LinkedIn
- 2 Events organized by and/or in partnership with Soul Food
- 3 English Club activities
- 4 Creative and artistic workshops⁶
- 5 Photography activities/shoots
- 6 Events organized by and/or in partnership with Soul Food

⁶ In 2025, we offered workshops focused on culinary practices and mixed visual arts. At times, we design and organize these ourselves. Sometimes we lead them, and on other occasions, we are invited to participate in workshops hosted by partner organizations.



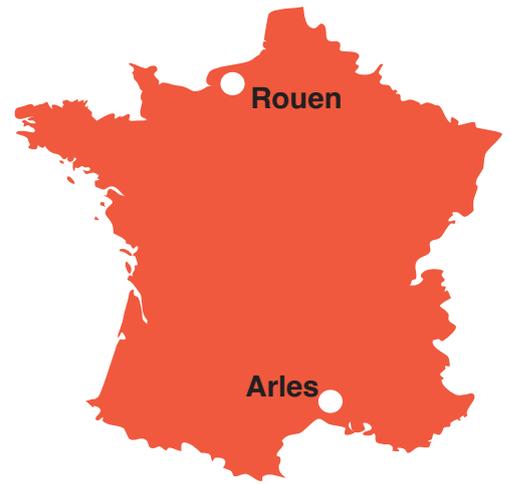
Activity Highlights

soul food not in Paris

We took two trips this year: First we traveled to the south of France to Arles in August for a few days. In December we organized a day trip to Rouen in Normandy.

Arles was chosen as a destination largely due to the Rencontres d'Arles, an international photography festival held there each year. We spent several hot summer days discovering the city, taking a lot of photos and exploring the many exhibitions presented as part of the festival. We included a few activities focused on the history of Arles and Camargue cultural practices, including a request that came directly from young members to attend a show with animals and traditional costumes in the Roman arena.

One afternoon we spent time with a professional photographer who gave young members tips and helped them take portraits of locals we met as we walked around. Giving them disposable cameras allowed them to document the trip from their individual perspectives and practice their photography skills.



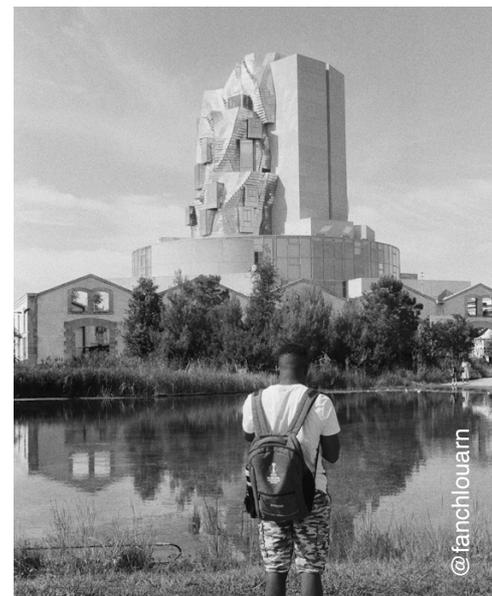
@kryssssandra



@fanchlouarn



Photo: Young Soul Food member



@fanchlouarn

“My favorite thing [in Rouen] was the church, the cathedral... Yes, because I thought it was magnificent, it’s well built.”

- Aboubacar, young soul food member

Our trip to **Rouen** didn’t go exactly as planned due to substantial train delays that left us stuck for hours. We quickly adapted, playing games while we waited and making a plan to adjust what we had scheduled. We made it in time for lunch and then enjoyed exploring the old city center, taking photos and learning about Rouen’s historical significance.



Exhibitions

We started the year off with a photography exhibition called *Voyagers*, which examined who is seen as a traveler, an explorer, or a tourist—and who is labeled a migrant. Through photographs taken by young Soul Food members during our trips across France and Italy in 2024, alongside Cornelius Kaess' photographs, taken with a nonprofit in Pakistan, the exhibition shifted how movement, perspective and agency are understood. Without centering on migration discourse, it created space for curiosity, agency and observation, asking viewers to reflect on who gets to travel and how those journeys are understood. *Voyagers* remained on view for two months.



It was moving to witness young members discovering their work presented in an exhibition alongside that of a professional photographer. *Voyagers* also offered a meaningful way to share Soul Food's work with a wider public.



Voyagers

Contributing artists: Cornelius Kaess and young Soul Food members

Curation: Kryssandra Heslop

Location: La Montgolfière

Collaborations and Partnerships

One of the new collaborations we began in 2025 was with LinkedIn. We were welcomed to their offices by a few members of their team for a series of professional development workshops based on young Soul Food members' needs.⁷ We focused on CVs, cover letters, creating or updating LinkedIn accounts, and mock interviews. The experience was met with strong engagement and a sense of pride among participants.



We continued collaborating with the Goethe-Institut Library this year, organizing several workshops there.⁸ We also relaunched our book exchange program thanks to this partnership. Young Soul Food members can now go to the library independently from our organized activities to check out books from our collection and use the library as a safe space to spend time.

⁷ We also received a micro grant as part of our collaboration.

⁸ In addition to organizing these activities with young Soul Food members, we also participated in the Goethe-Institut's Christmas market, where we had the opportunity to network and fundraise through our merch and art stand.



soul food festival

This year we went back to La Montgolfière to continue our tradition of celebrating Soul Food's birthday with a one-day cultural festival.

The festival program included DJ sets, collage workshops, culinary collaborations, and our exhibition, *Voyagers*. New and existing people from the larger Soul Food community came out to commemorate Soul Food's 7th birthday. Many current and previous young Soul Food members also attended. It was a special day!





soul food service

This year, we focused less on producing our own events and more on participating in those organized by others, allowing us to dedicate time and resources to other aspects of our work. We nevertheless maintained a strong presence, benefiting from the visibility events provide while developing new partnerships and creative collaborations.

In 2024 we organized and participated in 9 events total. Young Soul Food members attended 6 of these as cultural excursions (marked with *):

- 1 Soul Food Festival – 7th birthday *
- 2 *Voyagers* Finissage *
- 3 S.W.A.G. Outside Belleville *
- 4 We Love Green Festival – Day 1 *
- 5 We Love Green Festival – Day 2
- 6 We Love Green Festival – Day 3
- 7 Les Traversées du Marais Festival – Day 1 *
- 8 Les Traversées du Marais Festival – Day 2 *
- 9 Goethe-Institut Christmas Market







soul food takeovers

A highlight in our cultural community event programming this year was our takeover of La Montgolfière. Our takeover events embody Soul Food through the combination of different forms of art present, featuring menus co-created by young Soul Food members and guest chefs, creative workshops, art exhibitions, immersive performances, and music. Our young members attend these events to experience the cultural offerings alongside other participants, fostering meaningful exchanges. This year we organized two of these takeover events at La Montgolfière to coincide with Soul Food’s 7th birthday and the start of *Voyagers*, and the second was to close out our exhibition.



Visual art: @fanchlouarn

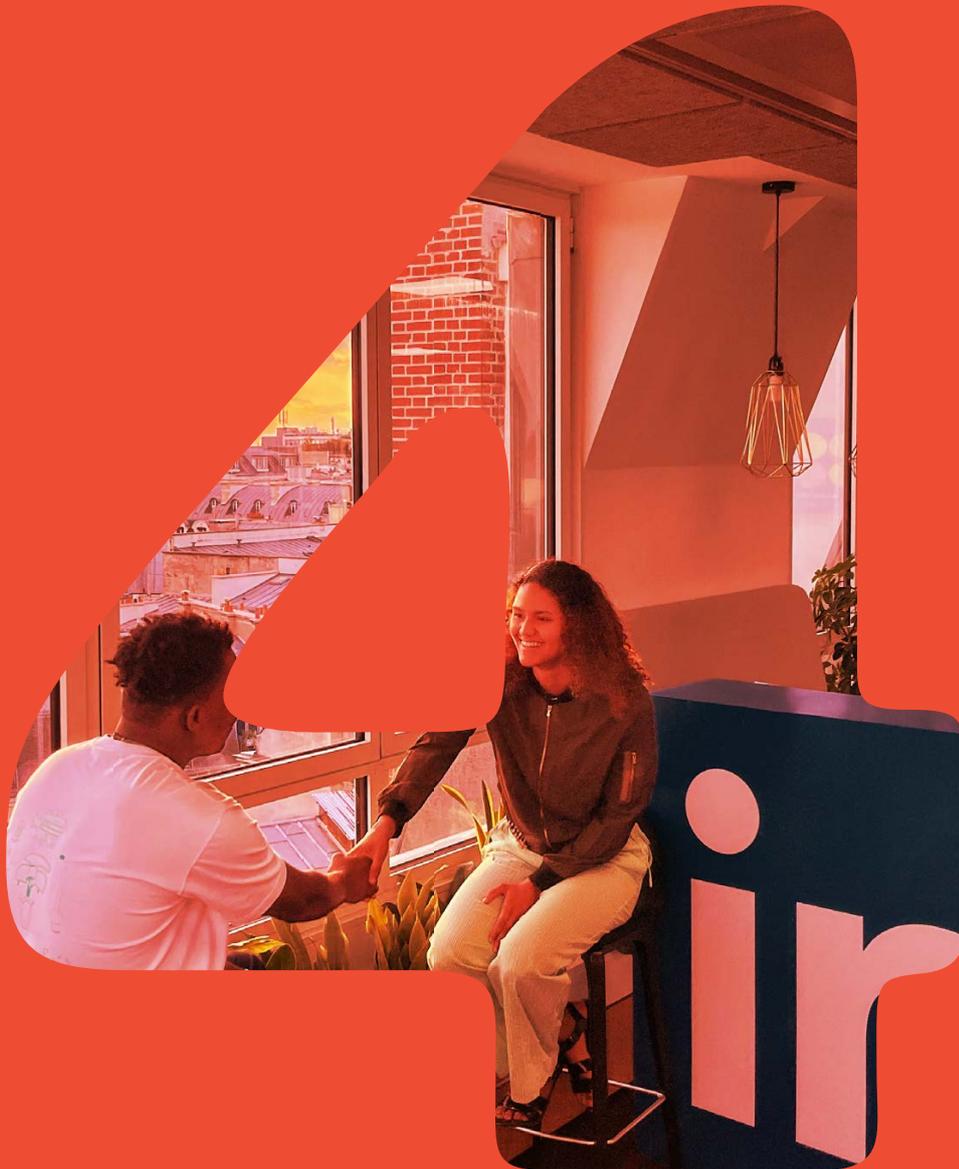
Additional Events

Several partners invited us to collaborate on events in 2025. These collaborations often enriched our overall programming, as we could invite young Soul Food members to participate.

Certain events primarily serve as fundraising and networking platforms, such as when we are invited to join panel discussions or sell our merch and art at creative markets. These occasions also contribute to community growth and increased awareness of our initiatives.



Professional Development Program



Program Breakdown

Through our professional development program, we are able to help young Soul Food members discover cultural professions, launch fulfilling careers, obtain and/or maintain legal immigration status, and integrate in positive ways. Once initial interest and motivation is identified, young members attend an orientation meeting and sign a contract between the organization and themselves, which serves as a means of holding each young member accountable. They also benefit from hours of administrative assistance and mediation by Soul Food, between their employers, education professionals, French Child Services, and the prefectures of the territories concerned, with the goal of ensuring their successful transition into their careers and to protect their legal status in France.

This program is challenging to quantify, as identifying and securing quality professional opportunities, combined with addressing each young member's unique administrative circumstances, demands countless hours of dedicated work. Even so, on every occasion that a young Soul Food member signs a professional contract or receives positive news about their immigration status, it represents a significant achievement—not just for them but for Soul Food as a whole. Each individual success is a testament to the collective impact of our work.

As art and culture are at the heart of Soul Food's mission, we focus exclusively on providing professional opportunities within cultural and creative industries. Through our partners, we offer access to volunteer positions, internships, apprenticeships, and permanent employment in the following fields:

Culinary Arts



Chef



Baker



Pastry Chef

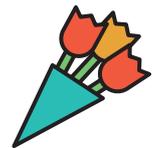
Fashion and Design



Carpenter/
Designer



Fashion
Professional
(various positions)



Florist

Partners

We are committed to working with like-minded partners who are understanding of the administrative obstacles that young Soul Food members face, while also being passionate about what they do and prominent professionals in their domains. Ensuring safe, dignified and non-violent work environments is also one of our priorities, particularly in sectors where these types of issues are prevalent, such as in the restaurant industry. These elements are important to us because we are committed to providing opportunities that are not typically available to the young people we work with. Considering the personal and administrative/legal obstacles that they have to overcome, it's also essential that they receive the maximum support possible, thereby giving them room to learn and grow in their chosen field.

Thanks to these partnerships, the following businesses and cultural establishments are places where young Soul Food members in our professional development program gained occupational experience in 2025:⁹

- Ten Belles
- Refettorio Paris
- Arboré (Royal Madeleine Hotel restaurant)
- La Pointe du Grouin
- Nosso
- Tempero
- Sucré Cœur

⁹ We've maintained partnerships with previous professional development program partners, even if no young Soul Food members were placed in their establishments in 2025.

“We welcomed a young person (young soul food member) for an observational internship, giving him the opportunity to discover the pastry profession. The team truly appreciated having him with us. It is important to us to share our skills and our passion for the craft with soul food’s young members.”

**– Marie Dieudonné, pastry chef, founder of
Sucre Cœur & soul food partner**

Events

Through the events we organize and participate in, young Soul Food members in the culinary arts track of our professional development program have had the opportunity to stretch their creative culinary muscles and collaborate with different professionals in their field by teaming up to create our menus. Through this initiative, they are also able to network with chefs and other professionals from the food industry, and practice the skills they’ve learned while volunteering with our team in a positive setting.

Thanks to these event partnerships, young Soul Food members had the opportunity to work with the following professionals:

- Jordan Moilim
- Lionel Chauvel-Maga (Gumbo Yaya)
- José Orlando (Comité Caribe)
- Morgane Fierce

Each time we contribute to the food offering for an event, we use a list of West African recipes and ingredients that was created with young Soul Food members, partners, chefs, and volunteers. This list contains food that our young members are accustomed to cooking and eating. It’s an integral component of every Soul Food culinary collaboration. Additionally, this practice has given young members the opportunity to switch roles when they teach chefs how to make traditional recipes from their cultures.

After the Program

Our goals with this program are to help young Soul Food members discover a career path they can be passionate about and to open doors to prestigious, meaningful and equitable professional opportunities. We also strive to guide them through their career initiation with reliable and talented professionals and to use these opportunities to help them achieve stable administrative situations in France. Our hope is that as we achieve these goals, they will reach a level of autonomy and positive integration that will then empower them to go off and secure vocations that they aspire to attain on their own.

Some young Soul Food members sign permanent work contracts and continue their professional journeys with our program partners. We continue to provide support to these young members and our partners when we can. Others seek employment elsewhere at the conclusion of their apprenticeship contracts.



@blvck.lens



@fanchlouarn



@kryssssandra



@florencaowen



@florencaowen



@florencaowen



@florencaowen



@florencaowen



Communication & Our Team



Digital Communication

Social Media

Social media remains an essential tool for Soul Food, helping us amplify our mission in multiple ways. We use it to raise awareness around key issues, advocate for our initiatives, increase visibility, build partnerships, share authentic stories, and promote our events.

While we maintain a presence on multiple platforms, Instagram continues to be our most active and impactful channel. It's where we connect most directly with our audience, where we have our largest following and where engagement is highest. Instagram also plays a key role in mobilizing our community, particularly when it comes to event attendance.

4,892 Instagram followers

Most views on a single post= **53,084**¹⁰

We also share content on Facebook, LinkedIn, Spotify, and YouTube, adapting it to each platform's format and audience.

This year's GivingTuesday campaign¹¹ was the most ambitious we have undertaken to date. Shared across our social media platforms and newsletter, it contributed to increased donations, visibility and audience growth.

10 This was for a cross post between Soul Food, Comité Caribe and Gumbo Yaya for Soul Food Festival.

11 GivingTuesday is a global movement that encourages people to give back.



Newsletter: The soul food Collective

Our newsletter continues to play a key role in strengthening our connection with our supporters. We use it to share details about our upcoming events and other Soul Food news. Issues include creative resources, special updates from our community, ways to support our initiatives, and our activity highlights.

Team

Soul Food is powered by a dedicated team of volunteers who bring creativity, skills and diverse perspectives to the organization. This international team continues to play an essential role in driving our mission forward, with contributions ranging from specialized, skills-based tasks to regular, hands-on involvement across our programs.

Leadership

Soul Food remains led by its co-founders, François Le Louarn (secretary general and legal expert) and Kryssandra Heslop (president and creative director). They collaborate on all aspects of the organization while leveraging their individual expertise to manage key projects and strategic initiatives. Their commitment has been instrumental in shaping the organization's growth and impact.

Volunteers

We are particularly proud of our high volunteer retention rate. Our team first expanded during France's initial lockdown in 2020, in response to the emergency context at the time. The three volunteers who joined then remain active in the organization today.

Our volunteer team expanded again this year, with members contributing in varied and meaningful ways. Those based outside France, most of whom started with us while living in Paris, continue to support remote projects such as social media and fundraising campaigns. In Paris, volunteers contributed both through occasional, skills-based contributions—such as graphic design and translation—and through more sustained roles across multiple programs and projects, including cultural excursions. At times, team members also lead activities for young Soul Food members, such as English Club sessions and creative workshops.

This year, we placed greater emphasis on delegation, allowing us to move toward a more sustainable way of working with the continued support of our volunteer team.

“soul food is a small organization where every volunteer and every hour you give is meaningful. It also permits [us] to build a long-term relationship with young members and accompany them in their professional, [and] administrative life, share moments of culture, everyday life, and give support when they are struggling.”

– Claire, soul food volunteer



Financial Resources



Financial Reporting

We adhere to the emergent understanding that dividing expenses into program and overhead costs is not an accurate way to portray a nonprofit's activities and expenditures, especially a small one that functions with limited resources. Overhead spending isn't inherently bad, but the myth that it is has real consequences for nonprofit organizations. Expenses that have been traditionally categorized as overhead costs are actually mission-critical expenditures. They are necessary to generate future income, continue existing programs, pay qualified staff, and guarantee the longevity and sustainability of the organization, making them critical investments.

A more representative financial portrayal demonstrates how costs are shared between programs and activities. For instance, when we invest in fundraising or administrative materials and equipment, these are expenses that support our mission and are therefore classified as core mission support. As we do not currently have a designated Soul Food location, most of our meetings and work sessions take place in public settings (coworking spaces, cafes and restaurants), adding expenses to this category and those of the programs and projects we are working on. When we purchase materials such as art supplies, we typically use them for multiple projects and initiatives, making them direct shared program costs. Other expenses and funds can be specific to particular programs, activities or events, such as disposable cameras for photography projects or train tickets for a trip with young Soul Food members, and that is why they are classified under direct expenses – program specific.

Prioritizing impact instead of overhead is also a more accurate interpretation of success, and doing so helps us make an impact that aligns with our potential. In recent years, leading nonprofit transparency organizations and sector experts have moved away from evaluating nonprofits by overhead ratios alone, emphasizing broader measures of financial health, sustainability and mission impact. Expenses traditionally classified as overhead and administrative costs are required components of nonprofit work. Our mission cannot be carried out without these. A strong, sustainable infrastructure cannot be built without investing in the organization. Our financial reporting reflects this.

Sources of Funding and Donations

We employ creative fundraising strategies, such as organizing cultural community events and selling Soul Food merch, to bolster the organization's long-term sustainability. Monetary donations remain a cornerstone of our financial foundation. Additionally, in-kind and skills-based donations significantly enhance our programs and initiatives, while simultaneously reducing their financial costs.

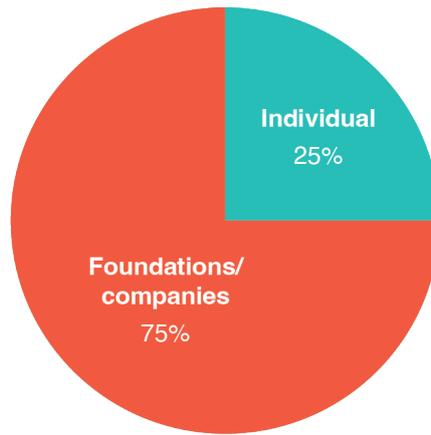
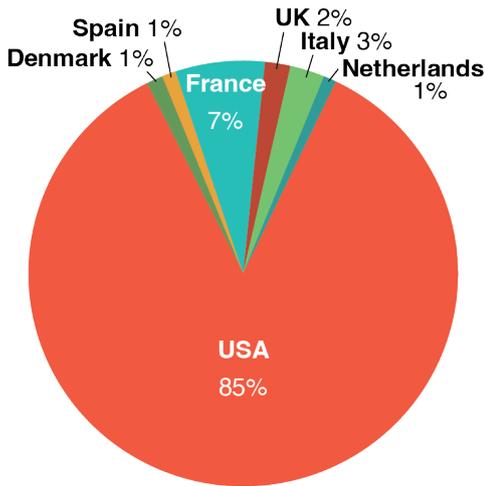
Though our overall funding structure remains consistent, each year brings its own variations. In 2025, these included an unrestricted microgrant from LinkedIn and a donation from pgLang, following our initial connection in 2022 when Soul Food was invited to attend a Kendrick Lamar concert. We also collaborated with FEATURING, a French organization that works with artists to raise funds for charitable causes. Through solidarity lotteries, fans can win stage-worn clothing and symbolic items donated by artists, with proceeds directed to organizations such as ours.¹²

Direct Financial Donations

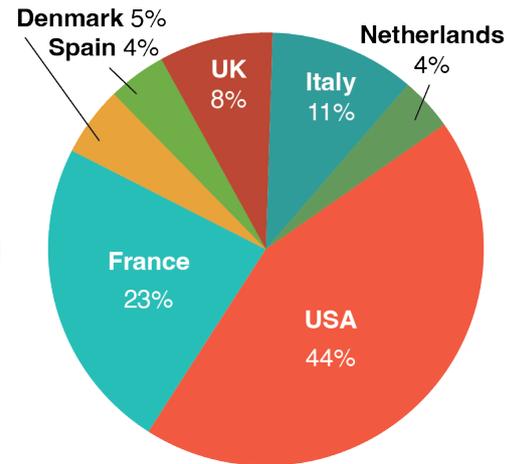
Direct monetary contributions continue to be fundamental to Soul Food's success. These unrestricted funds provide us with the flexibility to pursue our mission and adapt to evolving circumstances as needed.

¹² The FEATURING contribution is included under the category "Independent fundraising initiatives" in our breakdown of sources of income.

Sources of Direct Financial Donations¹³



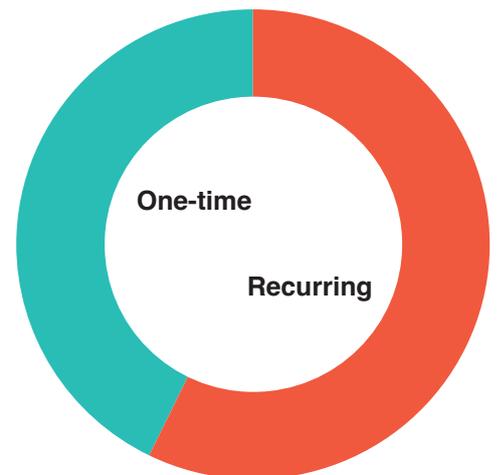
Individual Donations



For the past few years, a primary fundraising objective has been to secure more recurring monthly donations. In 2025, our GivingTuesday campaign achieved this. These monthly contributions enhance our ability to establish a consistent revenue stream and increase the likelihood of securing additional financial support over time.

Regardless of the amount, monthly recurring donations are vital to Soul Food’s sustainability, offering a level of reliability that one-time contributions cannot. They enable us to plan future activities and move closer to compensating staff by ensuring a steady influx of funds each month.

One-Time vs Monthly Recurring Donations



In-Kind Donations

Soul Food has been able to come this far, largely due to in-kind contributions from partners and supporters over the years. These include, but are not limited to: complimentary museum passes, concert tickets, snacks, food and wine for events, exhibition materials, book donations, and space to carry out activities. We’ve also received clothing donations, which have been distributed to young members, particularly those newly arrived and lacking basic necessities including a safe shelter, food and warm clothing. Some partners also offer discounts on items such as tickets to shows.

Skills-Based Donations

Certain donations come in the form of expertise. For instance, creative professionals have donated their time and skills in areas such as photography and videography, ensuring that Soul Food events are well-documented. Several chefs volunteered with us in 2025, providing immense support in terms of fundraising, as well as offering networking and professional experiences for young Soul Food members. Artists also volunteered with us, animating artistic workshops for young members as part of our programming.

Such contributions are invaluable, as we currently lack the budget to pay full price for these services.¹⁴ Their efforts also lend credibility to our work by providing essential tools, such as high-quality digital content to present to partners and potential donors, and professional entertainment at Soul Food events.

¹³ The chart on the left includes individual and foundation/company donations by country. It doesn’t include grants.

¹⁴ We compensate musicians a symbolic sum for performing at our events, in an effort to support artists who support Soul Food.

Creative Community Events

Organizing and participating in events serve multiple purposes for us, including fundraising. One of the primary ways we generate funds through events is by offering food. Since we do not have our own physical space, events also provide the opportunity to sell most of our merch and art. Some events offer additional fundraising avenues, such as direct donations, bake sales, silent auctions, and raffles.

The number of events we organized and participated in by year:

2025=9 **2024=13** **2023=11** **2022=13** **2021=2** **2020=1**

Merch and Art

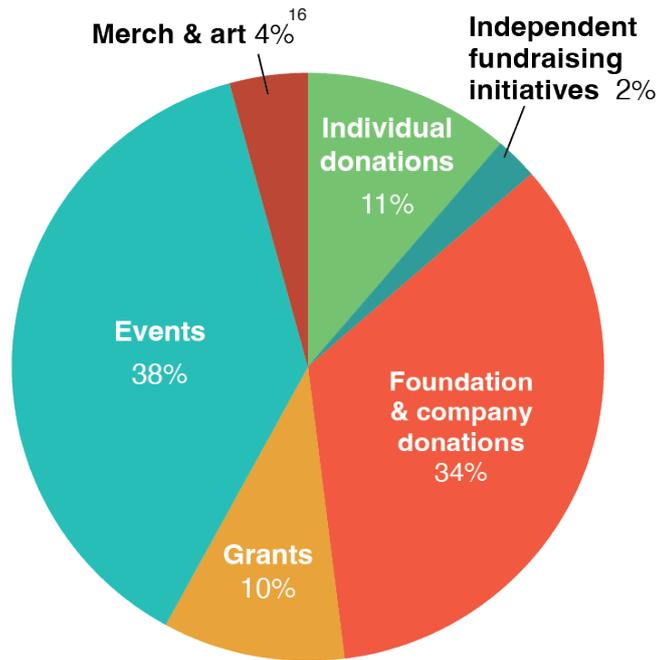
Merch and art are integral components of our fundraising strategy¹⁵. The primary goal of this initiative is to create alternative, non-restrictive revenue streams to fund our activities, aligning with our strategic objective of achieving financial stability. In 2025, we received a donation of high-quality clothing, which we are using across selected merch collections and other projects, helping reduce production costs.

The art pieces we sell are created in collaboration with artists who are part of the Soul Food community. Kryssandra designs Soul Food merch, often incorporating drawings done by young members during our workshops. In addition to having merch and art stands at most of our events, we are sometimes invited to markets, where selling these items is a primary objective.

¹⁵ Each year we sell merch and art created in the current year, as well as in previous years.

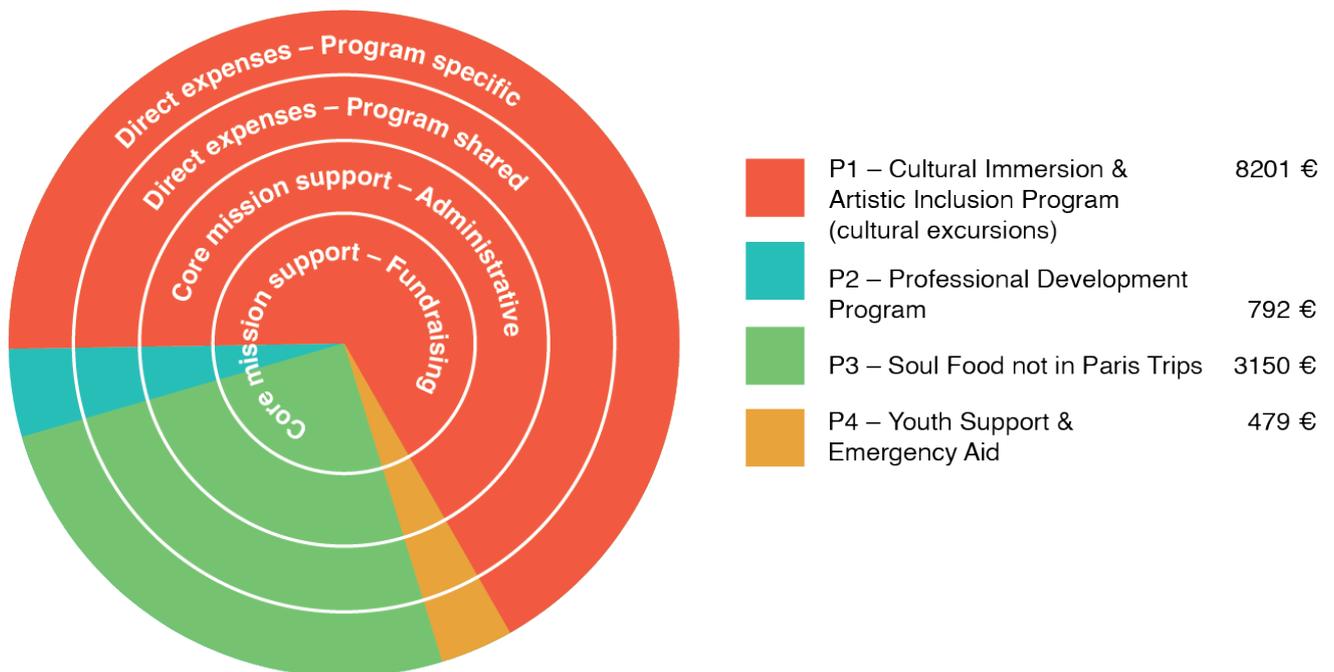


Sources of Income



Breakdown of Expenses

In 2025, we continued to invest in the organization’s core to support Soul Food’s mission. This is reflected in our breakdown of expenses, as are the four principal youth-centered initiatives that we allocated financial resources to throughout the year.



¹⁶ The “Merch & art” total includes all merch and art sales, including those sold at events. The “Events” total is therefore missing these sales.



@kryssssandra



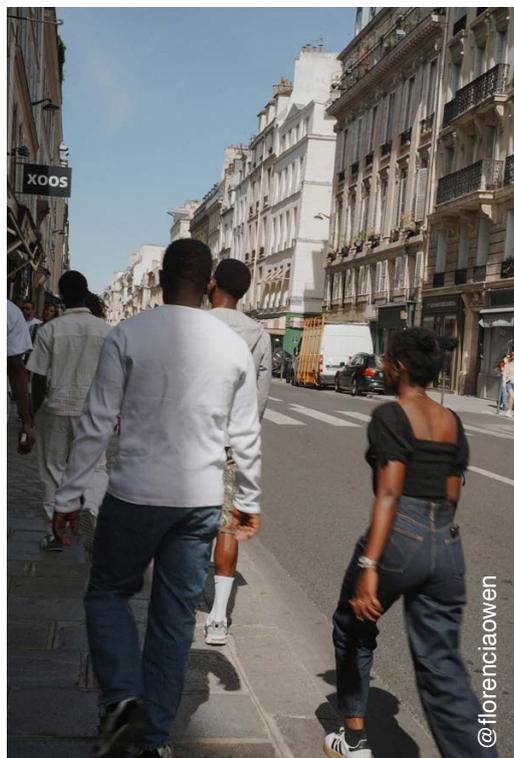
@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@florencaiaowen



@benoit.chenmin



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra



@kryssssandra

Looking Toward the Future



Our Mission Continues: Future Ideas & Projects

Since we created Soul Food in 2018, we have been dedicated to creating meaningful impact in the lives of young migrants and refugees. In 2025, this commitment remained strong, and we are determined to continue building on our work.

soul food not in Paris

In 2023 we shared our goals to expand our initiatives to other locations. In 2024 we began doing so by traveling with young Soul Food members across France and to Italy, where we connected with local individuals and organizations interested in our mission and open to collaboration. We continued this work in 2025 through two trips within France. In both the short and long term, we plan to keep developing these connections in different cities and countries.

One of the key reasons we are looking to expand internationally is our ongoing pursuit of financial stability and independence. From the very beginning, our community has extended beyond borders, with supporters — including donors — based in different countries. It is thanks to this international network that we have been able to grow and sustain our work, and we hope to continue strengthening these connections in the years ahead.



Looking Ahead: Our Priorities for the Near Future

When contemplating Soul Food's future, our focus remains on three key strategic objectives:

- 1.** Achieving financial security without compromising our values
- 2.** Increasing Soul Food's visibility and expanding our community
- 3.** Reaching more young migrants and refugees both locally and internationally

As a volunteer-driven nonprofit, we recognize that while passion fuels our work, sustainability requires more than dedication alone. Operating entirely on volunteer efforts is not a viable long-term solution, which is why securing reliable, values-aligned funding remains a top priority. We are committed to identifying solutions, whether through increased financial support or adjustments to how we operate. While we would love to continue at full capacity, we also recognize the need to adapt if necessary. This is why we dedicated a substantial amount of time and energy throughout the year to experimenting with changes and giving more responsibility to different people on our team.

This past year, recurring monthly donations continued to play a central role in supporting our work. These contributions—regardless of amount—provide a stable foundation that allows us to sustain and grow our programs. We plan to continue exploring additional ways to strengthen this form of support.

A Vision for the Future

Beyond direct programming, our long-term goal is to contribute to broader conversations on migration and integration. We hope that our initiatives can serve as a resource for research and policy discussions, shedding light on how reception conditions, access to equitable opportunities, creative activities, and community support, impact the mental health, integration and overall lives of young migrants and refugees. Through this work, we aspire to drive positive change in migration, mental health and integration approaches worldwide.

Looking ahead, we also aim to establish paid staff positions, to launch our initiatives in different locations and to secure a dedicated physical space for Soul Food. This would serve as a home for our team and a creative hub for young migrants and refugees. We envision a place where local residents and immigrants can connect, where artistic expression thrives and where Soul Food can generate sustainable income to support its programs well into the future.

A Heartfelt Thank You

We are grateful to our community for remaining engaged and for the continued trust in Soul Food. Donations, volunteer hours, social media shares, and in-kind support all contribute to this meaningful work. Together, these efforts help expand access, encourage cultural exchange, support creative expression, and build a more just society.

#SoulFoodForMigrantYouth





**Everyone who contributed to this annual report
did so on a strictly volunteer basis.**

Cover Photo

© Kryssandra Heslop

Photography

© Benoît Dhennin (@benoit.dhennin), Kryssandra Heslop (@krysssssandra), François Le Louarn (@fanchlouarn), Yann Morrison (@yannmorrison), Milton Ngangwele (@milton_scar), Florencia Owen (@florenciaowen), Mahel Pfaff (@blvck.lens), young Soul Food member(s)

Graphic Design

Tim Francis

Content

Kryssandra Heslop

Translation

Pénélope Bacle
Kryssandra Heslop
François Le Louarn

Proofreading & Editing

Matthew Delabre
François Le Louarn
Janick Milimo

François Le Louarn,
Secretary General, Co-Founder
Kryssandra Heslop,
Creative Director, President, Co-Founder

© 2026, soul food.
All rights reserved.



soul food



@soulfoodparis

