

# VOICE OF AROHA

Empowering Voices, Shaping Futures

## IMPACT REPORT 2024

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VOICE OF AROHA









# A Reflection from the Board

*Kia ora koutou Voice of Aroha whānau,*




As I step down from my role as Chair, I feel immense gratitude and pride reflecting on what has been five powerful years of Voice of Aroha (VOA). Our mission to amplify the voices of our diverse communities has only grown stronger in 2024. From grassroots conversations to city-wide celebrations, we've continued to create spaces where stories are not just told, but truly heard.

In 2024, we saw the remarkable growth in our volunteer team – a testament to the trust and energy our communities bring to VOA. We delivered not one, but two World Refugee Day events across Wellington and Lower Hutt, collaborated with partners on meaningful initiatives, and brought the community together for the Ethnic Awards Night and the community breakfast. Through our podcast platform, we've shared powerful stories that reflect the strength, beauty, and resilience of our people.

For me, being part of VOA has been more than a leadership role – it's been a journey of learning, connection, and deep purpose. I've had the privilege of walking alongside incredible leaders, passionate youth, and generous volunteers who give their time to uplift others. This kaupapa has shaped me, and I carry its values with me into whatever comes next.

To our community: thank you for your courage, your voices, and your trust. May we continue to rise together, louder and stronger, as we tell our own stories and build spaces that reflect who we are

*Ki te Kotahi te kākaho, ka whati; Ki te kāpuia, e kore e whati.*
*When we stand alone we are vulnerable, but together we are unbreakable.*
**Aku mihi nui — Luis Perez, Chair**

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# A Message from our CEO

**Kia ora koutou, Voice of Aroha whānau, volunteers, supporters and funders,**



2024 has been a year of incredible growth, deep impact, and powerful storytelling. Our mission to uplift and amplify diverse voices has resonated across communities, reaching more people than ever before.

Our volunteer whānau has expanded significantly, a true reflection of the passion and commitment that fuels our mahi. From World Refugee Day celebrations to the Ethnic Awards Night and the Young Emerging Leaders Breakfast, we have continued to create spaces where culture, leadership, and resilience shine. Through our podcast platform, we've shared powerful stories of change-makers shaping their communities.

Of course, growth comes with challenges. As we expand, securing sustainable funding and resources remains a key focus. Balancing increasing demand for our initiatives while maintaining our values-driven approach requires ongoing commitment and innovation. Yet, despite these hurdles, our kaupapa remains strong.

This year, we also express our deepest gratitude to our outgoing Chair, Luis Perez, whose leadership has been instrumental in shaping Voice of Aroha over the past years. His unwavering commitment has left a lasting legacy, and we thank him for his dedication and vision.

Voice of Aroha is more than an organisation; it is a movement. A movement of people who believe in the power of storytelling, diversity, and community. As we move forward, we remain committed to creating spaces where every story has value and every person feels seen and heard for stronger cohesion and better Aotearoa.

To our volunteers, supporters, and the incredible communities we serve, thank you. Your courage, dedication, and belief in this kaupapa make it all possible.

Together, we continue to grow, to inspire, and to build a future where our voices shape the world around us.

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**Ngā mihi nui — Kodrean Eashae, Chief Executive**

*“Being with Voice of Aroha has been, and is, a beautiful experience - one which has facilitated a lot of growth and new connections for me. I will always enjoy a moment with the VOA team, as I wholeheartedly believe in its kaupapa which brings in wonderful people to do amazing things to promote social cohesion, environmental activism and just doing things to make the world a better place. If you are looking for something meaningful to do with your time, come and join the team to make your days (and the world) better.”*

**Sarah Habib**
Volunteer



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# Vision & Mission

## OUR VISION

To establish a safe and inclusive space where marginalised voices are heard, perspectives are understood, and opportunities are accessible for all.

We strive to shift narratives, break stereotypes, and encourage positive representation of migrant and refugee communities in mainstream media and public discourse.

## OUR MISSION

To create an inclusive platform that empowers diverse communities, shares untold stories, and addresses pressing social issues.

By bringing forward underrepresented perspectives, we normalise and promote pride in refugee and migrant backgrounds while fostering dialogue between communities and decision-makers.

# Our Background & History



## From radio to multimedia platform

Voice of Aroha began as a small volunteer radio program and has grown into a multimedia organisation with 24 volunteers and eight staff members.

Established to challenge stereotypes, foster social cohesion, and empower marginalised voices, VoA has become a vital platform for former refugees and migrant communities in New Zealand.

**24 volunteers • 8 staff • Growing every year**

# Digital Impact & Expansion 2024

Over 1000 pieces of content created across platforms

**100**

Messages from VoA

**154**

Short videos

**76**

Episodes & highlights

**56**

Audio versions

**185+**

Stories posts

**600+**

Local stories & events

*“Volunteering at the Voice of Aroha was one of my highlights of 2024! It has been an amazing experience so far, where I have gotten the opportunity to network with my community and learn about the stories of new settlers in New Zealand. The stories of strength and resilience were extremely inspiring to me and helped me implement these values within my own life. I am excited about joining various events in 2025 and continuing to support the community!”*

**Charlotte Wells**
Volunteer

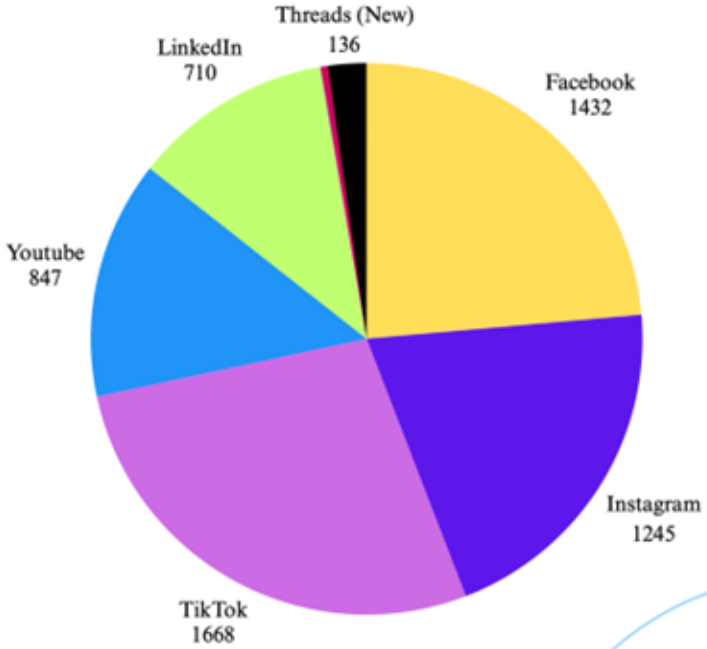



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# Social Media Following 2024

## PLATFORMS FOLLOWERS

**Totoal Followers: 6.061**

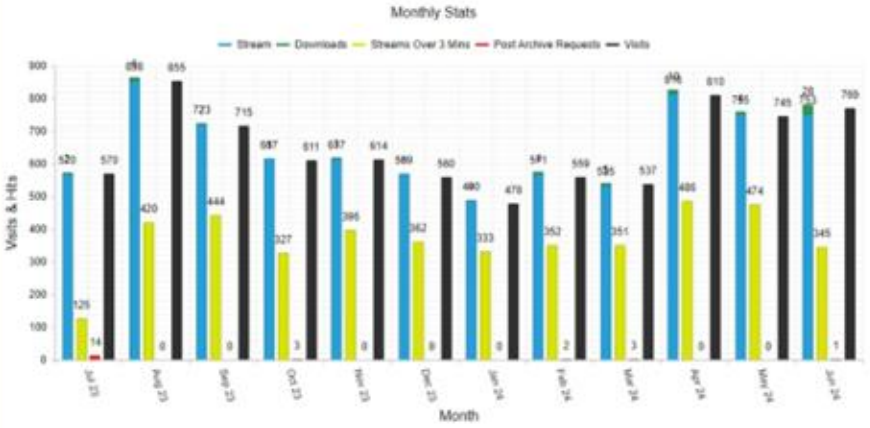



Note: We are starting to spread to new platforms like X and Spotify.

# RADIO PERFORMANCE 2023 - 2024

**Voice of Aroha**

**Statistics - Voice of Aroha**



# Programmes & Activities



01

## Podcasting & Storytelling

Platform for refugee & migrant voices to share journeys, culture and social insights. Training in storytelling and content creation.



02

## Community Events

Cultural festivals, panels and networking forums fostering connection, learning and collaboration across communities.



03

## Youth Empowerment

Ethnic Youth Hub, leadership workshops and mentorship equipping young people with skills and confidence.

# Programmes & Activities (cont.)



04

## Climate Action

Trailblazing inclusion of refugee & migrant voices in climate initiatives. Collaborating with councils and environmental groups.



05

## Ethnic Success Awards

Recognising academic excellence and leadership of young ethnic leaders in partnership with Ministry of Education.




06

## World Refugee Day

Flagship celebration of resilience and contributions. Panel discussions, cultural performances and storytelling.

# Key Achievements

## Media Representation

Over 62,000 YouTube views and growing engagement across digital platforms, increasing migrant & refugee visibility.

## Youth Empowerment

Mentorship and skills workshops equipping young leaders with tools for personal and professional growth.

## Advocacy Success

Supported advocacy for Assyrian, Afghan, Colombian, Palestinian and Syrian communities.

## Increased Visibility

Platforms created for migrant and former refugee voices, promoting understanding and support.

# Awards & Recognition







## NZ Community of the Year Semi-Finalist 2024

Top 10 semi-finalist in Ngā Pou Whirinaki o te Tau — Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Awards.

## Wellington Airport Community Awards

Finalist 2024 — Wellington City

## VolunteerWellington Mahi Aroha Awards

Two volunteers nominated

## Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees 2024

CEO attended in Malaysia + NZ Hub

**Asia Pacific Summit of Refugees 2024, organised by APNOR**




This powerful summit brought together refugee representatives from over 13 hubs worldwide to connect, discuss, and promote refugee rights, participation, and inclusion in decision-making.
Our CEO, Kodrean Eashae, attended the summit in person in Malaysia, while other members of our team were present at the New Zealand Hub. The Aotearoa team made a strong presence both in Malaysia and back home, contributing significantly to the summit's goals through their leadership and active participation.

The summit provided a valuable opportunity to discuss critical issues affecting refugees across the Asia Pacific region. We heard about the challenges in accessing basic human rights, and the determination of those on the front lines was truly inspiring. It reminded us of the importance of continually supporting and advocating for refugee rights.

The summit emphasised empowering refugee-led organisations, ensuring their inclusion in decision-making, and advocating for policy changes to improve service access. Also, we are glad that the summit addressed climate change issues, highlighting the importance of refugee voices in these discussions. This reinforces the significance of the work we do at Voice of Aroha.

As a pioneering organisation in this field over the past two years, we have increased awareness, shared stories, and built leaders from our diverse communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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# Challenges & Future Plans

## CURRENT CHALLENGES

Flexible Spaces
No permanent location — we collaborate with partner organisations for flexible spaces.

Funding Limitations
Like many community organisations, sustainable funding remains a key focus to expand initiatives.

## FUTURE PLANS

→ Youth Voices training academy

→ Climate Action expansion

→ Stronger partnerships & advocacy

→ Digital engagement growth

→ Policy change advocacy

→ Dedicated creation studio spaces

# Community Voices

**Volunteer story: Aarthi Candadai**

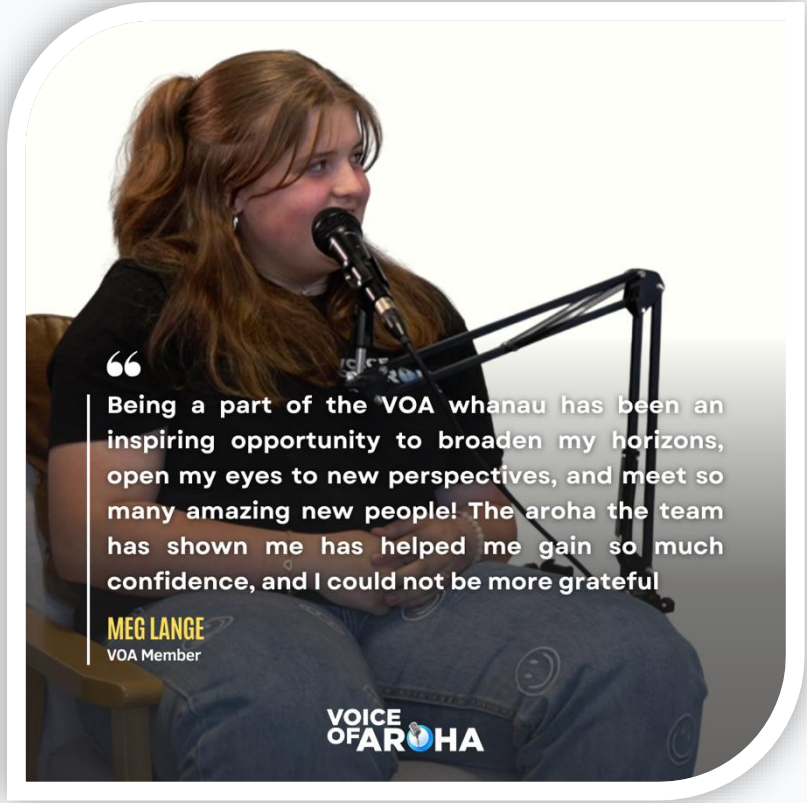
Being part of Voice of Aroha has been such a special experience for me. Over the past two years, I've had the chance to sit down with so many different people and listen to their stories, their struggles, and their dreams. There's something really powerful about just giving someone the space to be heard, and through interviewing people, I've learned so much about perspectives I might never have otherwise understood. It's made me realise how deeply connected we all are, even if our experiences look different on the surface.

What makes Voice of Aroha so special is the community it creates. Not only is it a wonderful platform for storytelling, but it is also a space where people feel heard, valued, and connected. Every conversation, every shared moment has reminded me how important it is to approach the world with empathy. Because at the end of the day, understanding each other is the first step toward real change.

**"When we take the time to listen, we don't just hear stories. We understand people."**



# Community Voices






# Community Voices






# Acknowledgements

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS

Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Wellington Community Fund
Te Upoko o te Ika

Supported by Lotto New Zealand
Funded by NZ Lottery Grants Board

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Te Mahau

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Ministry for Ethnic Communities
Te Tari Mātāwaka

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# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

ALL FORMER REFUGEE COMMUNITIES IN THE WELLINGTON REGION
ALL OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE NATION
AOTEAROA REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICES
AROHA AFTERNOON
BOYS AND GIRLS INSTITUTE WELLINGTON (BGI)
COLOMBIAN YOUTH NEW ZEALAND
EKTA NEW ZEALAND
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PARTNERS
ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN WELLINGTON
GENRATION ZERO WELLINGTON
HUTT MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL
INSPIRING STORIES
LEARN AND INNOVATE WITH NEW KIWI
LOWER HUTT CITY COUNCIL
NEW ZEALAND REFUGEE YOUTH COUNCIL
NEW ZEALAND POLICE
PARENT FOR CLIMATE AOTEAROA
PORIRUA MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL
THINKPLACE NZ |WAHIWHAKAARO
UNION AID NZ
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
WELLINGTON ACCESS RADIO
WELCOMING COMMUNITIES | LOWER HUTT
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

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Voice of Aroha has made remarkable progress in giving voice to marginalised communities, fostering social cohesion, and inspiring positive change. Through its initiatives, VoA has empowered individuals, connected communities, and challenged narratives that often marginalise former refugees and migrants.

As the organisation continues to grow, it remains committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable New Zealand for all. Join us in our mission to amplify diverse voices and shape a future where every story matters.



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# Look forward to collaborating together!

Thank you for your interest in Voice of Aroha.
We invite you to explore collaboration opportunities and support our mission.

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