

2024 - 25

ANNUAL REPORT



rota
Race on the Agenda



rota

Race on the Agenda

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Registered Charity No. 1064975
Company limited by guarantee No. 3425664

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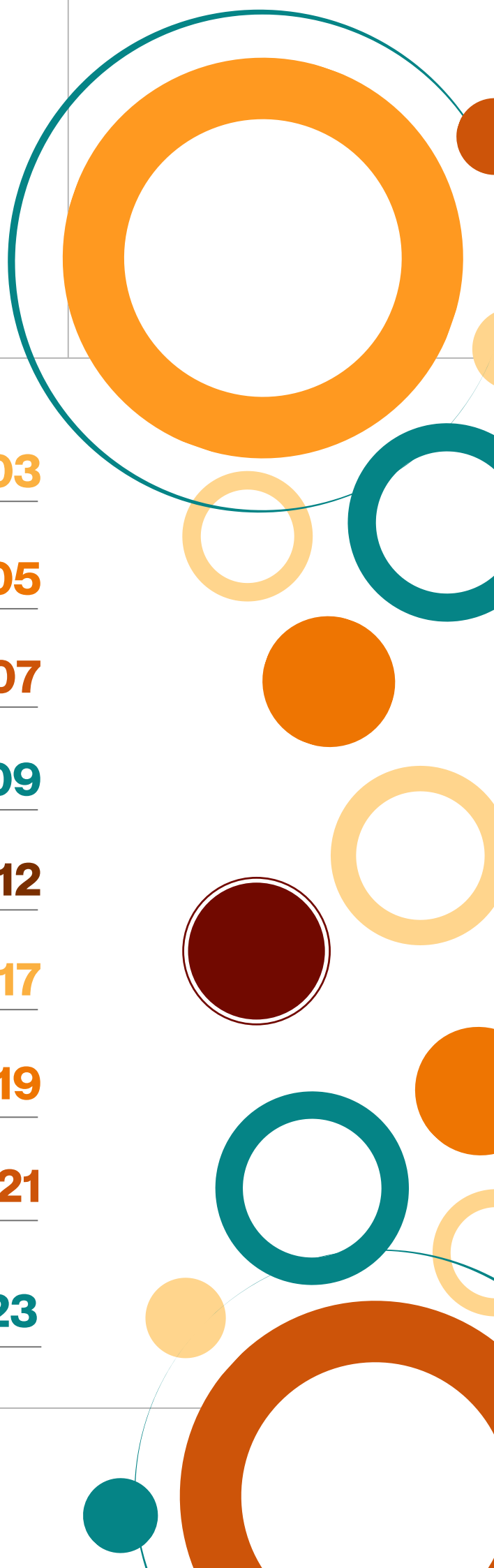
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Chair's Report

Chair's Report

I am pleased to present the Chair's report on the work carried out by Race on the Agenda during the period of 2024/25.

This year has been one of transition and resilience for Race on the Agenda (ROTA).

We were again without a Chief Executive for almost a year and as always, our staff and volunteers, with the support of trustees, continued working to ensure that the ROTA maintained its presence and delivered meaningful impact, while also prioritising the long-term sustainability of the ROTA.

Our priority of exploring and securing new funding continued during these difficult times.

This enabled us to recruit a new CEO, Matthew Johnson, who started in February 2025.

We launched our 3-year Propel Project, supported by our new Research and Policy Coordinator, and a Training and Engagement Manager, Kulvinder and Taranjit. 10-peer researchers were recruited and the project completed its first year and a project report was launched in January 2025

In addition, a planning grant from Oak Foundation has allowed us to begin vital work on housing policy.

Strategic planning for a new organisational strategy has also been initiated, laying the groundwork for ROTA's future direction.

Our membership and social media presence continued to grow modestly.

This was a year of challenges but also of renewal. The successful recruitment of a new staff team, and the expansion of our funding base mark an important step forward.

On behalf of the trustees, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, members, funders, and partner organisations for their valuable contributions. Together, we will strive for a more just and inclusive society.

Ali Ahmed
Chairperson



Our Vision, Mission and Priorities

1

VISION - THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE

TOGETHER, WE WILL END RACISM IN BRITAIN

The Britain we want to live in, is one where race no longer has a negative impact on the lives of racialised groups. Everyone should be able to engage with, contribute to and benefit from society to their full potential. Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups will be able to focus their energies on thriving, rather than the challenges of racism.

An inclusive, fair and equal society where people from all groups can develop their full potential, and where the voluntary and community sector is fully participating in serving them.

2

MISSION - OUR ROLE IN GETTING US THERE

WE WORK WITH RACIALISED COMMUNITIES TO BRING ABOUT GENUINE STRUCTURAL CHANGE TO END RACIAL INEQUALITY

ROTA's role is to drive for structural change by using evidence and research. The evidence comes from working collaboratively with impacted communities and the organisations that support them. We believe communities impacted by racism, and the organisations which serve them, already know how best we can create anti-racist policies and practices. ROTA works with these groups and uses its lobbying and communications expertise to enable communities to exercise their power.

We abide by the principal of 'nothing about us without us'.

3

OUR PRIORITIES

ROTA works to challenge racism in all of its forms and in all of the areas it appears. We have identified six priority areas of British life where structural racism has the largest impact. The areas we have identified are:

- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Immigration
- Employment
- Criminal Justice

Chief executive's report

Chief executive's report

I joined ROTA in February 2025, stepping into an organisation that had spent the better part of a year holding itself together through sheer commitment of staff, volunteers, and trustees, refusing to let the work slow down in the absence of a permanent CEO. That commitment is the first thing I want to name, because it is the foundation everything else in this report is built on.

What I found when I arrived was an organisation in motion. The ROTA Community Research Partnership (RCRP) had completed its inaugural year, training 10 peer researchers, drawn from the communities we exist to serve, producing research, centred on lived experience in education and employment, and launching its findings to a room of fifty people who understood exactly why that work matters. The Brick by Brick housing project had begun to take shape, parliamentary briefings drafted, advisory group members recruited, two House of Lords debates referencing ROTA's analysis. These are not small things.

The context in which we are operating is not a comfortable one. The summer riots of 2024, the ongoing assault on equalities legislation, the disproportionate impact of economic pressures on Black and Global Majority communities - all of it sharpens the question of what organisations like

ROTA are for. My answer is simple: we are here to make structural racism visible, to centre community voices, and to ensure that the people most affected by policy are the ones shaping it.

24/25 was a transitional year; 25/26 will be a year of building. A new organisational strategy is in development. Our funding base has grown. Our team is strong. And the policy landscape, however hostile in places, is full of pressure points, where focused, credible advocacy can make a difference.

I am grateful to the board of trustees for their stewardship during a difficult period, to the staff and volunteers who kept the mission alive, and to our members and funders, whose trust makes this work possible. The agenda is full. We are ready.

Matthew Johnson
Chief Executive



Summary of activities in relation to charity's objectives

Summary of activities in relation to charity's objectives

ROTA retained its mission on the charitable objective by providing a unique combination of frontline and infrastructure services to all Black and Global Majority led organisations and Black and Global Majority people, paying particular attention to those who tend to be marginalised or excluded.

ROTA focused its attention on exploring and securing funding new funding to sustain the organisation, without the leadership of a Chief Executive, for over half of the year. Some of ROTA's funding is restricted to London but we also operate more widely in England and our move to providing virtual services meant our reach was national.

ROTA's services in 2024/25 can be grouped under four categories:

a) Policy Development, Voice and Representation of issues affecting Britain's Black and Global Majority communities by developing responses to consultations and legislative changes, sitting on policy bodies and by supporting staff of other Black and Global Majority and equality organisations to sit at the decision-making table. Attending steering group meetings at Equality Ours and HEAR Network are prime examples of this.

b) Information, Research and Awareness Raising through innovative research and publications, producing articles, blogs and external papers, holding events, attending and speaking at external events and meetings, campaigning and providing specialised support, consultancy and advice. We held our annual conference, with the theme 'The Power of Community Research' and hosted a discussion session around how we can work more closely with our communities in co-creating research that makes a tangible difference.

c) Media representation and thought leadership ROTA continued to be present in media. Our team regularly makes appearances in the media. We made comments in The Guardian; Civicus; The I Newspaper; Dazed; and were interviewed for a German National News podcast and a Spanish radio station, both on the Riots.

d) Projects for Capacity-building and Skills Development We held 2 membership engagement sessions and analysed a membership survey.

Summary of activities in relation to charity's objectives

Volunteers

Volunteers play a vital role in our work. During the year, our Education Policy Researcher volunteer supported ROTA, who committed over 700 hours, leading on our Education work and supporting with the Housing Project.

We met with the DfE and Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition re school exclusions and persistent absences. DfE requires further consultations to gather additional evidence and carry out impact studies. And updated information from DfE on the latest policy and practice regarding school exclusions. Also met with Traveller Movement and IntegratED to discuss future information exchange/partnering.

ROTA Membership

ROTA membership continued to grow, resulting in a 6.29% increase, composed of both individual and organisational membership. 2024/25 saw 114 new members join ROTA. Total membership at the end of the year was 2,857. We continue to develop our online presence with over 10K X followers, over 840 Facebook followers, over 1k LinkedIn followers, 37 BlueSky followers and 69 Instagram followers.

Fundraising

- We secured funding from the City Bridge Foundation Strategic

Initiative fund the new Chief Executive.

- We secured funding from the City Bridge Foundation Anchor programme
- We successfully recruited a new CEO to start in February 2025.
- We secured funding from Oak Foundation to fund the initiation of our new Housing Project, Brick by Brick.

We continue to explore further long-term core funding.



Work carried out in 2024/25

INFORMATION, RESEARCH AND AWARENESS RAISING:

Our principal target groups continue to be The Black and Global Majority communities, anti-racist voluntary organisations, policy makers in government and public sector bodies, and funders. We believe in evidence-based policy. We disseminated information and increased awareness of issues affecting the Black and Global Majority communities and other equality groups through:

- In-house publications: Produced 3 Policy E-Newsletters and 1 Research Publication.
- **ROTA events:** In May 2024, we held 2 RCRP project launch events. And in September we held our AGM 2023/24 and Annual Conference 'The Power of Community Research', hosting a discussion session around the ways in which we can work more closely with our communities in co-creating research that makes a tangible difference.
- **Consultancy and advice:** Recruited a consultant to begin the work of Brick by Brick Housing project, before the recruitment of a full-time project worker.

- External events: ROTA staff continue to attend online and in-person events.

Skills development

ROTA aims to increase the capacity of Black and Global Majority and equality organisations to engage in policy, develop partnerships, and learn from best practice. We also aim to increase the skills and knowledge of Black and Global Majority individuals to fight discrimination and become champions in helping to promote equality of opportunity.



Work carried out in 2024/25

OUR PROJECTS

Brick by Brick – Housing Project

ROTA significantly advanced its Brick by Brick project, positioning racial justice at the heart of housing reform. We hosted two webinars with over 50+ attendees in total, recruited a 11+ advisory group members - including five with lived experience and developed a clear project strategy and communications plan.

Our parliamentary engagement has reached 12+ MPs and peers, resulting in direct references to ROTA's work in 2 House of Lords debates on the Renters (Reform) Bill.

We shaped a formal briefing on racial discrimination in housing for Baroness Janke and our framing was quoted in the House of Lords.

We co-authored an open letter with Heriot-Watt University calling for anti-racist measures in the Renters (Reform) Bill. We shaped key questions for Voice4Change's upcoming roundtable in July 2025 on race and housing.

Our collaborations with Shelter, the Runnymede Trust, and others continue to amplify our calls for change. Through policy influence, stakeholder engagement, and lived experience leadership, ROTA is cementing its position as a thought leader on racial justice and housing.

ROTA Community Research Partnership (RCRP) – Inaugural Year

The inaugural year of the RCRP, enabled by funding from Propel and the City Bridge Foundation, saw significant progress in developing and delivering community-led, anti-racist research, which centres lived experience in the narratives and research which concerns the UK's Black and Global Majority communities.

Key milestones included:

- Finalised our plans for the first year of the partnership.

Began recruiting our Peer Researchers, kicking off with two public information sessions, attended by c.40 people in total. We had a total of 51 applications for the 10 positions available.



Work carried out in 2024/25

- Finalised recruitment of our 10 Peer Researchers, and delivered our first five-day course of training, focussing on research methods, ethics, and project management. We received very positive feedback on this training, which has formed the basis of our successful efforts to have ROTA accredited by the CPD as a provider of anti-racist research training.
- Peer researchers undertook their research, with ad hoc support from ROTA. PRs were working across a very broad range of issues related to the inequities Black and Global Majorities face in the areas of **education** and **employment**. These included work with: Black girls in London schools; BGM junior recruits in the finance sector; and international students in British universities.
- We compiled, synthesised, and analysed the results returned by our Peer Researchers, before writing up the final report from the 2024 cohort.
- We launched the RCRP final report at an in-person event in London, with c.50 attendees.
- Between January and March, we were busy incorporating the feedback and learnings from our first year into our plan of work for the 2025 RCRP cohort.



Our year at glance

SOCIAL MEDIA

- 844 Facebook Page followers
- Over 10k Twitter followers
- 12k website visits
- 1,260 LinkedIn followers
- 37 Bluesky followers
- 169 Instagram followers

MEDIA

- Chief executive made 5 media appearances

MEMBERSHIP

- 6.29% increase in membership
- 114 new members

PUBLICATIONS

- 3 E-newsletters
- 1 online blog
- 1 Research Publication

Funders and Partners

Funders and Partners

We would not be able to provide the support and influence policy change without our funders, supporters, members and volunteers. We would like to thank you all for your time and on-going support throughout this year.

In 2024/25 our work benefitted from funding relationships with:

- City Bridge Foundation
- Oak Foundation

City Bridge Foundation - Core 2: this fund is contributing towards salary costs of the CEO.

City Bridge Foundation - Propel: has provided £500,000 over three years (£162,000; £167,000; £171,000). This funding will enable ROTA to expand its delivery of collaborative peer-led research, developing long-term community policy solutions to combat structural racism in London. It will also improve our capacity to train and upskill members of Black and Global Majority-led groups across London, supporting their combined strength, voice and impact.

City Bridge Foundation - Strategic Initiative: has granted £150,000 over 12 months to enable Race On The Agenda to implement the next phase of our strategic development.

Oak Foundation: has provided funding to develop a pilot housing project that will empower individuals with lived experiences of precarious housing and institutional racism in the housing sector to strengthen their voices, connections, and influence and provide a platform for them to expose and challenge discriminatory practices in housing.



CITY BRIDGE
FOUNDATION

Pr*pel



**Board members,
staff and
volunteers**

Board members, staff and volunteers

Staff & Volunteers

- Chief Executive: Matthew Johnson (February 2025)
- Operations Manager: Saifur Valli
- Research and Policy Coordinator: Kulvinder Nagre
- Training and Engagement Manager: Taranjit Chana
- Senior Development Manager: Michaela Queensborough (December 2024)
- Education Policy Researcher: Eleanor Stokes (Volunteer)

Board members

- Ali Ahmed (Chair)
- Gifford Sutherland (Treasurer)
- Lorraine Dongo (Vice - Chair)
- Dr Tele Amuludun
- Kadra Abdinasir
- Ariel Chardonnay Breaux (Sept 2024)
- Bakari Princeston Ukuu (Sept 2024)
- Michelle Daley (Sept 2024)
- Fevzi Hussein (Sept 2024)

Board and Staff members who left during the year

- Project & Development Manager: Katherine Odukoya (Apr 2024)
- Chief Executive: Michael Buraimoh (Jun 2024)
- Project & Development Manager: Katherine Odukoya
- Trustee: Jasber Singh (Sept 2024)



Summary of year end position

Summary of end year position

The purpose of these pages is to provide a summary of the charity's year end position and income and expenditure for the period stated. This summary is derived from the audited annual accounts, and is not a full representation. This report may not be sufficient to give a full understanding of the charity's finances.

A full copy of the annual accounts and Independent Examiner's report can be obtained from Race on the Agenda (ROTA), SPACES, New Broad Street House 35 New Broad Street London EC2M 1NH.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	<u>Note</u>	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		1,364		356
Total fixed assets			1,364		356
Current assets					
Debtors	13	42,912		1,548	
Cash at bank and in hand		210,341		278,859	
Total current assets		253,253		280,407	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(3,378)		(9,115)	
Net current assets/(liabilities)			249,874		271,292
Total assets less current liabilities			251,238		271,648
Net assets			251,238		271,648
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted funds	16		136,668		151,261
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds	16	<u>65,000</u>		<u>65,000</u>	
General fund	16	49,570		55,386	
Total unrestricted funds			114,570		120,387
Total charity funds			251,238		271,648

Summary of income and expenditure

Summary of income and expenditure

	Notes	Year ended 31 March 2025			Year ended 31 March 2024		
		<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Total</u> £	<u>Restricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Funds</u> £	<u>Total</u> £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	-	7,662	7,662	-	51,456	51,456
Income from charitable activities:							
Voluntary income	3	225,750	-	225,750	217,737	-	217,737
Income from other activities:							
Fees and sundry	4	-	300	300	-	-	-
Investment income		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income		<u>£225,750</u>	<u>£7,962</u>	<u>£233,712</u>	<u>£217,737</u>	<u>£51,456</u>	<u>£269,193</u>
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	8	8,754	442	9,196	2,688	2,756	5,444
Charitable activities	5	231,589	13,336	244,925	63,787	81,811	145,599
Total Expenditure		<u>£240,343</u>	<u>£13,778</u>	<u>£254,121</u>	<u>£66,475</u>	<u>£84,567</u>	<u>£151,043</u>
Net income /(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year		(14,593)	(5,817)	(20,410)	151,261	(33,111)	118,150
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		151,261	120,387	271,648	-	153,498	153,498
Total funds carried forward		<u>136,668</u>	<u>£114,570</u>	<u>£251,238</u>	<u>£151,261</u>	<u>£120,387</u>	<u>£271,648</u>

The company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP. These financial statements were approved by the board on 21 July 2025.

Registered Company number 3425664.



Richard Stone

Alan Bates-Taylor

John Bates
Chairman of Trustees

Jon Davies
Pillaton Girls School (Trafford)

David Trussard
Commissioning Support for
London

Jon Davies

Jon Davies

Liz St Clair
Conservative Women's Party

Jonathan Tay
Southwark Council

Anna James
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Helen Sotomayor

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ALA

Gifford Sutherland
Foundation 4 Life

Jon Stewart
Council 4

Carolyn Sullivan
Home Office

Isabel Wallace-Sinott

Katy Taylor

Jackie Stevenson
Suffolkshire & West Midlands
Probation Trust

Kate Taylor
Suffolkshire and Probation Trust

Join us

ROTA membership is free. ROTA's members are essential in all the work we produce. Without your input, our publications, events, and networks would lack accuracy and depth.

Membership will help keep you up to date with the social policy issues affecting the Black and Global Majority communities.

Membership benefits include:

- Regular email bulletins, policy briefings, consultation responses and reports
- Information on ROTA's upcoming events
- Information on networking opportunities
- The opportunity to participate on policy steering groups

Register at: rota.org.uk/rotamembership

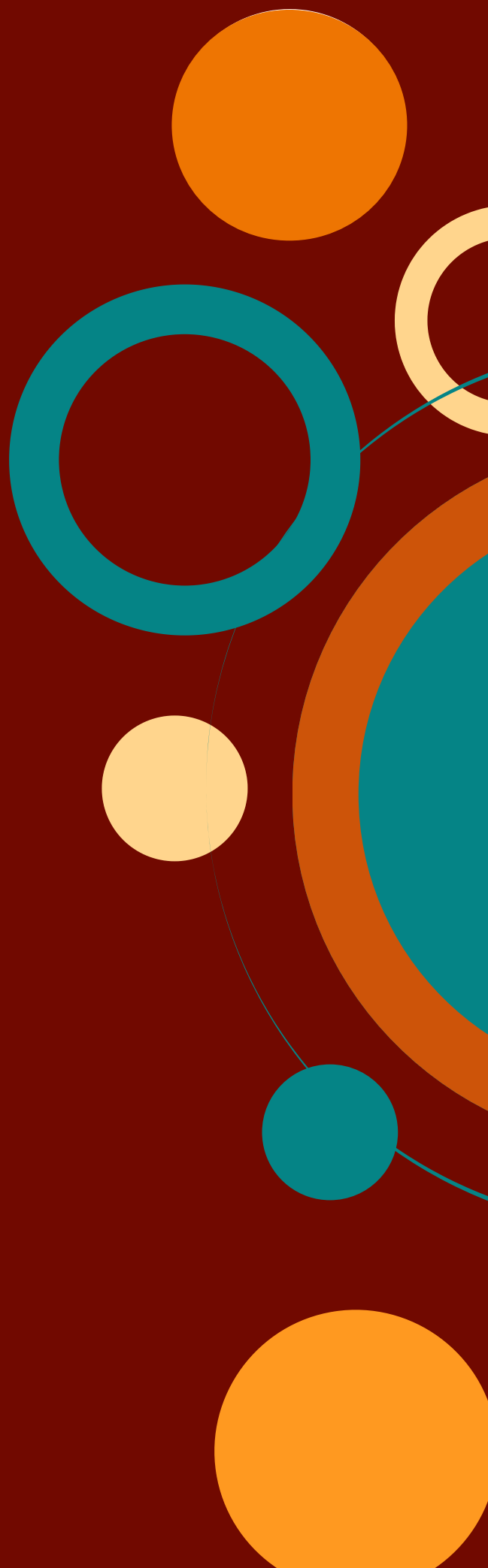
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