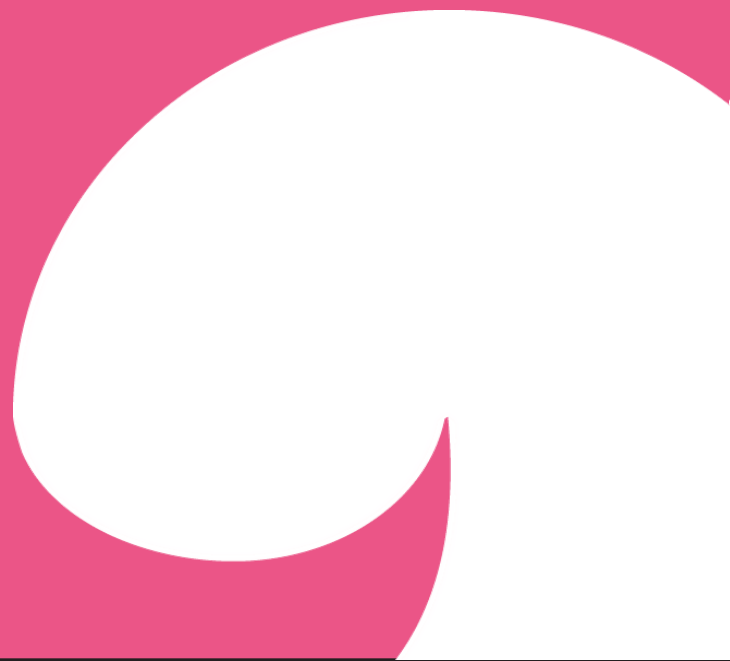


imix

Strategy

2021- 2024



Introduction

This document outlines our plans for IMIX for 2021-2024. We are determined to change the conversation about migration in the UK and will do this by supporting the migration sector and our allies to tell stories of change and challenge negative stereotypes.

Since its inception in 2017, IMIX has gone from strength to strength. We're clear about the value we bring the migration space and wider social justice movement and there is a clear strategic space in which we operate. Since gaining our independence we've rebranded, developed a new digital presence and increased our capacity. While there is still more to be done from an organisational development perspective, we are in good financial health.

How we work is as important as what we do. We will strive to increase the diversity of our team; we will work even closer with people with lived experience of migration to help them tell their stories and we approach all our work with kindness and compassion.

Our vision is a society which embraces and celebrates people who move to the UK, one where we can all live well together.

Our mission is to change the conversation about migration and refugees, challenging an often-hostile media agenda and altering public perception.

Reflections on the 2018-2021 strategy

Much in the initial strategy still holds true, the communications capacity of the migration sector is fragile, and the public still have strong views on migration. While migration is not as top of mind as it was before the referendum to leave the EU, it is still an important issue and one that the media and policy makers are obsessed with.

We work closely with partner organisations to support them to achieve their aims by offering mentoring, training and consultancy to meet their specific needs – and to help them reach as wide an audience as possible. Our network is growing. We now have over 500 members signed up to our googlegroup. Members receive a daily press briefing, access to our messaging and tools kits and invites to monthly meetings as well as being able to access bespoke advice.

Over the last three years we've held training courses across the country - everywhere from Southampton to Newcastle. As well as our core offer of media and audience understanding we've delivered training on digital outreach and how to manage in a crisis. We've supercharged our support for people with lived experience of migration, and in partnership with Refugee Week have supported dozens of people to tell their stories and share their experiences through the media. We've launched a new initiative 'human journeys' to give a platform for people with lived experience to share their story safely.

We have secured significant international, national and local press coverage and helped shape the coverage regarding some of the toughest issues in the migration space. From the Windrush scandal to EU citizens' rights we've had our thumb print on some of the biggest campaigns in the sector and are rightly proud of what we've achieved.

While we have increased our capacity, we are still unable to meet all the requests made of us, and we are still struggling to deliver the local level support we know is much needed, but we've developed strong relationships with journalists and media outlets to mitigate the risk.

While we have not made as much progress as we would have liked on making the UK a more hospitable and welcoming environment for those who move here, we are clearer about our role in that endeavour and look forward to increasing our focus in this area in years to come.

External context

When we started the review process, the biggest consideration was the impact of Brexit. We now have the added dilemma of what a post-covid Britain looks like. With the country facing an uncertain future outside of Europe and impoverished due to the pandemic, we have already seen migrants being scapegoated. The impact of this is being felt in communities across the country, but particularly in regions which are hosting above average numbers of people seeking asylum. The migration narrative, driven by the government, has fallen back into contributors / genuine refugees v illegal migrants.

The Government - with its 80-seat majority - is talking up 'taking back control' and being tougher on 'illegal migration' at the same time it has created a new points-based system which will enable more people than ever to come and live and work in the UK. While some argue that this approach is balanced, there is a risk that those who have no safe routes to the UK are being vilified and that refugee protection might only be extended to those who come via resettlement schemes.

The sector is more open to collaboration which makes our job easier and we have established good links with other infrastructure organisations within the sector and beyond but the challenge is clear, the sector is still poorly funded (compared to other causes) and external factors often mean we're competing for investment.

Financial Situation

Thanks to a strong strategic approach we have brought on several new donors to support our work including Comic Relief, Esmee Fairbairn and Trust for London as well as securing follow-on grants from our core supporters Unbound Philanthropy, Oak Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, AB Charitable Trust and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. This means we start the new strategy period in a strong financial position, we are operating with six months in reserve and have several multi-year grants.

This does not mean we are complacent. We know it will be harder to secure funds in future; critical to our future success is continued fiscal control, a greater focus on monitoring and evaluation and diversifying income. Within this strategy period we will better quantify the costs of our training and support as well as review our operational costs to ensure we are getting best value for money.



Overall Aims

To create an open and welcoming Britain for people who make the UK their home; by increasing support for refugee protection and to build social support for migration.

To build sustainable communications capacity in the refugee and migration sector to improve the quality and volume of media coverage.

Objectives

- To increase the number of experts by experience engaging with debates on migration
- To support the sector to deliver higher impact campaigns and media interventions which persuade segments on the public to be more welcoming to migrants
- To build strong relationships with mass media outlets and digital content providers
- To deliver regional training and support to increase the communications capacity of small and grassroots organisations
- To use digital platforms to increase empathy, understanding and celebration of people who migrate
- To support development of new narratives and messaging frameworks

Target Audience

Our core audiences are the UK media and people working within the migration space. We believe that the sector base must be engaged and energised, to build more support. Following work on audience insight, we intend our media engagement to be with outlets which can help us reach a subset of the ‘persuadable middle’, One Nation Conservatives, whose support the migration sector needs if we are to build more support for refugees, people seeking asylum and those who migrate.

Priority policy areas

While we want to be responsive to the sector, we have to focus our efforts on media outreach and supporting campaigns which influence public opinion. From discussions with partners, including trusted journalists, we will focus on key workers in the context of post Brexit immigration policy, supporting initiatives around asylum reform and creating new narratives around destitution. Our vital contribution to these debates is two-fold, supporting journalists to undertake investigations, and helping the sector to tell the story of community.

We also know that support for migration is at risk when we don’t counter some of the far-right narratives. We will, therefore, continue to support charities in the sector to put forward alternative perspectives to more challenging issues such as channel crossings and detention.



Operationalising the strategy

Each area of work will have its own detailed plan, including monitoring and evaluating our success, based on the approach outlined below.

Working with experts by experience

This might not be what we are known for, but we have done a lot of work with people with lived experience of migration and are planning to do this more strategically in future. We will nurture relationships with a small group of experts by experience to help them tell their stories and, importantly, comment on policy issues.

Measurement and evaluation: We are committed to working with six people a year and will work with them to understand what success looks like for their media interactions.

Media engagement

We have excellent relationships across broadcast and print outlets at the national, regional and local levels. We are rebalancing our resources to increase our support at the grassroots level as local media will always be important in terms of shifting the narrative. While we will maintain our strong relationships with progressive outlets, during this strategy period, we will increase our work with the mass media outlets such as the Mail, ITV and LBC. To reach the moveable middle we will also increase storytelling through consumer press, like GQ and Stylist magazines and digital content providers like Ladbible.

Due to our success in building relationships we have become a defacto press office for the sector, this is time and resource heavy and there has been a lot of out-of-hours work which has not been compensated for. We need to consider the balance between being responsive to the needs of charities in the sector and journalists while delivering high quality support and advice.

Measurement and evaluation: number and type of media articles secured.

Capacity building & training

Building the capacity of the sector is core to IMIX's theory of change and something we do well. We will continue to offer digital, media understanding, spokespeople and audience insight training. In addition, we want to hold more 'masterclasses' to help the sector get to grips with things like pitching a story to the media, dealing with trolls, how to handle crises and campaign creation / delivery.

Measurement and evaluation: 18 training sessions a year; post training we send out a survey to capture initial feedback. We will follow up with attendees within six months of training to see what actions they have taken following our intervention.

Operationalising the strategy

Regional working

We are aiming to replicate our successful partnership in the West Midlands in other regions in the UK. Due to more home working, Covid has given us the opportunity to think more creatively about how we use our resources, for example our new Strategic Communications Manager is based in Liverpool so will work with the regional media there.

Measurement and evaluation: Number of partners supported, media hits and collaborations.

Digital content

This will be an area of growth for us, we plan to increase our investment in digital – content and collateral development - to role-model good digital communications which is something partners have requested. However, we have our own capacity issues and some skills gaps to deliver certain aspects. Where possible, we will train up our staff to meet needs, but also, we'll work with more volunteers who have offered their help.

Measurement and evaluation: Number of specific human-focused, positive and community stories shared on the website and social media, website hits and social media engagement.

Narrative and messaging

While it's vital that the sector owns and develops narratives and messages, we will use our expertise to support collaborations, and where appropriate, lead message development.

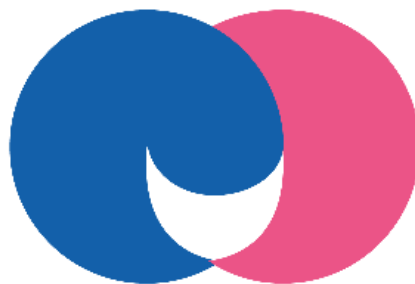
Measurement and evaluation: Number of projects we support, message take-up with groups.

Resourcing the strategy

The first full year of independence has coincided with the Covid pandemic so almost inevitably it's had an impact on the team. While the aim has always been to keep the team small and focused, we want to invest more in local level interactions and digital content, to do this we may have to reduce some of our media outreach and / or say no more to invest more energy in the priority areas: refugee welcome, destitution, post-Brexit immigration systems and channel crossings.

To meet some resource gaps and to give people with lived experience of migration the opportunity to learn about the media and communications we have created a London living wage internship programme.

Towards the middle of this strategy period, we will start conversations with potential new funders as well as investigating alternative funding models including increasing our consultancy work and a charging framework for training.



imix

IMIX registered address:
CAN Mezzanine, 7-14 Great Dover
Street, London SE1 4YR

phone: 020 7922 7853
email: media@imix.org.uk
website: imix.org.uk

charity number: 1183693