



Changing the conversation



Impact Report

July 2022 – June 2023

Welcome from our Chief Executive, Jenni Regan



It is a challenging time to be a migrant in the UK. The past year marked the poignant first anniversaries of the fall of Kabul to the Taliban and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We have seen violent attacks on asylum seekers in Knowsley and a battle against the government's unlawful policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda. According to British Futures, dissatisfaction with the government's handling of immigration has surged to record levels.

We need to have positive and meaningful conversations about migration to make any progress. IMIX works to make this productive dialogue a reality by supporting organisations to combat damaging media narratives and communicate about migration more effectively. Through this work, we can improve public attitudes towards migration.

This past financial year was my first as Chief Executive Officer, and I am continually inspired by the dedication and resilience of our team. As we embark on a new chapter, I am honoured to share our reflections on the past year and our ambitious vision for the future.

Ambitions:

1

We will significantly increase the quality and quantity of humanising media coverage about refugees and migrants in the UK.

2

We will empower more organisations and experts by lived experience to communicate effectively through high-quality training, digital resources, and strategic support.

3

We will prioritise the voices of refugees and migrants.

None of our accomplishments would be possible without the unwavering support of our team, funders, and partners. You are the driving force behind our work, and we extend our deepest gratitude for your continued commitment. Together, we can create a more compassionate society where every voice is heard and valued.

J Regan

Jenni Regan
Chief Executive

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Everything IMIX does seeks to challenge the often-hostile narrative on migration and displacement. We support the migration sector to communicate more effectively, place positive coverage of migration in the media, and empower experts by lived experience to tell their stories.

There is a human story behind every negative headline and that story deserves to be heard.



Our vision

is a society which embraces and celebrates people who move to the UK, whether through migration or displacement, 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 influencing public attitudes.

Our values

Ambitious

We challenge ourselves to take risks and push boundaries in all we do. We strive for excellence and aim to create significant, positive change in the narrative around migration.

Inclusive

We advocate for inclusion and participation for everyone, upholding diversity, fairness, and respect for individual choices. Our work ensures that all voices, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, are heard, valued and centred.

Collaborative

We seek out opportunities to work in partnership with others, sharing knowledge, and inspiring each other. By collaborating, we develop new and creative approaches to achieve our shared goals.

Adaptable

We work flexibly and responsively, enabling us to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our audiences and participants. Our adaptability allows us to meet changing needs and challenges effectively.

Media coverage: Increasing Quality and Reach

July 2022 – June 2023

65%

177 media stories placed
by the IMIX team, approx. 1 every
2 days, with **65% featuring**
lived experience voices

68%

68% of these stories
appeared in media outlets with a
‘mixed middle’ audience
like ITV, BBC, and Sky News

Time and again, we see people stop and listen when confronted with the real story of a real person. By pushing these narratives to the forefront of the media, we can change public attitudes to migration.

Between July 2022 and June 2023, we placed 2 humanising stories in the media every month. 65% of these featured lived experience voices.

There's a risk, though, that these stories only make their way into the feeds of people who are already pro-migration. Instead, we hope to talk to the ‘mixed middle’ – the half of the UK who are ambivalent about migration – and encourage them to join us. And this year, 68% of the stories we placed appeared in outlets with a mixed middle audience. This means we can make a real difference.



Some of the Powerful Stories
we Placed in 2022/23

Metro



I would have been arrested if I stayed in Turkey – so I fled to the UK



OPINION
Zozan Yasar
Published July 5, 2022 12:45pm Updated July 5, 2022 12:48pm


Zozan Yasar, a Kurdish journalist and Refugee Week Ambassador, **told her story in the Metro** with our support. As she writes,

“I believe in stories. As human beings, we all have stories, and they help us to be heard and to be known.”

I believe my voice can help
make change happen.

Zahra Shaheer,
Refugee Week Ambassador 2023


SkyNews




Channel migrants: 'Nobody wants to be a refugee'


The government is set to introduce plans to stop people crossing the Channel in small boats from claiming asylum in the UK, but opposition parties say it will punish the victims of human trafficking.

Monday 6 March 2023 12:16, UK





I'm an asylum seeker and was in the hotel targeted by far-right rioters



FIRST PERSON
Arian
Published February 21, 2023 11:20am Updated February 21, 2023 11:20am

In February 2023, protestors rioted outside a hotel housing asylum seekers. We supported a resident of the hotel to write **a first-person piece in the Metro** about what it was like inside. The editor described it as one of the most powerful articles he'd ever commissioned.

Empowering Grass Roots Organisations

July 2022 – June 2023

Heightened hostility towards migrants put the sector under a whole new level of pressure. It's more difficult for those representing migrants to land their message, but also more important that they do. We build communications confidence and know-how in these spokespeople and advocates who have so much else to focus on, and we create collaborative spaces where they can share their expertise with each other.

Funding meant we could give free masterclasses to 226 people who wanted to communicate more effectively about migration. Our sessions include media training for the sector and classes for experts by lived experience who want to tell their stories. The feedback is excellent: participants consistently tell us how much confidence they gain.

 The training IMIX delivered gave us all the confidence we needed to break the wall between us and the media world. 

Mihai Calin Bica,
Roma Support Group

We also designed and delivered 30 bespoke media training sessions to 318 people from a wide range of organisations. Counterpoints Arts told us how valuable our training has been:

226 226 people attended our masterclasses

318 318 people received bespoke training

42% 42% of attendees had lived experience of migration

 IMIX's strategic direction and creativity in our work with press and broadcasters has brought a step-change in our reach across the country. 

Tom Green,
Counterpoints Arts

Other Organisations who Benefitted from our Bespoke Sessions this Year Include:



Communications Network

As well as providing training, we also produce sector-specific resources. In 2022, the government responded to the increase in the deadly Channel crossings by threatening to deport those who cross irregularly. The refugee sector needed to find effective ways to talk about safe routes – or more precisely, the lack of them – with the public. So, we collaborated with refugees and communications specialists to develop a series of messages about safe routes that, when tested, landed with the 'mixed middle'. (You can read that toolkit [here](#).)

We also provide the sector with a daily news round-up of relevant headlines from the UK and Europe. The round-up is especially popular with the sector and by June 2023, we were sending it to over 1,000 people. Recipients know that we have the headlines covered, so they can focus on other urgent work.



Creating Collaborative Spaces

We can't change public attitudes towards migration by ourselves. We believe in the power of a collaborative refugee sector, which shares knowledge and skills to maximise its impact. That's why, in 2022/23, we hosted various collaborative spaces:

- **A Google group** which acts as an online forum on communications and media in the sector. It had 1100 members as of June 2023.
- **Monthly comms meetings** for the sector. Guest speakers share best practice and answer questions.
- **Panel events**, like the Channel crossings briefing we held in late 2022. This was attended by 40 people, more than half of whom were journalists from outlets like Sky, the Telegraph, BBC, Tortoise and Bloomberg. We promoted fact-checking and first-person narratives in coverage of small-boat crossings, and the evening inspired a number of high-profile news articles.

I can't tell you how valuable the news round-up, Google group, training sessions, and support you provide are to us at Doctors of the World.

Melanie Delaroche,
Communications & Engagement Manager,
Doctors of the World UK

Empowering Experts by Experience

July 2022 – June 2023

At IMIX, we believe that the best way to foreground the human side of migration is by empowering people with lived experience to tell their own stories. And we are not alone: according to Migration Exchange, 65% of NGOs and 74% of funders believe that increasing the meaningful involvement of refugees themselves should be one of the sector's top priorities. That's why we devote so much of our energy to training and mentoring migrant ambassadors to share their experiences both with confidence and in a safeguarded way.



“I wish I could have put the home secretary in that room, to surround her with their passion and power – maybe then she might have realised who they really are. Human beings. Like me, like her.”

Katherine Maxwell-Rose,
IMIX, on meeting the International Migrants Day ambassadors

During 2022/23, we ran two ambassador programmes in partnership with the IOM and Counterpoint Arts, one for International Migrants Day in December and another for Refugee Week in June. Each of our sixteen Ambassadors benefitted from media training, one-to-one mentoring, and networking opportunities.

In the end, we pitched our Ambassadors' stories to the press and placed numerous positive first-person narratives about migration with prominent outlets like Times Radio, the Metro, and the Big Issue. Many of our Ambassadors also joined our Lived Experience Storytellers Network and continue to improve our work with their invaluable perspectives.



Case Study

Amir Hussain Ibrahimi

Amir grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan with his parents and siblings; he grew into a budding photojournalist. When Kabul fell in 2021, the Taliban attacked him for documenting their violence. Amir was evacuated to England, but his parents and sister remain in Kabul. “Since I arrived here, I can't sleep well. I'm always thinking about them.”

When IMIX first met Amir, he had been living alone in a Southend hotel room for a year, waiting for a home. While grateful for his safety, he struggled with isolation and a lack of confidence. He came to our masterclass for people with lived experience of asylum, hoping to learn how he could anonymously tell his story.

Amir has since become a talented and confident advocate. In September 2022, he was selected as an Ambassador for International Migrants Day. And with our training and support, he has spoken powerfully about his experiences of asylum with ITV News, The Independent and Metro. Amir's newfound confidence empowered him to continue pursuing photojournalism: he recently co-produced a documentary and worked as a filmmaker in New York. Most importantly, he has built himself a supportive network.

“I now have power over my own story”

Amir Hussain Ibrahimi,
International Migrants Day Ambassador,
2022

Campaigns and Advocacy

July 2022 – June 2023

Destitution Narrative Project

Unlocking potential - Changing attitudes on migrant destitution

Five principles for communicating about migrant destitution



01 Describe participation in all its forms

02 Highlight the human cost

03 Show we're on the same side

04 Encourage resourcefulness

05 Reflect reality

An eden stanley project

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Unlocking Potential – The Destitution Narrative Project, launched in November 2022, built on our previous narrative work from **The Struggle for Safety**. Over 18 months, in partnership with Eden Stanley, NACCOM and Praxis, we placed the voices of lived experience at the heart of a series of workshops and focus groups, alongside charities, organisations, and journalists. Our approach ensures that messaging is authentic and resonates with those most affected, creating a safe space for people to share their realities of destitution and shape the narrative directly.

Our goal was to develop messaging that highlights the interconnectedness between migrants and the wider population while remaining politically neutral. We engaged with decision-makers at the local and regional levels, as well as in the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – bodies with the power to support individuals facing destitution. Through research, we identified existing narratives that hinder progress and refined new approaches to capture attention and motivate action across political lines. The Unlocking Potential narrative toolkit was created to equip organisations and individuals with a strategic messaging framework, suggested copy, and audience engagement strategies to drive change in practice and policy, ensuring fewer people are left isolated from their communities.

How to Talk About Safe Routes

Working with **More In Common**, we put the question, ‘Do you know what safe routes are?’ to two focus groups in two marginal constituencies likely to be electoral battlegrounds in the next General Election.

When we asked about safe routes, the first reaction was usually a shrug or a blank face. But when the discussion moved on to Channel crossings, many participants offered suggestions that were, effectively, safe routes. As one participant put it:

“There is quite a lot of spare work in the country and if people are willing to come here and work, I don’t think anybody would have a problem with that at all... In fact, if we were to legalise it, just allow people to come, people wouldn’t have to come across the Channel in a small boat and we could control it ourselves.”

When asked to imagine safe routes, another described:

“A plane landing rather than a dinghy, a nice plane, people waiting with open arms.”

More concerning for participants was the idea that, with no checks at all, criminals could take advantage of the chaos to slip through borders. There was strong support for a system that could respond quickly in a crisis, effectively identify people with a convincing claim, and allow them to work when they arrived.

There are clearly limits to a policy of safe routes alone, but talking about it brings the focus away from the current denial and dog-whistle rhetoric and back to the emphasis on acknowledging the existence of people seeking safety and the government’s obligation to come up with processes to help them.

You can [read our full report here](#).

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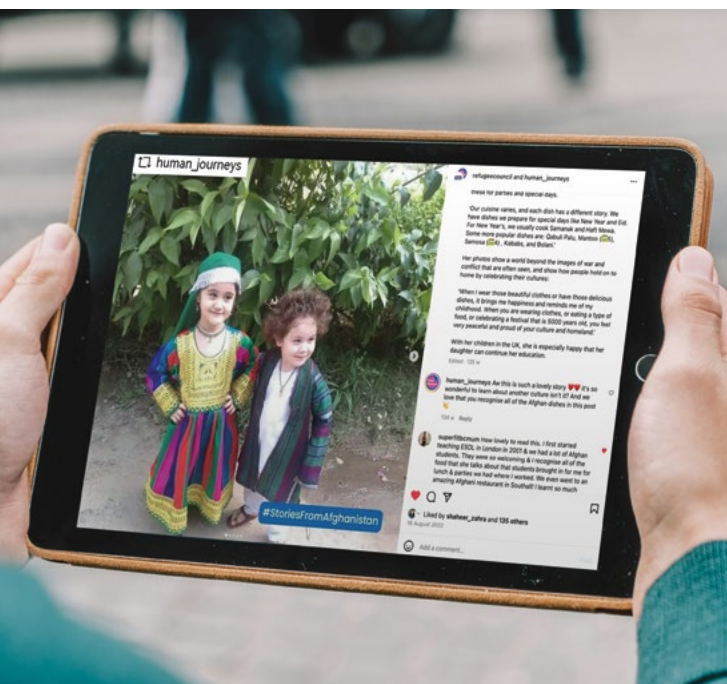
Unlocking potential

Changing attitudes on migrant destitution



imix.org.uk

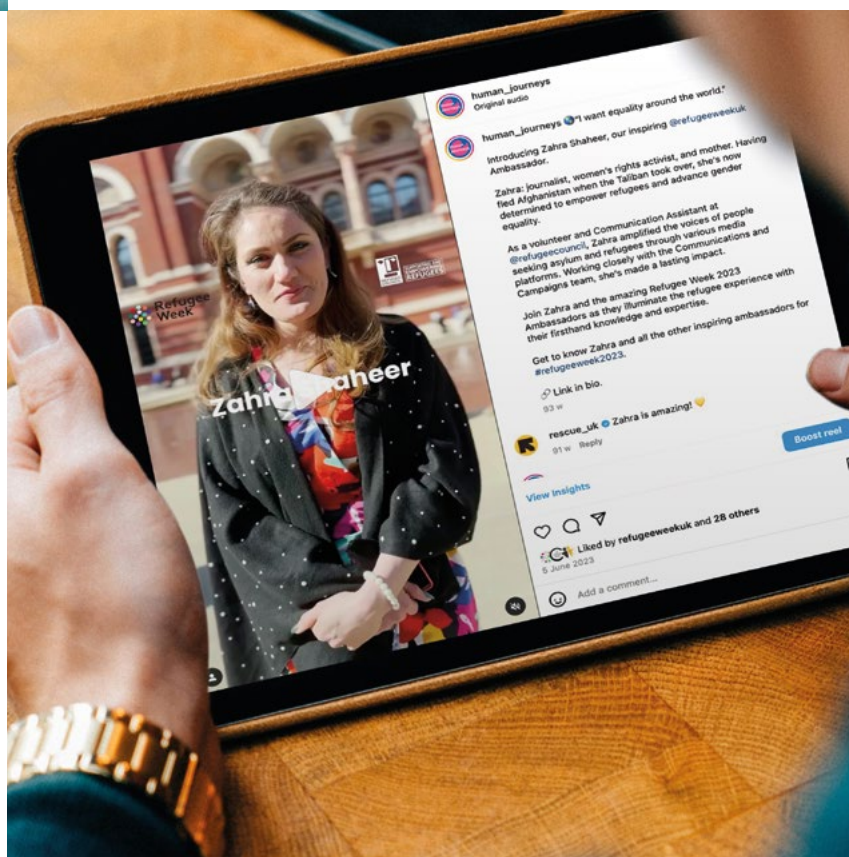
Digital – Amplifying Voices



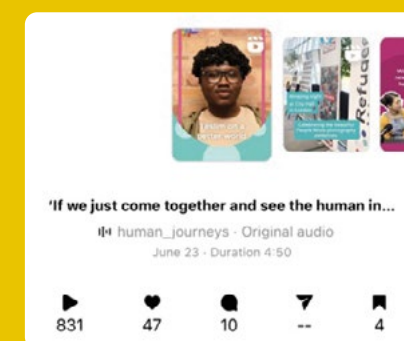
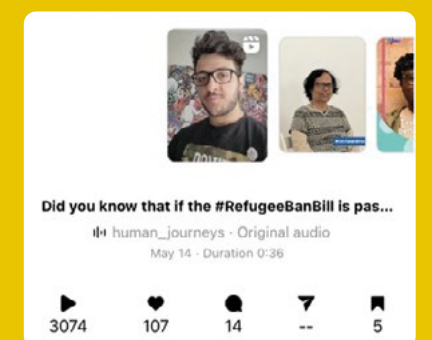
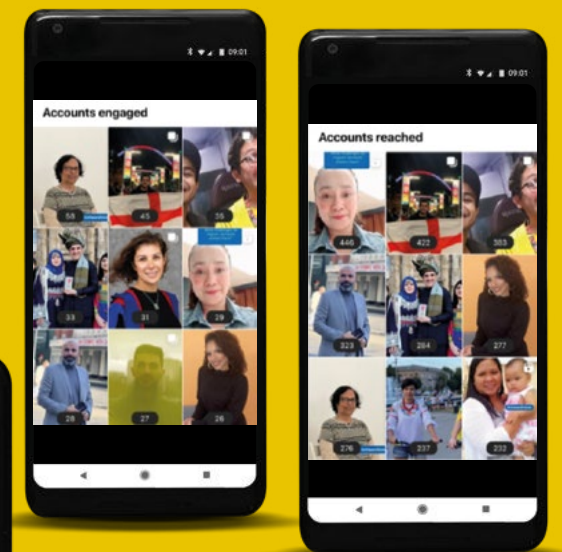
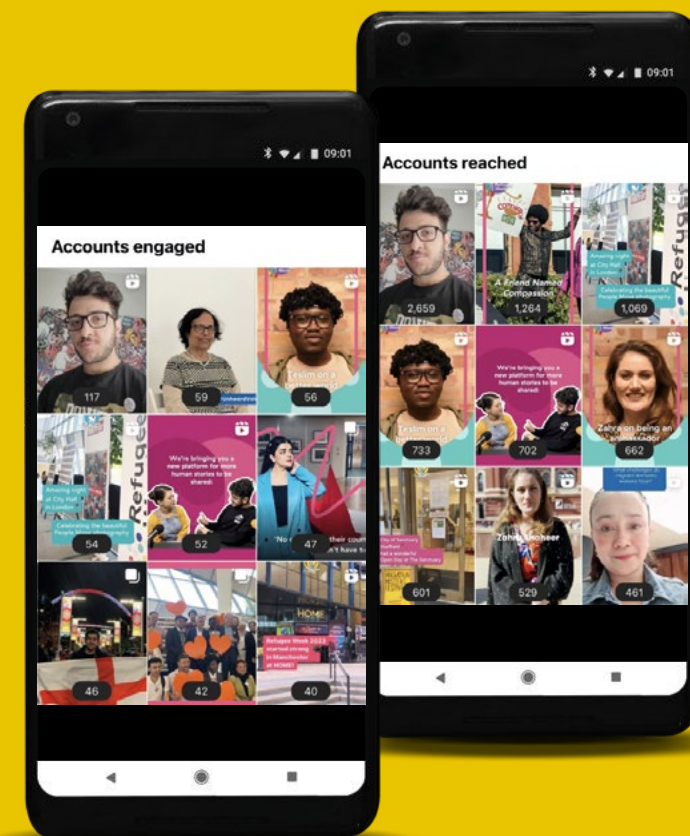
From July 2022 – June 2023, IMIX featured approximately 95 stories of people with lived experience of migrating to the UK on the Human Journeys Instagram platform. We ran a number of successful campaigns including #StoriesFromAfghanistan marking one year on from the fall of Kabul, seven Ambassadors for International Migrants Day on the theme of Community in partnership with IOM UK, #UnheardVoices featuring the hidden voices of migrant domestic workers in collaboration with The Voice of Domestic Workers and Sound Delivery and eight Ambassadors for Refugee Week on the theme, Compassion.



The IMIX project **Human Journeys** was established as a platform to share and promote stories of people with lived experience of migrating to the UK. The stories are both unique to the individual telling them as well as a powerful collection of voices about the experience of migration and displacement. We have also found it a useful tool in giving people a gentle, first experience of sharing their story publicly which has often developed their confidence and many of the people featured have gone on to share their story more widely with the media.



High Performance Posts



Analysis of metrics over this period show that content performs best when storytelling is central to a campaign. One of the best performing posts was Ali Ghaderi from our Storytellers Network who posted about the #RefugeeBanBill from his personal perspective securing significantly more engagement and reach than other posts. The video was viewed 3,074 times reaching 2,659 accounts. This was a timely and relevant video about the impact of the bill on people who want to seek asylum delivered by someone who has been through that system themselves. The Refugee Week Ambassador content also performed well due to a combination of linked posts about the theme of Compassion, high quality photos and videos, as well as powerful personal storytelling.

High Performance Posts

Additionally, we worked on and promoted the **inLIMBO** photographic project with the artist Aida Silvestri and Counterpoints Arts. We supported each person to have their photograph taken and to share their story for an exhibition at the premiere of the film, Matar by Hassan Akkad, a Deadbeat Studios production for Waterbear Network.



Copyright @Aida Silvestri



Our Objectives for the Future

1

EPIM project – we will be working with Migrant Voice and Show Racism the Red Card

2

Digital resources project and press office facility

3

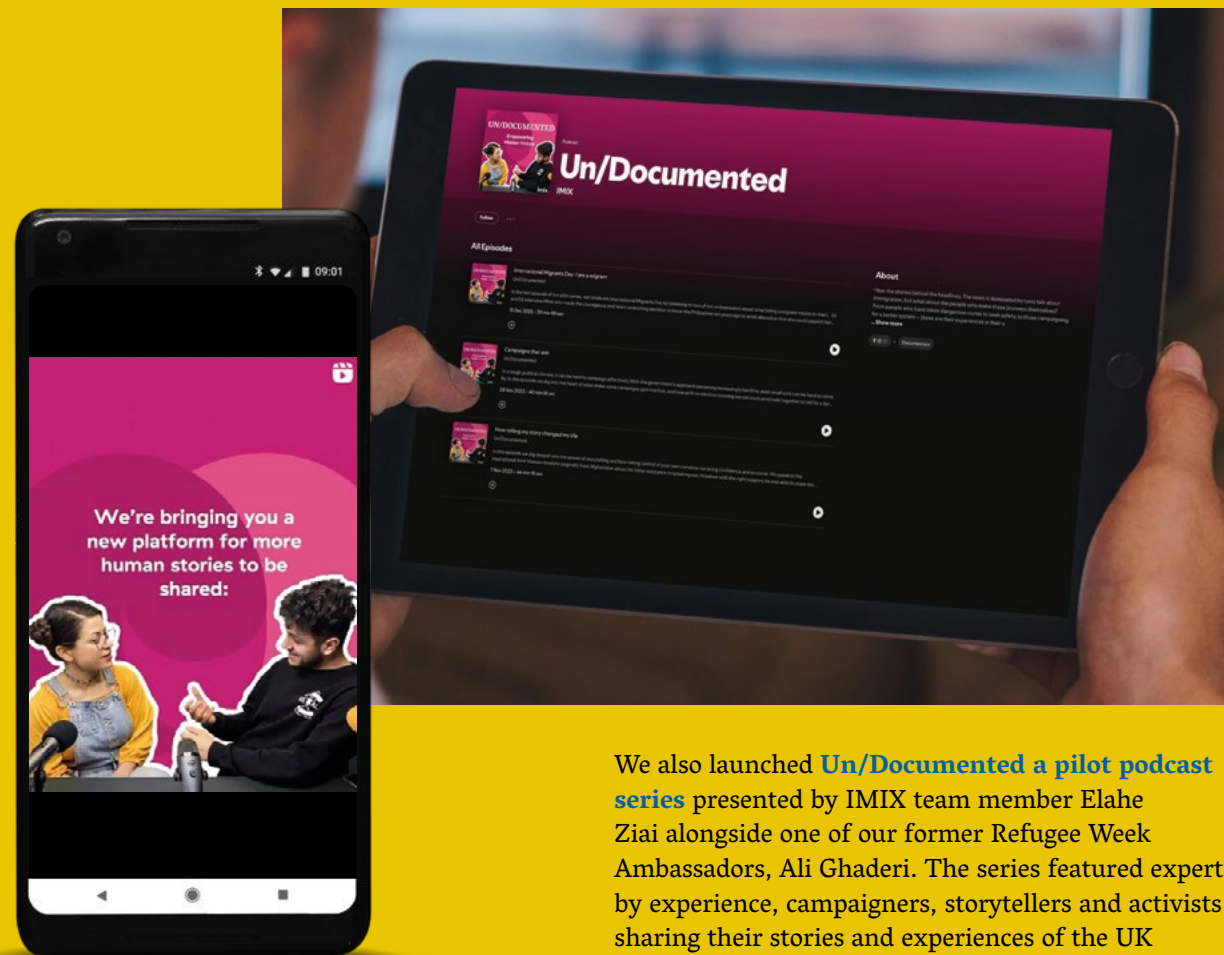
We are developing a training program specifically for individuals with lived experience with prior media engagement experience

4

Expanding our Lived Experience Storytelling Network and Media Volunteers

5

Established a **Steering group** composed of 6 people with current or lived experience of the asylum system and diverse skill sets. They challenge assumptions, ask critical questions, and provide unique perspectives, fostering more equitable decision-making processes



We also launched **Un/Documented** a pilot podcast series presented by IMIX team member Elahe Ziai alongside one of our former Refugee Week Ambassadors, Ali Ghaderi. The series featured experts by experience, campaigners, storytellers and activists sharing their stories and experiences of the UK immigration system. The podcast was shortlisted for an Independent Podcast Award in 2024.



Thank You to our Funders

Funders

Many thanks to the groups who make our work possible with their donations. IMIX couldn't make a difference without you.



Paul Hamlyn Foundation



Income

July 2022 – June 2023

Donations and Legacies

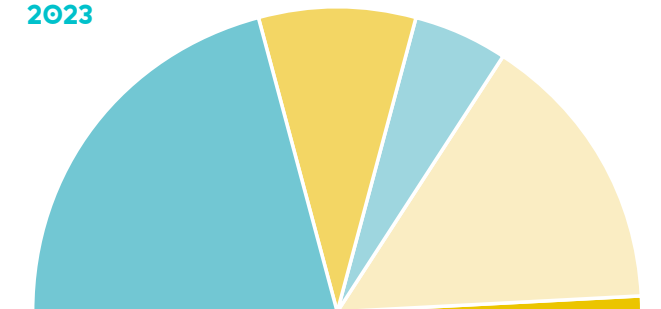
Key

- Esmee Fairbairn
- OAK Foundation
- AB Charitable Trust
- Comic Relief
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Miscellaneous donation

2022



2023

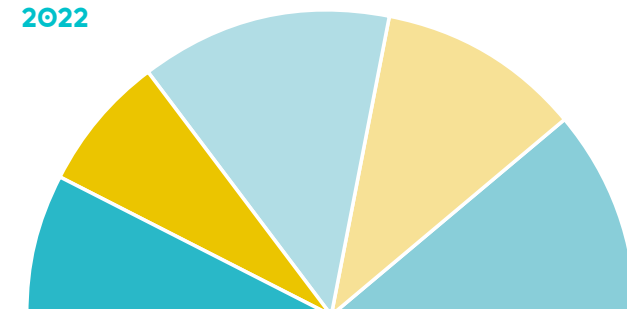


Income on Charitable Activities

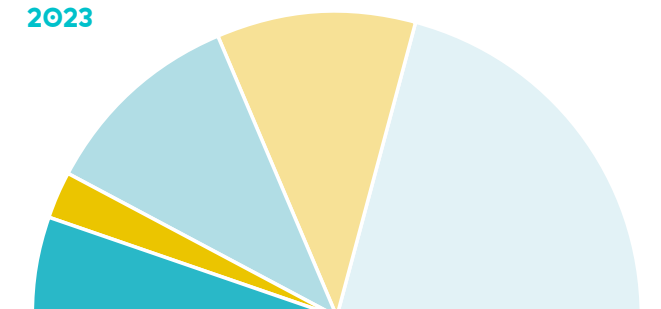
Key

- Barrow Cadbury
- Trust for London
- Comic Relief
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Unbound Philanthropy
- EPIM

2022



2023





Changing the conversation



Registered Address:

Canopi
7-14 Great Dover Street
London
SE1 4YR

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