

# IMIX Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism Statement

At IMIX, we believe migration is a racial justice issue.

We are committed to disrupting the systems of oppression that shape the lives of people who move—and to doing so through strategic, values-led communications.

## Why this matters

Oppression in the migration context is structural, historical and ongoing. It is written into immigration policy, lived through everyday barriers, and reinforced by the stories we tell and the voices we hear—or don't hear—in public debate.

It looks like racism, the hostile environment, indefinite detention, and being undocumented. It looks like being shut out of housing, education, healthcare and legal support. It looks like poverty, isolation, invisibility, and fear.

These forms of harm do not fall evenly. Some migrants are treated with compassion and given access to support, while others are vilified or ignored. This imbalance is shaped by race, gender, class, status, nationality and other intersecting identities. Understanding this is essential to our work.

## How We Got Here

In 2024, we partnered with Darvaja to reflect on our role in the migration space and commit to anti-oppressive practice.

We formed a **Commissioning Circle**—made up of staff, trustees, funders and steering group members—to ensure this work was collective, not top-down.

Together, we:

- Co-designed a sector-wide survey on our relationship to power, equity and oppression
- Took part in workshops to explore our role within the wider system

- Agreed a shared understanding of what oppression looks like in the migration context

We explored how oppression plays out:

- **Structurally**, through laws and systems that criminalise or exclude
- **Culturally**, through stereotypes, silencing and misrepresentation in the media
- **Practically**, through everyday barriers to safety, health and dignity

We also recognised our position within this system. IMIX holds access to media, decision-makers and public platforms. That gives us influence. And we are committed to using that influence with care, clarity and purpose.

The process surfaced real challenges. There were concerns that we were unclear about our values, too distanced from grassroots voices, and at times reinforced harmful narratives. We listened—and we are acting.

## Our Strategic Approach

IMIX exists to shift the public narrative on migration.

We are a communications charity that supports campaigners, charities and migrant-led groups to reach beyond the migration ‘bubble’. Our work is data-led, strategic and audience-informed. We focus on stories that humanise, language that persuades, and strategies that meet people where they are—not where we wish they were.

We believe that communications can be a tool for justice. Through storytelling, media engagement and values-based messaging, we aim to challenge harmful narratives and build a more welcoming, compassionate conversation around migration.

Often, this means sharing positive or hopeful stories—because we know they can build connection, increase empathy, and change minds. But we also recognise the risks: we reject exceptionalism and avoid reinforcing the idea that only ‘good’ or ‘deserving’ migrants are worthy of support. We interrogate the content we create and promote to ensure it does not reinforce harmful tropes, even when designed to persuade.

Our **daily news round-up** is one of our most visible and sometimes contested tools. We share it because the media shapes perception—and we believe the sector must stay informed. But we know headlines can reproduce harm. Where appropriate, we add framing

and analysis to help our readers understand the wider narrative landscape—and resist it when necessary.

## Who We're Trying to Reach

We focus our communications on those most likely to engage with messages of welcome, fairness and shared humanity. This includes:

- **Our base** – people already supportive of refugee and migrant rights
- **The inactive aligned** – those who agree in principle but haven't yet engaged
- **The persuadable middle** – people with mixed or uncertain views who are open to positive, values-led messaging

Historically, we have not focused on the most hostile audiences. However, **recent research suggests a growing need to engage those who are, or may become, Reform UK voters**—particularly as views on migration become more polarised. We recognise the nuance within this group: not all hostility stems from hate. Some of it is driven by fear, disinformation, or a sense of being unheard.

While messaging may need to adapt to engage these audiences, **our approach remains the same**: empathetic, data-led, emotionally intelligent, and grounded in the values of safety, fairness, dignity and connection.

## What We've Learned

Through our long-term narrative work—including our *Unlocking Potential* and *Struggle for Safety* projects—we've learned that:

- Communications must spark empathy, not preach morality
- Facts matter—but stories move people, especially when they centre lived experience and shared values
- Messages built around empathy, fairness and resilience cut through more effectively than those based solely in data
- Humanising stories must be rooted in reality—not tokenising or reinforcing the 'good immigrant' frame

- Real change happens when communities see themselves in the narrative, and when power over messaging is shared—not centralised
- Overly technical, abstract, or legalistic language rarely shifts public opinion.

*Unlocking Potential* helped us understand how to resonate with sceptical but reachable audiences. It reinforced the importance of grounding narratives in community, belonging and shared futures—while cautioning against depoliticised or overly individualised messaging that ignores deeper structural injustice.

## How We Apply This

Our strategy is grounded in evidence. We test what works, adapt based on learning, and constantly reflect on impact. Here’s how that looks in practice:

- **Values-Based Messaging**  
We lead with empathy, fairness, and resilience—framing migration as *the struggle for safety*, not a threat or crisis.
- **Human-Centred Stories**  
We platform people with lived experience as narrators and messengers—not just case studies.
- **Positive Narratives**  
We often share stories of welcome, strength, belonging, and solidarity between communities—not because we ignore injustice, but because we know these stories reach and move the audiences who matter.
- **Mixed Content Strategy**  
Our news round-ups include both progressive and problematic media content. We remain committed to continuous improvement and regularly add context to avoid amplifying harm.
- **Local & National Reach**  
We work with grassroots organisations and national media to shape conversations at both regional and national levels—because change needs to happen everywhere.

## **Our Role in Disrupting Oppression**

We're not campaigners or caseworkers. We're communicators. IMIX exists to change the national conversation on migration—away from fear and division, and towards justice, truth and shared humanity.

We work to shift the stories that shape the world around us. That includes:

- Supporting migrant-led and grassroots groups to tell their own stories
- Challenging racist and xenophobic media narratives
- Using tested messaging to engage people outside our usual audiences
- Creating space for voices often pushed to the margins
- Engaging audiences who may be sceptical, misinformed or unsure
- Helping organisations across the sector communicate strategically and with confidence

We recognise that IMIX was established through funding and partnerships, not grassroots organising. In many ways, we are the opposite of grassroots. But we are committed to using our position—with honesty and responsibility—to open space, redistribute power, and support those on the frontline of lived experience and local change.

We understand how language shapes perception, how media shapes policy, and how stories shape public feeling. These are forms of power—and we are committed to using them to disrupt oppression, not reinforce it.

We also recognise the tensions that come with this work. Uplifting positive stories can humanise migrants—but too often, they feed a “good immigrant” narrative that suggests only the exceptional are worthy. We will continue to reflect on these tensions, ensuring that our storytelling is affirming without being selective, powerful without being exploitative, and truthful without relying on pain.

We acknowledge our power: our access to platforms and our media relationships. But we use that power with purpose—to share it, not hoard it.

# **Our Commitments**

## **1. Challenge Harmful Narratives**

We will actively challenge racism, xenophobia and dehumanisation in media and public discourse.

We will amplify the breadth and complexity of migrant experiences, especially those most excluded from public platforms.

## **2. Use Power Responsibly**

We recognise our access to media, funding and influence—and we will use it to open space, not dominate it.

We will be transparent about how we operate, who we collaborate with, and how decisions are made.

## **3. Share Knowledge and Platform**

We will mentor, support and train regional and grassroots storytellers and communicators. We will invest in long-term, reciprocal partnerships with migrant-led organisations—not one-off or extractive engagements.

## **4. Embed Anti-Oppression in Practice**

We will regularly review our language, partnerships, and programme delivery to ensure they align with anti-oppressive values.

We will uphold inclusive, trauma-informed and collaborative ways of working—within our team, with partners, and with contributors.

## **5. Engage with Complexity**

We will reflect critically on the messaging we use—acknowledging tensions between persuasion and principle.

We will resist the urge to simplify or sanitise migrant stories for media appeal. Instead, we will honour their depth, dignity and context.

## **This Is a Living Commitment**

This statement reflects our current learning and position. It is not the end of the conversation, but part of an ongoing process of accountability, care and growth.

We know we haven't always got it right—and we won't pretend to be perfect. But we will keep showing up, listening, reflecting, and doing better.

We are proud of what we do. And we are proud to say:  
**strategic communications is our anti-oppression work.**