

imix

Changing the conversation



IMIX Strategy

2025 – 2030

imix.org.uk

A warm welcome

We are excited to share our new five-year strategy. Thank you for your interest in the work we do to ensure that the voices and stories of migrants and refugees to the UK help shape the national conversation about migration.

We know the sector – and the country more widely – faces huge challenges. The public disorder in Summer 2024 and ongoing incidents across the country, show the incredibly damaging impact of racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric on our communities. The need for the work IMIX does to help challenge and balance the debate has never been greater.

Our vision remains: a society that embraces people who move to the UK and understands the journeys they take, whether through migration or displacement. A thriving society where we can all live well together.

This is a key moment for us to work even more collaboratively with the migration and refugee sector, those with lived experience of migration and the media to create a more human, inclusive narrative. Together we can change attitudes, policies and help build better communities.

Our 2025–30 strategy builds on our nine years of experience working nationally and locally with migrant and refugee communities, grassroots organisations and journalists. We know we still have work to do.

We have listened carefully to organisations who support migrants and refugees, the wide network of migrants and refugees with lived experience we work with, our funders, our team, journalists and other supporters. All their input has shaped our ambitions for the next five years.

The process of creating this strategy has, importantly, been guided by the IMIX Steering Group, made up of people with lived

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experience of migration to the UK who also have significant skills and knowledge of journalism, campaigning and co-production. The Steering Group's role is key in informing and influencing what we do and how we do it, including holding us to account in our ambition to ensure migrants and refugees are at the heart of everything we do.

We are also responding to the rise in public support for anti-immigration policies, and increasingly toxic media narratives. Public concern about immigration is rising, and mainstream media headlines have become dominated by negative depictions of people seeking asylum. We recognise the need to expand our audience engagement beyond the traditional 'persuadable middle' and connect with those groups at risk of drifting further into anti-migrant sentiment.

A big thank you to everyone who has given us their time, wisdom and support to help us develop this Strategy. In particular our Steering Group:

Mary Njoroge, Shamim Sarabi, Zarith Hanipah, Mike Butscher, Sadia Sikandar, Niloha Rangel, Ronald Tagwireyi (Ronnie), Ali Reza

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Why we are here

IMIX was established in 2016 to increase communications capacity in the refugee and migration sector. We were set up by a group of funders who recognised a gap in skills and capacity.

That gap still exists, particularly for the many smaller, grassroots organisations across the UK doing incredible work to build better communities that include migrants and refugees but with very limited resources.

We believe that people who migrate or seek sanctuary in the UK should be welcomed and valued within our communities. There is a human story and journey behind every negative headline and that story needs to be heard.

We challenge the often divisive, dehumanising, racist media narrative about people who move to the UK, whether through migration or displacement. At the same time, we help create, share and celebrate positive stories of migration.

We believe that people who migrate or seek sanctuary in the UK should be welcomed and valued within our communities.

Our vision, mission and values

Our vision

Our vision is for a society that welcomes people who move to the UK and understands the different journeys - through migration or displacement - that bring them here. A society that recognises how overlapping injustices shape those journeys, and where everyone can belong, be treated fairly, and live well together.

Our mission

Our mission is to use our media and communications expertise to ensure the voices and stories of migrants and refugees help shape how migration is understood and discussed in the UK.

We do this by working with people who have lived experience of the immigration system, the organisations that support them, and the journalists who shape public opinion - always recognising the inequalities and barriers that affect whose voices are heard.

Our values

Migrants first

We believe people with direct lived experience of migration have a critical role as leaders, experts and advocates. Their experiences, voices, priorities and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to involving migrants and refugees meaningfully at all levels of our work and decision-making.

Connection

We build lasting, trusted relationships with migrants and refugees, grassroots and larger organisations, and the media. By working collaboratively, sharing skills and listening deeply, we aim to create a stronger, more united sector that can change the migration narrative together.

Equity and inclusion

We recognise that not everyone starts from the same place. Migration is only one part of many people's experiences, and we are committed to addressing the structural inequalities - including racism, ableism, classism, and more - that shape lives and limit opportunities. We work to dismantle the systemic barriers that affect migrant communities and embed equity across all we do.

Championing

We are bold and principled in our communications. We support individuals and organisations to speak truth, challenge injustice, and shift public narratives. We don't just react to negative discourse - we help lead with stories that reflect dignity, solidarity and shared humanity.

Learning

We embrace reflection, humility and growth. We are committed to learning from and alongside the migrants and organisations we work with, adapting our approach as the world - and the migration context - continues to change. We see anti-oppression as an ongoing practice, not a fixed outcome.



Our ambitions to 2030

To achieve meaningful change, we need focused ambitions that respond to the needs of the people and organisations we work with – and inspire action from those who support us.

While our ambitions include measurable targets, we are equally committed to depth and quality. This means working flexibly, including more intensive support for smaller groups where needed, and responding thoughtfully to emerging priorities across the sector.

Ambition

1

We will ensure that more people with lived experience of migration have the skills and confidence to communicate effectively in the media.

By December 2030, we aim to **increase the number of people with lived experience of migration we work with by 50%**

We will do this by:

- ensuring we have a clear strategy in place that puts people with lived experience of migration at the heart of everything we do at IMIX
- offering high quality media and communication skills training for people with lived experience of migration
- offering those who complete our training a clear pathway to become a media volunteer or spokesperson, as well as other opportunities to be involved in the work IMIX does
- building our Storytellers Network and opportunities for members
- increasing and diversifying the media coverage of people with lived experience of migration on terms that reflect their priorities and safeguarding needs

We will measure success through:

- undertaking a yearly 'listening process' with our Storytellers Network
- monitoring and measuring the number of people with lived experience of migration we work with and how we are meeting their needs
- working with our Steering Group to ensure we are accountable for our ambition to put people with lived experience of migration at the heart of what we do
- working with an expert partner to research and publish a quarterly media coverage report which analyses media coverage against our aims, including terms that reflect the priorities and safeguarding needs of people with lived experience of migration

Ambition

2

We will ensure that more organisations working to support migrants and refugees develop their media communication skills and capacity to tell the human story of migration.

We will do this by:

- creating a clear plan to promote our role and services to the sector, including using our digital channels
- offering high quality training and resources
- asking for and responding to the sector's needs to develop new training options
- providing a structured mentoring programme for communications staff and volunteers in grassroots organisations; strategic communications guidance and support, including for sector initiatives and campaigns and in response to crisis
- hosting regular communications meetings and workshops for the sector to build networks, learning, experience and capacity, including with the media
- develop messaging resources that reflect the intersection of migration with issues like gender, disability, racial justice and climate displacement – and support partners in using these narratives to build broader coalitions
- working with policy partners in the sector to target constituencies where it is believed that migrant voices and those who work with them have a key role in influencing government policy

By December 2030, we aim to **increase the number of organisations we work with by 40%**

We will measure success through:

- undertaking a yearly 'listening process' with the sector to ensure we are providing the most useful and relevant support in the best way
- evaluating feedback on our training, mentoring, communications meetings and workshops
- testing messaging on social media, through informal focus groups and professional polling, so it has authority
- capturing and sharing attitudes towards migration through public polling working with expert partners
- working with Together with Refugees to ensure that the sector is aligned around the same audience segments, insight and messaging

Ambition

3

We will work with journalists and media teams to significantly increase the level of positive migrant and refugee stories reported in the UK media.

Positive reporting includes reporting with a focus on human stories rather than dehumanising numbers and statistics. Reporting devoid of clichés and stereotypes, but instead designed to increase empathy and understanding of the issues experienced by migrants and refugees.



By December 2030, we aim to **increase the level of positive migrant stories in the UK media by 50%** and increase the number of journalists we work with by 40%

We will do this by:

- creating a clear plan for engaging with more journalists, particularly those working for media outlets with mixed middle or persuadable audiences, and identifying opportunities to reach new and less engaged audiences through local, regional, and non-traditional platforms including podcasts, community radio, and digital media
- identifying and investing in new and alternative messengers – including local voices, community leaders, digital creators, and trusted figures outside traditional media – who can reach audiences currently disengaged from or sceptical of mainstream coverage
- increasing and diversifying the media coverage of people with lived experience of migration on terms that reflect their priorities and safeguarding needs
- bringing together journalists and those with lived experience of migration and sector organisations to build understanding and meaningful relationships

We will measure success through:

- engaging with popular culture through television and film drama to change the narrative and reach a wider audience
- engaging with the media beyond placing stories, building meaningful relationships with journalists and others through IMIX media briefings and workshops
- working with journalists to create a virtual press office on the IMIX website with information, resources and access to sector press releases
- creating a picture bank of photos for the media to use in place of negative imagery
- working to increase representation of journalists from a migrant background by mentoring programmes and work with media partners
- regularly measuring levels of media engagement with IMIX events that bring journalists, migrants and the migrant sector together; briefings, workshops, the IMIX virtual press office, picture bank and digital channels
- measuring the opportunities we create in popular culture that reach a wider audience and change the narrative

Who we are and the work we do

We are a dedicated team of professional media, communications, and campaign experts using lived and learned experiences to do three things:



Empower individuals with lived experience to use their voices and stories in conversations about migration at a local and national level

Improve the communications capability within the migration and refugee sector

Build relationships with the media to encourage them to tell a more human story about people who migrate to the UK



We serve a unique role in working to deliver the following outcomes:

We amplify migrant and refugee voices

The best people to create narrative change are those who have direct experience of the migration system. We know that stories have the power to speak to people's hearts, leading to attitude, policy and cultural change. We believe that by telling the human side of the migration story, we can positively impact public perception, promote a more inclusive and balanced dialogue and ultimately help to build stronger communities.

So, we invest heavily in delivering specialist training, mentoring and support to migrants so they have the confidence and skills to speak to the media and share their stories and opinions.

We make grassroots connections

Every year we support over 100 often poorly resourced grassroots organisations, enabling them to place stories in local and national media. Doing so increases their profile; promotes positive stories of the amazing work they do and provides opportunities for new and different voices to be heard.

Our structure reflects our commitment to the grassroots, with our staff based in Scotland, the North East, the West Midlands, Kent and London.



We build capacity in the migrant and refugee sector

We deliver regular online expert communications training tailored to the migration and refugee sector, as well as training to meet specific sector needs.

Our tailored programmes include workshops designed to build specific media skills, from interview practice to telling anonymous stories and using social media strategically.

Our free daily news round-up provides the migration and refugee sector with up-to-date insights on public and media views around migration.

Our Google group allows 1200 organisations supporting migrants and refugees to network, share opportunities, collaborate and seek support.

We craft strategic messaging

We work with front line staff from the migration and refugee sector, people with lived experience of migration, and other key stakeholders to develop clear, values-led messaging that supports the sector in engaging with the media.

Our approach is grounded in anti-oppressive principles and recognises the intersectional nature of migration. We are mindful that experiences of migration are shaped by race, gender, disability, sexuality, class and other identities. Our messaging reflects this complexity and aims to centre those most affected by unjust systems.

We create messaging guides on key issues – such as safe routes, destitution and community participation – and produce rapid briefings in response to breaking news. These tools help organisations across the UK respond proactively to media narratives, amplify under-represented voices, and communicate with greater consistency and confidence.

We respond at critical moments

Our team is experienced at operating at times of breaking news. We offer crisis communications support to the migration and refugee sector when needed and create triage systems for small, grassroots organisations to support them when they are overwhelmed by the media.

We regularly help co-ordinate open letters to the press and policy makers as well as other cross-sector initiatives, supporting the migration and refugee sector to speak with one powerful voice.

We change the media narrative

We work with hundreds of journalists across the media to target 'mixed middle' or 'persuadable' audiences. Our work with national organisations including ITV, BBC, The Mirror, The Guardian, and numerous regional and local media outlets, ensures that the stories and voices of migrants and refugees reach the widest possible 'persuadable' audience.

We regularly host off-the-record media briefings, bringing staff from migration and refugee organisations, those with lived experience of migration and journalists together to build connections, awareness and understanding.

We develop long-term relationships, helping journalists produce truthful, well-researched and human-focused media stories about migration.

We humanise and influence policy

While we do not design policy or campaign for policy change ourselves, we do believe that the public and government should hear about the direct impact of policies on the lives of migrants and refugees.

We provide media support for grassroots organisations and those with lived experience of migration who are calling for policy change that aligns with our belief that people who migrate or seek safety in the UK should be welcomed and valued within our communities.

How we work

By recognising that injustice, racism and oppression are central to the migration debate

Migration is a racial justice issue. Racism – rooted in colonial histories and sustained by modern-day structures – shapes the UK’s immigration system and the daily realities of people who move.

We recognise that oppression is complex and layered. It plays out across systems and experiences. In legislation, media narratives, social attitudes and institutional practices. Our work acknowledges this reality and aims to challenge it through strategic communications, inclusive storytelling and partnerships that shift power and perspective.

We are committed to embedding anti-oppressive practice in all that we do. This means actively confronting the forces that marginalise migrants, while working alongside those affected to shape how their stories are told and understood. It also means remaining reflective, honest and accountable. In 2024, feedback from grassroots partners helped us see where we needed to do better – being clearer about our values, more responsive to lived experience, and more aware of how narratives can unintentionally cause harm. These lessons now inform our approach.

We recognise the power we hold as an organisation with access to media and funders. We aim to use that power responsibly – by sharing opportunities, challenging gatekeeping, and ensuring that those most affected by the immigration system can shape the national conversation directly.

We also understand that migration doesn’t exist in a vacuum. Experiences of displacement, movement and settlement are shaped by many overlapping factors – gender, disability, class, sexuality, climate injustice and more. Our work increasingly seeks to reflect this intersectionality, recognising that justice in one area is connected to justice in others. As climate change accelerates displacement, and as marginalised communities face multiple forms of discrimination, communications that reflect these interwoven realities are more necessary than ever.

This approach is not just about pushing back against injustice – it’s about creating space for new stories, new leaders and new ways of seeing. Through collaboration, listening and long-term partnerships, we believe the migration sector can be on the front foot – shaping public debate with bold, hopeful messaging that centres dignity, fairness and shared humanity.

By focusing our work with the media on audiences who can be persuaded

Historically, IMIX has focused on engaging the “mixed middle” – those who hold a range of views on migration and may be open to more balanced, human stories. These audiences are often shaped by their local experiences, trusted media sources, and priorities like public services, the economy and community wellbeing.

While our messaging continues to connect with those already supportive of refugee and migrant rights, we recognise the urgent need to engage beyond this group – including people who may vote for right-leaning parties. Recent research shows that negative views on migration are not always driven by hate. Often, they come from fear, misinformation, or the feeling of being ignored in political and media debates.

We see this as an opportunity – not a retreat. Our goal is not to convince everyone, but to expand the conversation. In a political climate where migration is too often framed as a problem, we offer an alternative rooted in values: fairness, safety, dignity, and connection.

One of our key focus groups is the “Moderate Interventionists” identified by Hope Not Hate – many of whom lean towards parties such as Reform but also express support for migration when it strengthens services, boosts the economy or benefits their community. This group is economically secure, ethnically mixed, and motivated by fairness and social cohesion. They are open to new perspectives when messaging reflects their lived concerns and values.

Our communications approach is always insight-driven. We work with British Future, More in Common and others to understand what matters to different audiences and how they consume information. This allows us to craft messaging that builds empathy, challenges myths, and connects with people’s daily lives.

Through smart, emotionally intelligent and values-led storytelling, we believe we can reach new audiences – including those traditionally outside the ‘welcome’ space – and help shape a more open and confident national conversation about migration.

By working collaboratively with three key groups:

Our work is driven by collaboration with three key groups:



Together, we’re changing the conversation – rooted in dignity, guided by experience, and delivered with care.

What we need to make this happen

To make change happen, we must develop our organisation, culture and processes, how we work with key partners and, critically, how we ensure migrants and refugees are at the heart of everything we do.

We need to share inspiring and compelling stories, we need to raise funds to support our ambitions, and we need to communicate the reality and positive story of community participation and cohesion for many migrants in the UK.

Putting lived experience first

We will ensure people with lived experience of migration are at the heart of everything we do by developing a whole organisation approach to their engagement and involvement in IMIX's work. This will be overseen and guided by our Steering Group and will include creating clear pathways and support, including bringing in expertise where required to ensure we are always putting individual needs first. The development of our Storytellers Network is also key to this ambition.

Working collaboratively with the migration and refugee sector

We know that narrative change cannot happen in isolation. The challenges facing migrant communities – and the organisations that support them – are structural, urgent, and shared. That's why collaboration is core to how we work.

We are committed to using our resources, influence and platforms to strengthen the whole sector's ability to tell human, compelling stories. This includes working transparently, being clear about what we offer, and providing structured opportunities for feedback that we turn into action.

We recognise our position in the ecosystem. IMIX was not born from grassroots organising – but we are deeply committed to supporting those who are. That means building long-term, reciprocal relationships, especially with migrant-led and under-resourced groups. It means sharing knowledge, tools and media access – not hoarding them.

We will continue to support organisations across the country with tailored communications guidance, capacity-building opportunities, and aligned messaging that reflects the diversity and complexity of migrant experiences. We will ensure this support is grounded in anti-oppression best practice, trauma-informed, and responsive to the lived realities of our partners.

Our goal is not to lead the conversation alone, but to help build a sector where many voices lead with confidence, clarity and care.

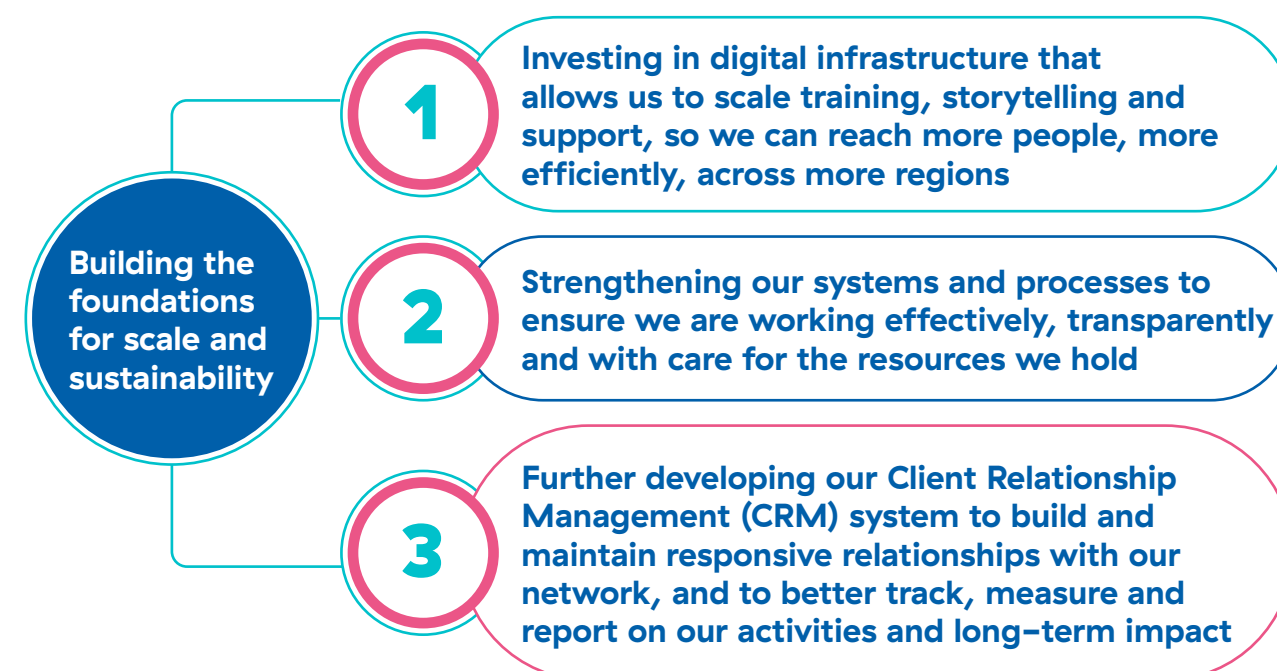
Building the foundations for scale and sustainability

We are committed to strengthening our internal systems so we can deliver our mission effectively, scale our impact, and remain a sustainable organisation. This means investing in people, processes and technology, while fostering a culture of learning, reflection and care.

As we build our infrastructure, we are equally focused on creating an inclusive, equitable workplace, one where power is shared, and every team member is supported to recognise and challenge structural inequality.

We will continue to invest in our team, refine how we work, and secure the resources needed to meet our strategic goals. All of this will be grounded in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice, ensuring our work is both accountable and aligned with our values.

This will include:



By improving how we work internally, we can focus more energy on what matters externally: shifting narratives, building partnerships and ensuring that migrant voices are central to the national conversation.

...migrants and refugees are at the heart of everything we do.

How we will fund our ambitions

To achieve our ambitions, we must resource our work sustainably and strategically. This means developing a diverse funding model that reflects the evolving funding landscape while positioning IMIX as a trusted and collaborative partner.



Our approach will include:

- developing a clear funding strategy with ambitious but achievable targets, including for earned income, and learning from others across the social change and communications sectors
- growing a more diverse funding base, including unrestricted and project-based income, to reduce reliance on any single source and build long-term resilience
- expanding our paid training and consultancy offer, particularly to funders and their grantees – positioning IMIX as both a supplier and strategic partner in building communications capacity across the migration and refugee sector
- building and maintaining strong relationships with funders, ensuring that we contribute to wider conversations about funding priorities, sector needs and narrative change
- exploring alternative funding streams, including academic, regional and global funds that align with our mission
- forming new partnerships with trusts, foundations and corporate allies who share our commitment to inclusive storytelling and systemic change
- pursuing collaborative funding bids with organisations across the migration and refugee sector to strengthen alignment, share resources and maximise impact

This strategic, values-led approach to funding will ensure we can deliver on our mission while scaling our impact and supporting the wider sector to grow in confidence and reach.

A shared vision for 2030

By 2030, we want to see a shift, not just in media coverage, but in the national conversation. Migration will no longer be framed as a problem to be managed, but as part of who we are as a society. Public understanding will be more empathetic, informed and connected to lived experience. People who move to the UK will be seen as neighbours, colleagues and community members – not strangers.

We believe this future is possible. It will be built through shared values, solidarity across communities, and powerful storytelling that reflects the full complexity of people's lives. At its heart will be the principle that migration is not a threat but a vital part of a healthy, connected society.

We see a future where communications across the migration and refugee sector are coordinated, strategic and grounded in hope – where organisations have the skills and confidence to lead the narrative, not just respond to it. Lived experience will be embedded in decision-making at every level, shaping both the stories told and the systems that support them. Journalists will seek out migrant perspectives and collaborate with care, and media coverage will reflect a fuller and more honest picture of who we are.

Understanding that traditional media may not be the main messenger in shifting attitudes in the years ahead, we will review and explore the channels and messengers that give us the best chance of achieving lasting change. That includes reaching those outside the usual audiences – including people who may feel disconnected from national conversations or who hold concerns about migration shaped by fear, misinformation or exclusion.

This future will also require courage – speaking truth to power, resisting narratives rooted in

We are committed to building a world where everyone feels they belong, and where communications are a force for justice, dignity and connection.



fear and racism, and making space for new messengers and unexpected voices. It will require funders, partners, and communities to stand together, prioritising long-term change over short-term headlines.

IMIX will continue to play its role – supporting the sector, amplifying migrant voices, and changing the story. We are committed to building a world where everyone feels they belong, and where communications are a force for justice, dignity and connection.



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