

Independent and evidence-based reflection on the role and impact of IMIX

November 2020

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Introduction and process

Background



IMiX is a key organisation in the immigration communications infrastructure. It was set up by the immigration sector as an internal agency to help it make the case for an open and welcoming Britain more effectively. It provides training, supports media opportunities, help to understand and use evidence on public attitudes and messaging and coordination support on campaigns and media response. It seeks to work both reactively and proactively with the sector and the media. IMiX has no positions or voice of its own, but rather works as ‘backbone’ organization to help improve collective impact. IMiX does this:

- ⦿ By encouraging and facilitating more coordinated and coherent communication on migrant, refugee and integration issues.
- ⦿ By adding capacity to campaigns and media interventions on migrant, refugee and integration issues that have particular strategic value
- ⦿ By providing advice and expertise on how to do migration communications effectively
- ⦿ By providing training and on-going support to smaller bodies which wish to do campaign and media work but which lack capacity and experience
- ⦿ Through convening the sector, particularly communications staff, to discuss issues of mutual interest and to plan and act collectively where appropriate
- ⦿ Through establishing and managing platforms for sharing information, intelligence and ideas

Purpose



This evaluation sought to explore the role IMIX plays and how it plays it, to better understand the impact IMIX has, and, to look at evidence of IMIX's contribution to the following outcomes:

- ⦿ The sector can confidently respond to challenging media narratives
- ⦿ The sector proactively “owns” the narrative
- ⦿ There are joined-up communications across different media outlets
- ⦿ More spokespeople from diverse backgrounds are ready to speak to media
- ⦿ Organisations have a more sophisticated understanding of target audiences, and better use of a variety of channels (digital, newsletters, etc.)
- ⦿ Journalists/media showcase more positives stories
- ⦿ Broader civil society and business become engaged with migration issues

Approach



- ⦿ Internal reflection: staff interviews
- ⦿ Web based survey, 55 responses (December 2019/ January 2020)
- ⦿ Interviews (24) with key stakeholders (February and March 2020)
 - ⦿ NGOs IMIX has worked directly with on media activity (including those who have received more structured support as well as those who have received ‘softer’ support, those who have communications capacity and those who do not)
 - ⦿ Individuals who have attended IMIX led training
 - ⦿ NGOS that IMIX does not currently work with but who are within scope

Caveat – the majority of the sample is your inner circle. 58% of our quant sample have worked closely with you and 42% have had some contact. Those you aren’t working closely with and those who aren’t supportive have been included where possible in the qualitative sample. Clearly there is a limit to how far the conversation can go with the group who don’t know enough about you to have an opinion!

Your customer base and relationships

Summary points

1

IMIX is working with a range of organisations, from the smallest to the largest in the sector and taking in those who have zero communications capability on their own to those who are big strategic players.

2

Sector communications capacity is limited but improving. Half feel that they have neither sufficient resource nor expertise.

3

Organisations feeling their communications capability (rather than resource) has improved since working with IMIX.

4

There are a great many more organisations in the sector who want communications support than IMIX can provide it too.

5

Lots of the people you work with aren't communications staff. Often they are campaigners using a proportion of their time, and intermittently, on communications (which includes website maintenance)

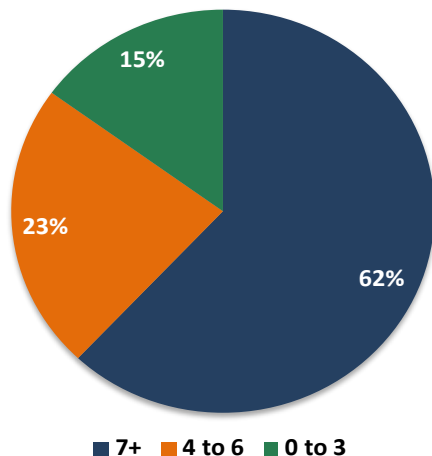
Reflection point: *Although you are reaching smaller organisations, are you reaching enough? Is the balance right? What work should you be doing with organisations with a great deal more capacity?*

Your customers



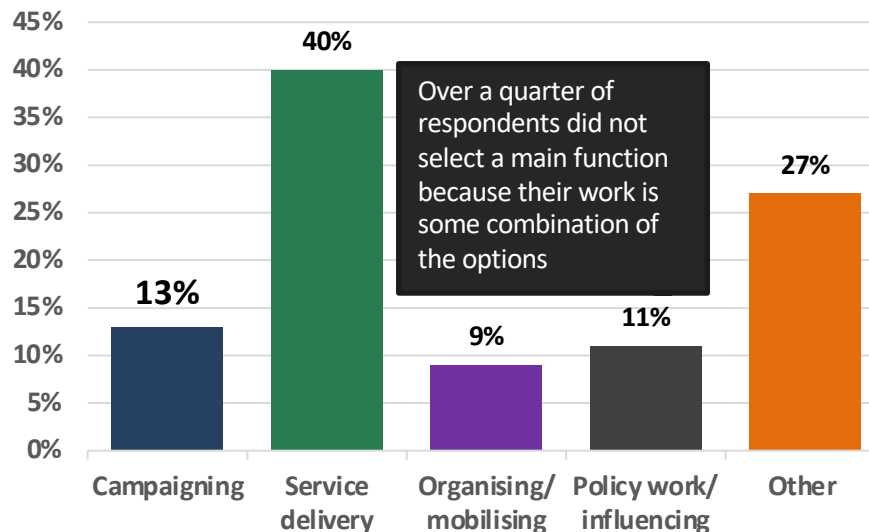
IMIX is working with a wide range of organisations, from the smallest to the largest in the sector

How many people work for your organisation?



- 38% of your customers have fewer than 6 staff. This broadly compares to the composition of the sector.
- Those with 4-6 employees were more likely to have worked closely with IMIX

How would you describe the main activity of your organisation?



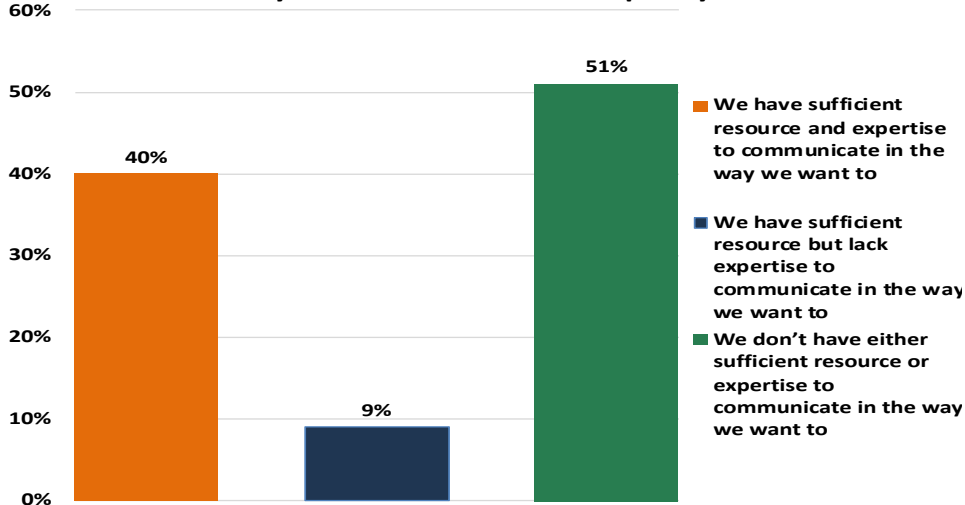
- 40% describe their **main** activity as service delivery.
- Campaigning (71%) and organising/mobilising (60%) organisations were more likely to have worked closely with IMIX.
- Service delivery (32%) and multidisciplinary/other (33%) were less likely to have worked closely with IMIX

Communications capacity/ capability

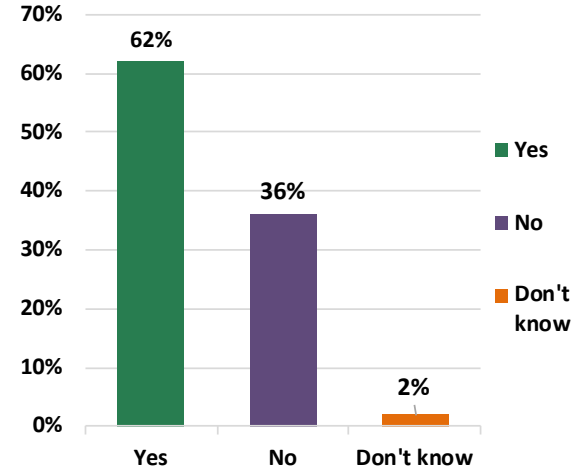


- 62% who responded to this survey reported having a communications post and 51% reported insufficient communications capacity. Research on the characteristics of the sector suggests this should be worse (Migration Exchange, 2020). The interviews revealed the following explanations:
 - It's possible to have communications capacity but want to do more – and many do
 - Some have built capacity precisely because of their relationship with IMIX
 - Larger organisations are more likely to have dedicated communications roles and IMIX is working with a high proportion of organisations that have more than 7 staff. This tends to reflect the parts of the sector that see the benefit of strategic communications work and want to do it.
- Those with specific communications posts include website maintenance, stakeholder management, press enquiries, social media, case study collation, press releases in this.

Which best describes your communications capacity?



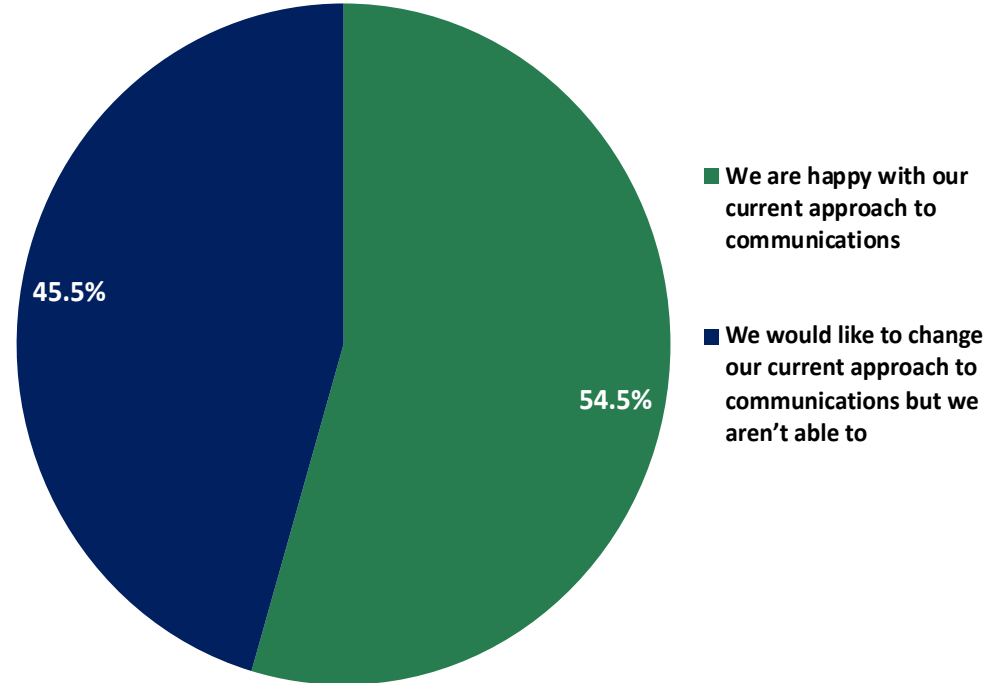
Do you have a dedicated communications post?



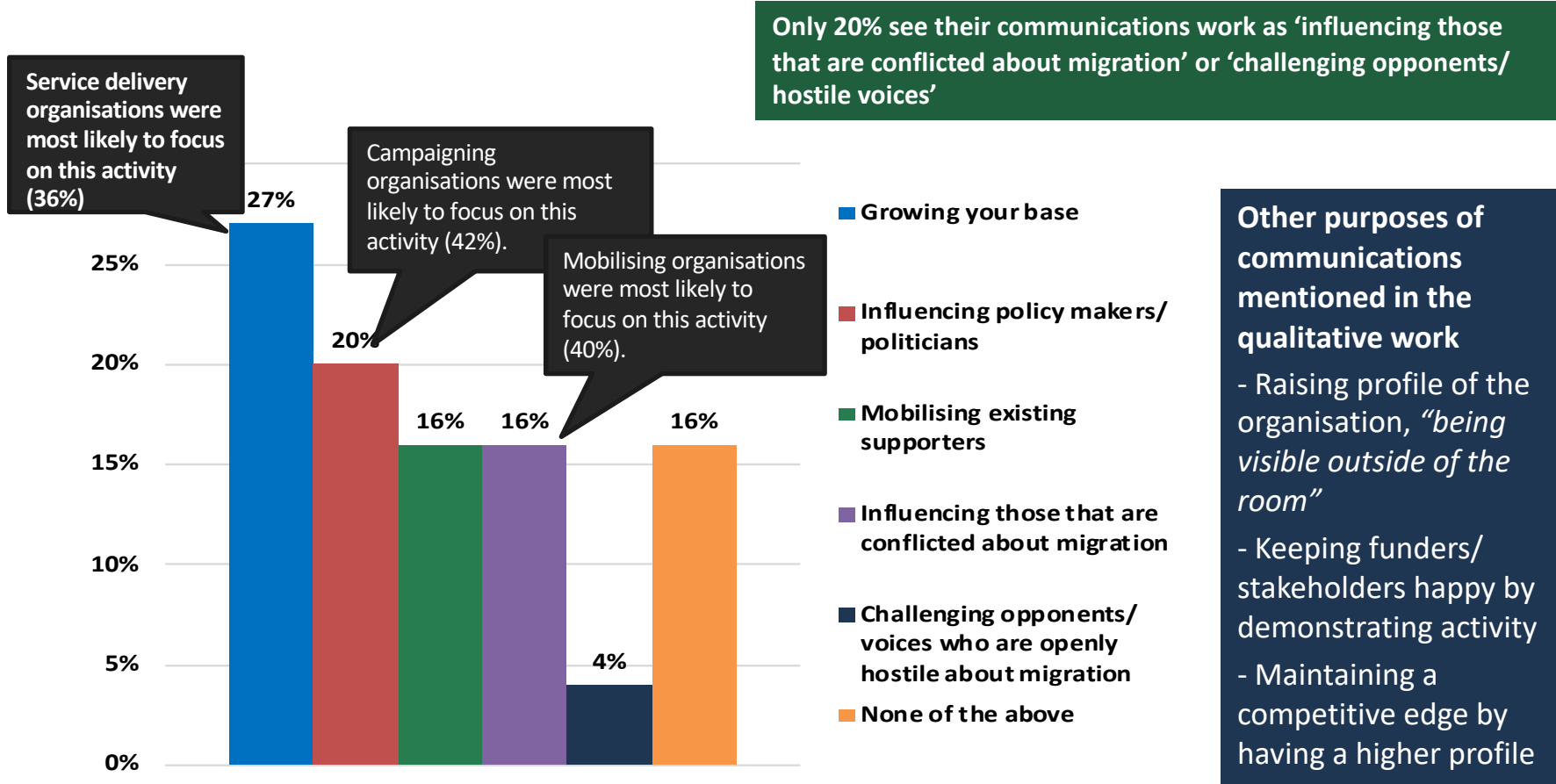
Communications capacity/ capability



- ⊙ 45% have an appetite to change their approach to communications work
 - ⊙ Service delivery (64%) and organising/ mobilising (100%) organisations were most likely to want to change their communications approach
- ⊙ Qualitative work reveals that the change they want to make is:
 - ⊙ Strategic advice and a communications plan which is bespoke to their organisation because they feel their current approach is reactive and haphazard
 - ⊙ More communications resource to enable the above
 - ⊙ Note that there are mentions of dialling up comms work because there is (perceived?) funder interest. Some organisations want to develop a comms strategy so they can get funding for it.



How your clients see the purpose of their communications



Relationship with you



How they find IMIX

- ⦿ There are organisations that IMIX has worked intensively with that only became aware of IMIX through an active web search for support with communications
- ⦿ In contrast, many feel they have known IMIX ‘from the start’
- ⦿ A few were referred by someone else

Why they come to you

- ⦿ They want someone to do the communications/ media work they can’t do (most)
- ⦿ They want someone to help develop strategy and provide guidance on messaging (minority)
- ⦿ They already have a clear communications goal and want IMIX to help facilitate it and engage others in the sector with their agenda

Their relationship with you

- ⦿ For some, contact with IMIX can feel sporadic and they want more
- ⦿ Others feel that they have a very close relationship and consider IMIX an ‘important friend’
- ⦿ There are wider group who don’t feel they have a relationship as such. For them, IMIX is a conduit to understanding sector communications activity, media coverage and wider conversations about communicating strategically

Your style and tone



You have a manner which has been conducive to building relationships, between you and sector organisations but also, between sector organisations that haven't previously come together. Three major themes stand out from the qualitative research on your approach and character:

1. **Neutral:** you are able to be an impartial 'referee' who doesn't alienate anyone when there is discordance. You are seen to be seeking to build consensus rather than be directive. You are perceived to have handled some tricky conflicts well. Your clients see you as a thought partner rather than someone who tells them what they should say
2. **Expert:** you are respected for your communications knowledge, your conversance with media handling and guidance with messaging. You are considered to be highly skilled and intelligent
3. **Supportive:** you are a friend to the sector, you walk beside people. You listen, understand and build trust. You create an atmosphere of being 'in it together'

In addition, you are perceived to be incredibly **hard-working** and **humble**

"If you take the approach of 'why aren't you all doing something different?' you aren't going to get many people saying 'that's great, we'd like you to help us with our communications.'"

"I would say that IMIX is a sort of expert friend that can help you engage usefully with the media."

Understanding of your role

Summary points

1

You do so much that you risk being 'all things to all people'!

2

Clearly when people talk about what you exist to do, they use their own relationship with you and the support you have given them as their primary reference point.

3

But being an independent coordinator is perceived to be your key function. After that, you are a sensitive and specialist media conduit

4

The link between capacity building and reframing the debate is unclear to some, perceived to be incredibly limited by others, and is considered unproven by a minority in the sample

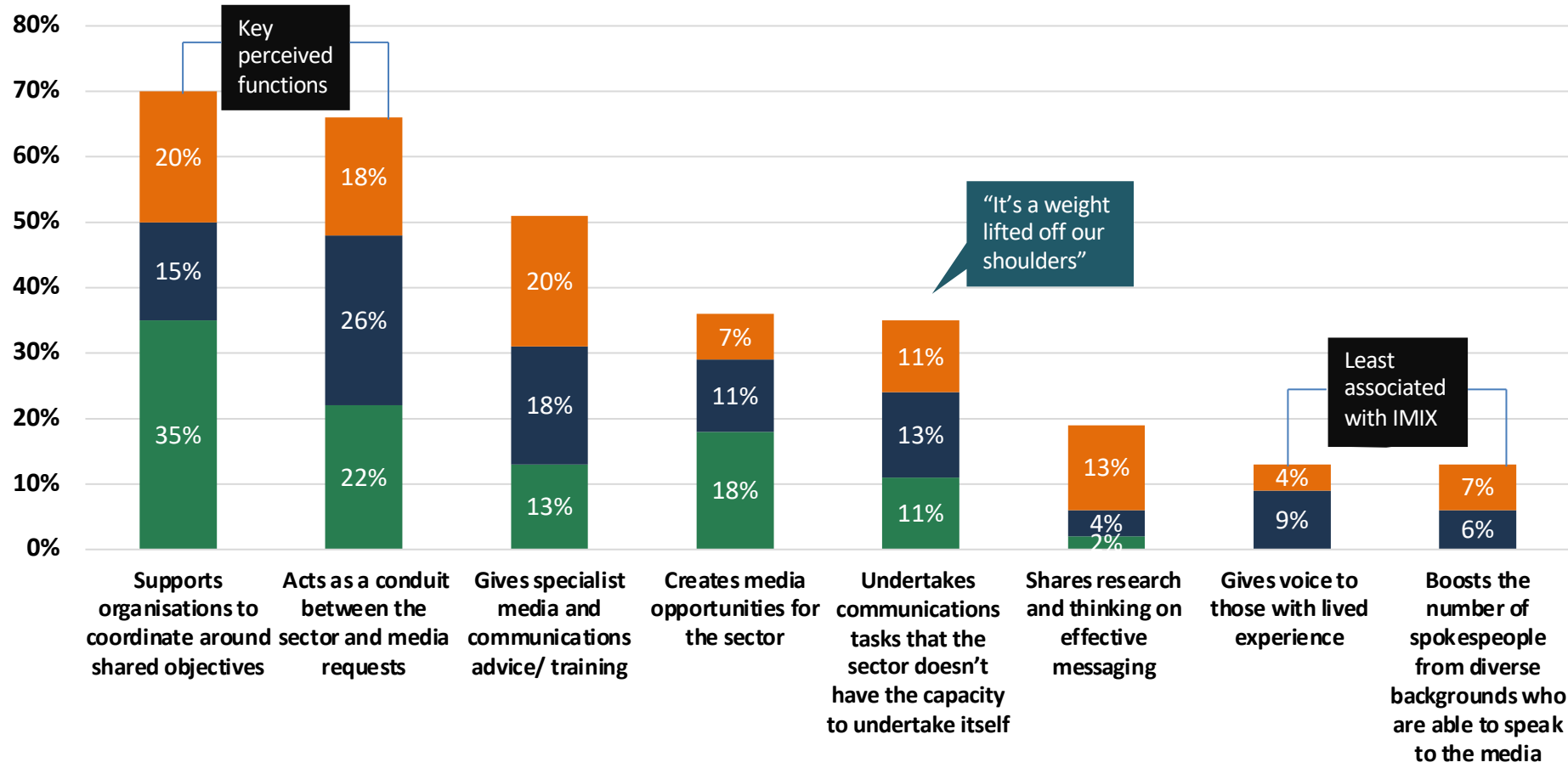
Reflection points: You have managed so far to balance building capacity, developing relationships between the sector and the media and convening organisations, who haven't historically considered what they want to say together. But the balance is easily tipped and there is a risk that:

- People could perceive you to be leading the conversation/ selecting campaigns to support
- You provide media and communications functions on behalf of organisations
- Sector level meetings become updates and lack strategic focus

Understanding of your role



Going with your 'top of mind' view, which of the below best describes IMIX's role? ■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3



How your role is perceived



There is general awareness of the functions you undertake but the role of neutral convenor and sector/ media intermediary are the most commonly cited in the qualitative and quantitative work. These are also highly valued functions which are perceived to have filled a gap in the sector. This is a step change in how IMIX was perceived a few years ago.

"It's main function is a coordinator"

"They've stepped into a convenor gap in the sector and filled in really well"

Being a 'communications hub' for the sector is a shorthand lots of people use but they can mean very different things by it. There is a split between those who see you as providing capacity and those who recognise your role in a broader communications goal of shifting the debate

"It's a resource for those who don't have a comms role"

"It provides comms expertise which is hugely valued/ "They give us authoritative guidance"

*"This media opportunity is coming up"/
"There is a journalist interested in XYZ"*

"I struggle to describe the purpose of IMIX. I know it to be useful but hard to say precisely in what way!"

"It provides help with framing work/ support with messaging"

"They operate more on the level of how to manage communication better on some of the advocacy asks"

"They exist to help us have a stronger, clearer voice"

Your role in the communications ecology



imix



British
Future...



migrant
VOICE
NEON
ONROAD



- Brings different parts of the sector together - migrant/ refugee and local/ national
- Boosts sector confidence and professionalism in dealing with the media
- Helps create media opportunities
- Gives strategic advice (message deployment, advocacy asks, horizon scanning)

- A voice on broader debate like shared identity and integration (not refugee issues, where there is already a voice) with the public/ NGOs and unusual voices
- Tries to bring positive stories to sceptical audiences
- Delivers research so everyone can be informed by attitudes

- All of these organisations are perceived to be key to amplifying lived experience/ experts by experience and developing spokespeople from diverse backgrounds
- There is some overlap with developing relationships and creating opportunities with media

- Provides information and statistics
- Provides important rebuttal function that is best delivered by an independent voice

IMIX plays a key role in supporting the functions of other parts of the ecology. However, it isn't always clear to sector organisations what the distinctions are and how/ if the infrastructure works together

Tension between communications and strategic communications



Whilst the two aspects of your purpose are inextricably bound up, some question the extent to which sector communications can influence the debate. There is a constant tension between how people see your role and how they see the role of communications generally. Some question whether this is a realistic aim for IMIX or anyone!



1. To reframe the debate on migration to enable a more welcoming environment for people who make the UK their home



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

You are perceived to be working at the 'coal face' of sector communications

Over the last 5 years, there has been a lot of 'noise' in the sector about strategic communications, audience research and messaging. For many organisations, this has been conceptual and therefore intangible. In contrast, you provide practical communications support. You are believed to exist to help them engage with the media constructively and in a way which protects sector organisations and the people they represent.

There is a big difference between building capacity and providing it

Not everybody sees that capacity building can be about getting help to tell the story differently. Some don't want to change their approach; they just want help to get their message out. Lack of sector communications capacity exacerbates this as organisations look for resource to make their communications goals happen. In some relationships, IMIX has provided capacity rather than built it.

For some, you are an expert *capability* builder

You have equipped them with a broader communications mindset and given them the strategy, tools and media relationships they needed to help them have a voice.

We don't have any space to talk about advocacy strategy as a whole for the sector for example. Sometimes it does feel like the communications conversation has taking place ahead of the advocacy conversation.

I think there is always going to be a sort of stable level of anti migrant sentiment. There are only moments we can temporarily reframe.

With regards to reframing migration - that might be IMIX intention but I am also not quite sure that that should be IMIX's role because how do you simply reframe the conversation without having substance and I think this is where I always struggle. Again this is really not a criticism of I at all but where I feel that there needs to be a little bit more careful analysis of what is communication and what is advocacy asks

If you achieve capacity building, it doesn't mean you reframe the debate. Stronger capacity can *help* to reframe the debate. But the sector has a tiny share of the debate so has limited scope to shape it.

I think it's never been a positive space to work in really I kind of look back from when I started here over those 15 years the most vilified migrant has changed it used to be an asylum seeker then it became in recent years your polish plumber or whatever you know it shifted to an EU thinking and then there's a much broader anti migrant sentiment and the end of free movement. I can't remember any sunny uplands where everyone really loved a migrant in this country

Progress towards outcomes (up to April 2020)

- 1. Sector proactively “owns” the narrative**
- 2. Sector can confidently respond to challenging media narratives**

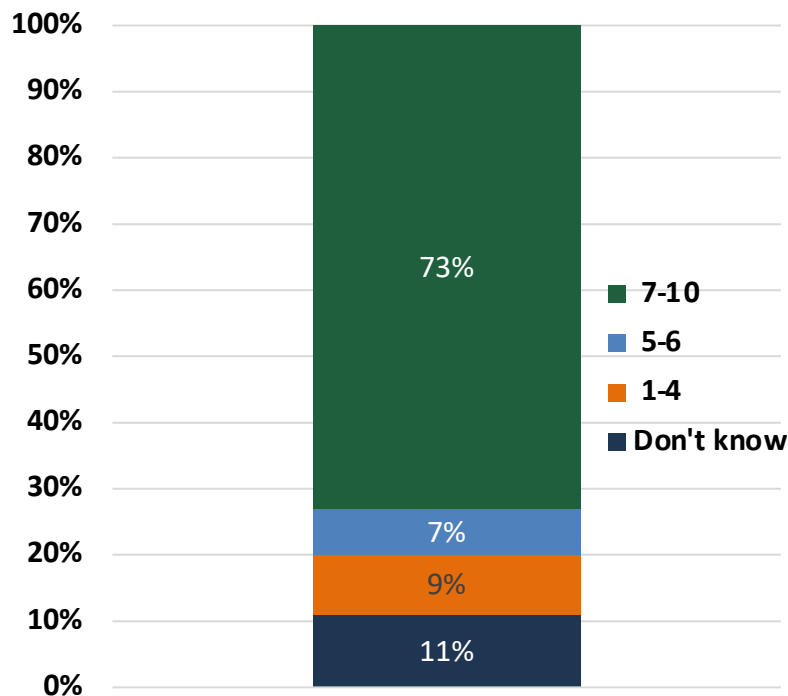
Measures

- Meetings, initiatives, interactions
- Organisations feel confident and supported
- Reported change sector communication activity and approaches
- Organisations completing media requests
- Organisations giving press statements

Impact on sector communications



Mean score: 7.4/10



In your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how much has IMIX helped to improve the quality of the sectors' communications and media activity over the past 12 months?

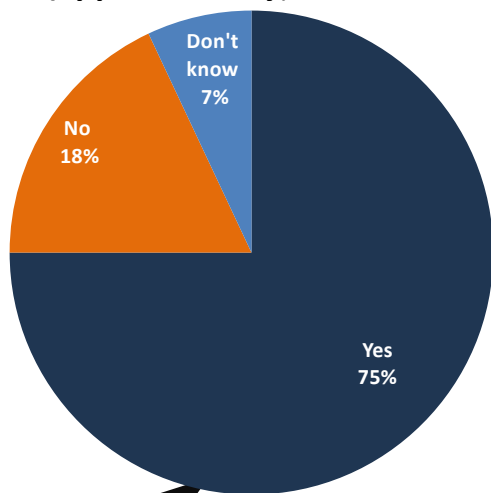
IMIX has provided:

- Help with messaging and framing – destitution, dispersal, health 'tourism', EU settled status scheme asks, channel crossings
- Support with communications strategy development
- Support with social media strategy
- Co-drafted job descriptions for communications roles
- Bespoke media training (tailored to potential media requests and area of advocacy)
- Convened regular groups and meetings (communication leads group, Brexit Civil Society Alliance)

Change in approach to communications

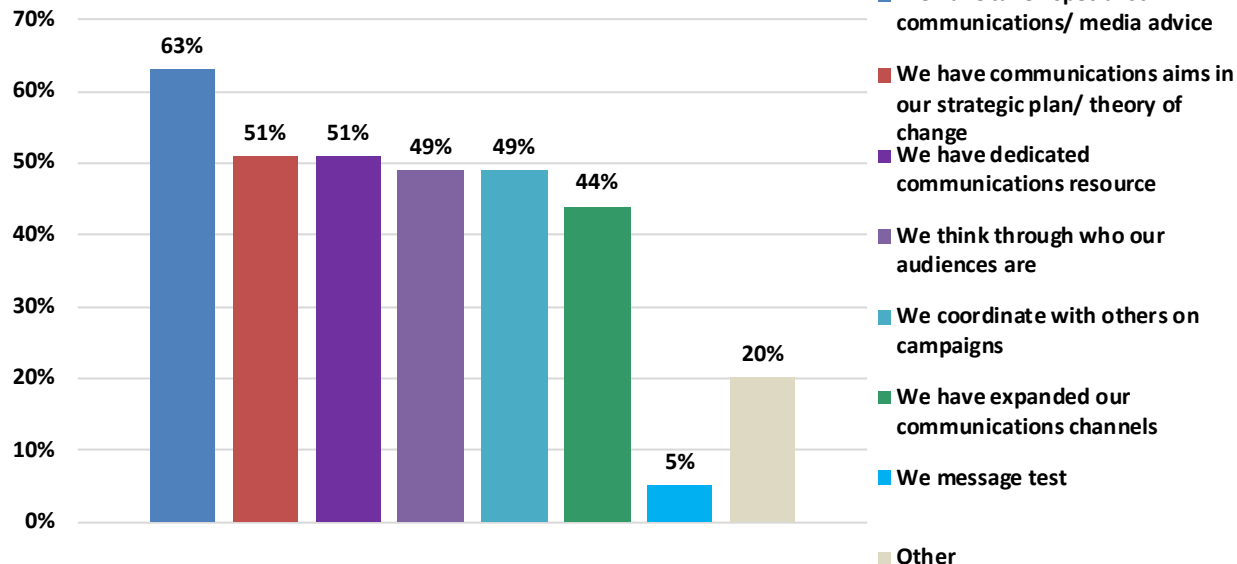


Has your approach to communications changed in the last two years (approximately)?



83% of those organisations that have worked closely with IMIX have changed their approach.

In what ways has it changed?



They are making what I do so much better and more professional. They are stepping it up a level by giving me this advice

IMIX so important to us as they give us access to skills and knowledge that we would never have been able to pay for. advice that I would never otherwise get

Improved confidence in dealing with the media



- ⊙ Organisations with no background in talking to the media now feel they know when and how to engage the media
- ⊙ Many talk about the 'relief' of having IMIX to turn to and to mediate media requests
- ⊙ There has been general mistrust of the media and have some organisations have had bad experiences in the past. As a result, they had shut down contact with the media. After working with IMIX, some of the most media averse organisations now feel they can engage with the media safely. Some of this is about leaning on IMIX for advice on media work and on training, but it's also about the relationships that IMIX have brokered and fostered between journalists and organisations – even smaller, local organisations.
- ⊙ Sector level meetings on communications have created space for 'upstream' thinking. These are universally welcomed and appreciated. However, there is some concern that regular communications meetings are not being attended by sufficiently senior sector staff, which limits the extent to which discussions are strategic.

They gave me proper media training and took away a lot of the risk. It's incredibly valuable and we are incredibly grateful for it.

It was such a relief to know there was someone who could support with all this stuff.

I know that IMIX is trying to look at how the debate might be shaped in the future so what are the key topics or themes that might become important. That more forward looking work I do find useful in the large scheme of things.

Every meeting varies but the meeting can be about for example how to pitch a story or a review of a successful campaign and how they use comms to achieve that success and then everyone kind of goes around to give an update on what they're working on so it's really useful for us to know whether there's opportunities, to find out what other organisations are working on and finding out if there's an opportunity for us to collaborate it's really good for networking and there's just a lot of knowledge in the room that I wouldn't have access to otherwise.

Improved confidence with reactive work



- ⦿ Responding to sudden, hostile/ challenging/ inaccurate media coverage has become more strategic. Whilst responding to challenging media narratives tends to be 'reactive'; parts of the sector feel more able to respond in a considered and tactical way, rather than hastily. Reactive work is increasingly mindful of the need to reflect broader communications and campaign goals.
- ⦿ IMIX has provided rapid messaging advice that has been communicated to the sector in response to challenging media coverage. Although it isn't possible to determine whether everybody aligned themselves to this, overwhelmingly people are positive about this role and many were thankful to have this guidance

▷ However, not everybody agrees that improved confidence in dealing with the media will necessarily produce good outcomes. There is a perception that the sector needs to remain media averse on some stories and especially on channel crossings/ north coast of France. Even those who recognise that IMIX has helped parts of the sector to respond constructively are concerned about the sector adding to coverage. .

Drawing attention to it is detrimental to people's chances of making that crossing. Because of all the media attention we now have border force boats in the channel. If we all just shut up about the situation, people's lives would probably get a bit easier.

I know that the stories which the civil society organisation are putting out is to challenge that but where is it going to end is it going to dominate the whole conversation for a long time to come, we don't really know.

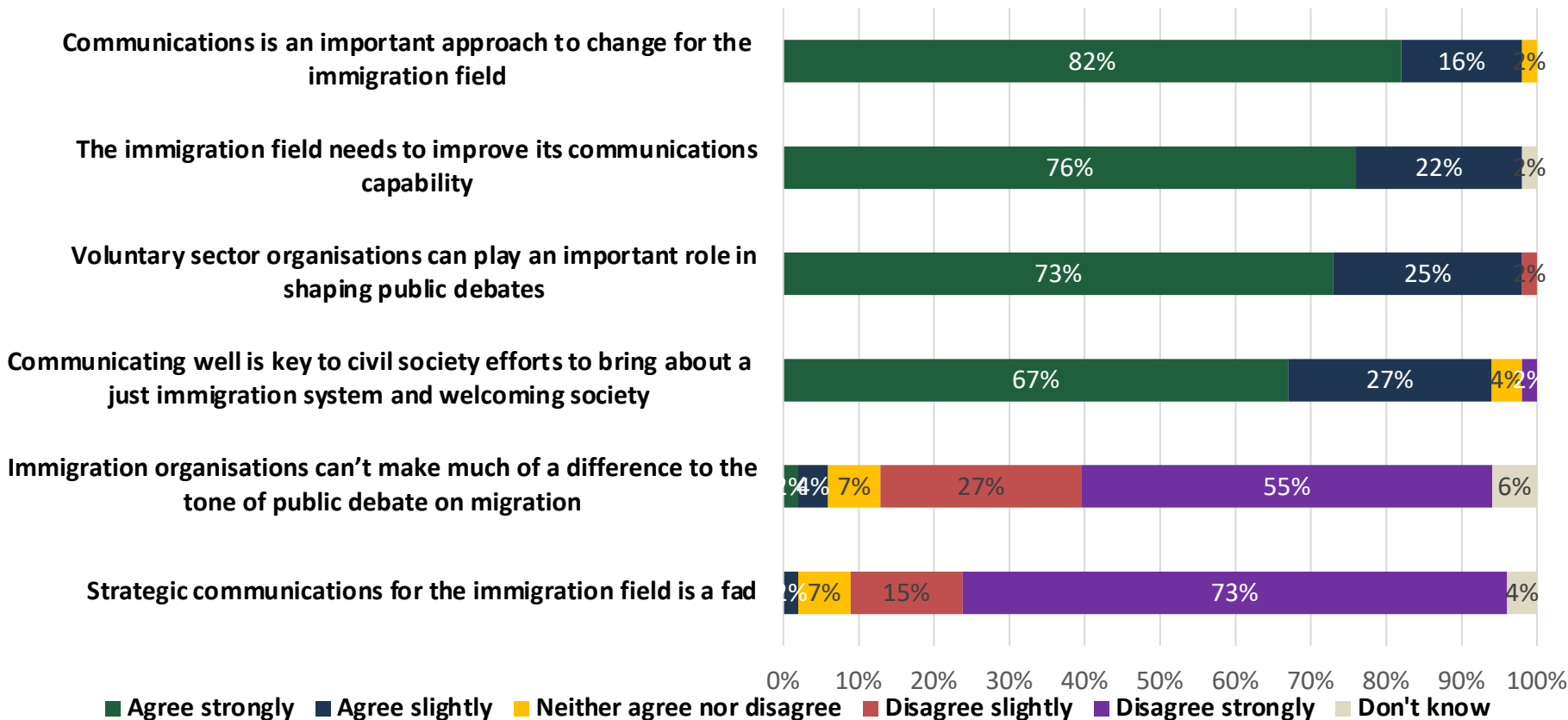
I think that just securing better coverage on newspapers and TV it's not going to change peoples minds on migrations and refugees unfortunately.

3. Organisations have a more sophisticated understanding of target audiences, and better use of a variety of channels

Measures

- Sector receives real time information about breaking news stories and events
- Organisations come to IMiX for ongoing communications advice and resources
- Increased skills and knowledge

Sector perspective on role of communications



Increased communications savviness



- ⊙ Many report that their understanding of target audiences has improved and that IMIX has played a key role in that. Many also feel that the sector overall has a better understanding of communications more generally and that this coincides with IMIX's existence, as well as other factors (e.g. British Future publications).
- ⊙ Channel use has diversified, with some looking for specific advice and strategy for social media communications to improve reach and profile.
- ⊙ Some organisations want to understand the bigger, more strategic picture and how they fit into that. Having developed more communications savviness, they are keen to know if and how they can be part of broader communications project (or if there is one).
- ⊙ There are a few organisations in the sample who feel that ultimately, they always had a good understanding and that, therefore, IMIX hasn't played a role in shaping their own understanding of target audiences

They've been amazing. Make such a big difference. Key advice is to talk about people, not figures.

How does my comms fit into the broader jigsaw puzzle? Is asking for the unwinnable part of that? How can all the different 'takes' / 'asks' fit together?

Some we've got a comms expert and we've also got a history of engaging with the media and a whole load of lines that developed over many years and it feels that actually we don't need IMIX in the way that others do and I think IMIX's focus on supporting those who haven't necessarily thought through their lines to help and we're happy to input at those points when lines are being developed.

So what do sector organisations now understand?



⊙ **It's about people, not numbers**

A shift from pushing 'facts' and myth busting of the past. Rebuttal is important but awareness that this alone doesn't alter the tone of debate or influence how people think about immigration and migrants. Human interest stories which are relatable are now universally considered to be a more effectively way of engaging people in a constructive discussion.

⊙ **Consider the 'conflicted middle'**

Everyone is conversant with this key research but few are clear about what to do with it. There is specific lack of clarity about who should be seeking to communicate with this persuadable group. There is also some resentment that the sector should moderate its messages to be more "palatable" to this group.

⊙ **Less technocratic campaign messages**

Avoidance of technical language. A key lesson learned on asking for a 'declaratory' system

⊙ **Positive content, not just 'poverty porn' case studies**

There is a lack of understanding about developing positive and value driven content. The discussion about positive narratives is reduced to presenting positive stories about individual migrants and there is concern about how this challenges a 'deserving/ undeserving migrant' narrative.

4. Broader civil society and business become engaged with migration issues

Measures:

- Views and shares of IMiX's website and social media
- Activities in Google Groups, initiatives and requests

Evidence of non-traditional channels isn't the same as evidence of broader civil society debate



- ⦿ This is the most difficult to determine and to attribute of all IMIX's outcomes. This research hasn't included any baselining of IMIX/ sector relationships with broader civil society and business. Additionally, how and why broader civil society and business talk about migration is determined by a wide variety of factors.
- ⦿ The contribution by non-migrant rights voices to shifting difficult public conversations is significant and IMIX has contributed by facilitating voices like health professionals, from Doctors of the World, for example, or coverage in the British Medical Journal

British politicians' NHS hypocrisy laid bare today on the global stage

Today at the UN Britain boasts of its pioneering universal health coverage – just as its government's "hostile environment" policies towards migrant healthcare are undermining that very principle.

[Docs Not Cops](#)

- ▷ Although IMIX has had some success in advancing coverage by non-traditional news channels which have broad reach, the field and stakeholders don't feel that this has been material to debates by broader civil society.
- ▷ Similarly to reactions to the aim of 're-framing the debate', it isn't felt to be a realistic outcome for IMIX.
- ▷ IMIX isn't seen to be in the space of the broader debate and is instead seen to be increasingly aligned with refugee organisations. It is itself seen to be a sector organisation.

5. There are joined-up communications across different media outlets

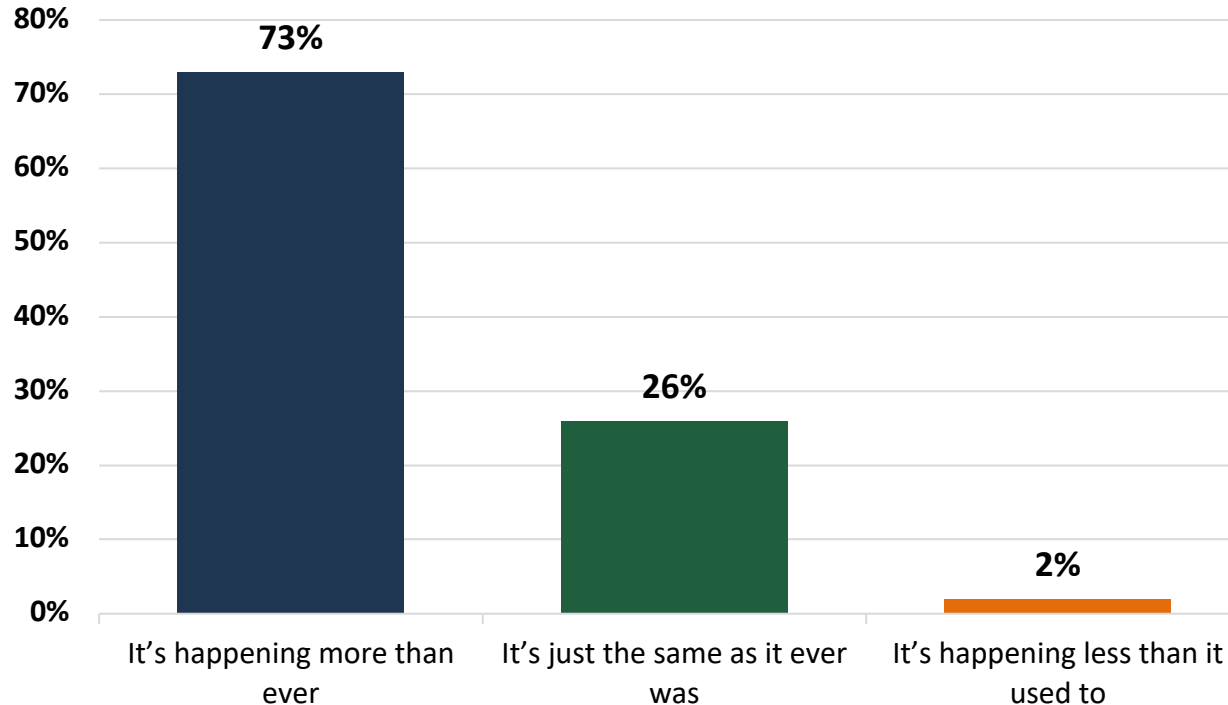
Measures:

- Messaging research is widely shared and used
- Organisations share plans and ideas with each other
- Organisations share best (and worst) practices with each other

Impact on sector coordination and cooperation



Which of these best describes your view about cooperation and coordination between different organisations in the refugee and migration sector?



- Organisations that have worked closely with IMIX (87%) are more likely to think co-operation is happening more than it used to, compared with 63% of those who have had only some direct contact with IMIX.
- Campaigning, service delivery and organising/mobilising organisations are more likely to think co-operation is happening more than it used to. Policy organisations are least likely.
- Organisations with 10 employees or less are more likely to think that co-operation is happening more than it used to

IMIX has played a key role in joining-up the sector



- ⦿ This research finds overwhelmingly that many organisations have shifted from being a) insular and/ or b) sceptical of communications support. Organisations are now more open and prepared to share information, problems and experiences and they see the value of it. There is evidence of informal consultation with one-another. The monthly communications meetings, the Googlegroup and other meetings that IMIX has convened have been key to this.
- ⦿ Some feel they were already coordinating and working within a common strategy. Those working on detention feel this particularly. Where an older alliance already exists, IMIX can be perceived as superfluous. However, even if there is no specific dialogue with IMIX on messaging and communications, those working on detention want to be ‘tapped in’ to the sector level conversations that IMIX facilitates, even if just to listen.
- ⦿ Note that joining-up doesn’t necessarily mean ‘collaboration’. It is possible and useful to be alive to what each other is doing and why. It is also possible to adopt guidance on messaging and even share tweets of other organisations without doing work together. Many see the value to this, and it creates a space in which collaboration might be possible. Furthermore, where organisations are not directly talking to each other when perhaps they should; IMIX is able to undertake the function of independent go-between which has improved alignment (e.g. channel crossings/ safe and legal routes, EU settlement scheme ‘asks’).
- ⦿ The IMIX GoogleGroup has enabled reactive messaging/ lines to be shared quickly and across the sector. Though some wonder what they can use the GoogleGroup for, it is in principle welcomed and has become a key mechanism for communications between sector organisations.

Linking the sector up is perceived as IMIX's greatest achievement



Individual campaigns considered in the context of other campaigns	<i>"It's really helped refining our own campaigns and our own messaging to know whether something seems systematic or something seems just related to our own little back yard and isn't a huge problem that everybody needs to know about."</i>
Joining up is now considered routine for parts of the sector	<i>"I think it's happening more than it was and that's a good thing. I think they helped to create a space where sometimes it's happening spontaneously within Imix pushing it as well which I think is really good. I think in the past when this first set up it was very much a like there would be quarterly meetings or however regular they were and not much in the in-between and now it does feel like there is a constant conversation."</i>
Amplifying each other's work	<i>"What it made us do out of solidarity retweet it, to support, you know it's nothing to do with us, but as an organization in solidarity with all migrants we retweeted a carefully worded message about the deportations flights and that's helpful, because you know that's helpful for relations in the sector, it's helpful for that cause. That wouldn't have happened without IMIX."</i>
Working together on shared campaign goals/ 'asks'	<i>"Where I've found them really invaluable is pulling the sector together and looking at messages from all angles and doing some fundamental work with the sector and with us. So, what are our messages about the EU settlement scheme and what do we all agree on? They've introduced that kind of rigour and that we make sure our messages get heard more widely because they're aligned across the sector and we don't contradict what the JCWI are saying on the new Australian points system or whatever it is."</i>
Joining up is now easier because IMIX is providing messaging resources	<i>"I think under the current management it has become so much more useful. there's a mixture of responsive comms and pre planned comms. I can see that people are preparing their own comms material based on the information that has been sent out."</i>

Greater use of online media channels and mainstream media



- ⦿ IMIX has helped to build and develop relationships with non-traditional voices on migration
- ⦿ Organisations talk about becoming more aware about the potential of these and especially social media and media aggregators like LadBible and HuffPost. There has been success in situating migration stories in a broader context of 'the kind of society we want to be', rather than speaking to immigration as a sensitive issue or a matter of injustice and rights.
- ⦿ Key examples include a Huffington post piece on hosting (with input from IMIX and NACCOM) and a story in the Metro with material from the previously media averse Roma Support Network. Both of these stories – and countless others – have been made possible by IMIX's introduction and guidance.
- ⦿ The so-called 'Tory press' is perceived to remain the sectors biggest challenge. Very few are thinking of this beyond traditional printed press, however. Unwelcoming voices are proliferated far beyond newspapers. There is perhaps a need to shift the sector on in thinking about narrative disruption rather than changing the mind of the traditional 'Tory press'.



We've also started to do social media activity more than we were doing before which again was a direct influence of the skills that we've gained through the trainings that we had with IMIX. We can control the information that is being delivered and through that then we engage with people which were never engaged before.

Where it's notoriously difficult to get into the Tory press and I think that's where I need more help. That's the sector's biggest challenge.

6. More spokespeople from diverse backgrounds are ready to speak to media

Measure:

-Speaker diversity reach 80% non-white British and inclusion of more protected characteristics

IMIX plays a role in training spokespeople but, more crucially, in managing the risk of them engaging with the media



- ⦿ There was no baseline measure of speaker diversity so it isn't possible to make any statement with respect to how speaker diversity has changed, and if/ how IMIX contributed to that. However, whilst it is the case the other organisations in the sector are perceived to make a bigger contribution to improving speak diversity, many organisations point to the role that IMIX has played in supporting media representations from those with lived experience of the immigration system.
- ⦿ IMIX has delivered media training to organisations which are comprised of people with lived experience and also provided media training to people associated with these organisations as service users or 'experts by experience'.
- ⦿ There is need for on-going work. Delivering media training alone isn't sufficient and perhaps isn't always best use of resource. In one example, 12 of those who received media training had moved on and were out of contact of the connecting organisation within a month of the training.
- ⦿ IMIX is perceived to have mitigated many of the safeguarding concerns associated with people telling their stories to the media by: vetting journalists; mediating the relationship between sector organisations and journalists; and, by helping to prepare spokespeople in advance of interviews.

They were very helpful at putting us in touch with journalists and through them actually I was able to arrange for some of our clients to speak for example on Channel 4's Sky News so they were passing me all of those contacts which I wouldn't have been able to get access to otherwise. So, in that respect I'm very grateful to them because they allow smaller organisations like us to share our side of the story as well because I think that often media go directly to the usual larger organisations.

IMIX was there for the support so whenever we were agreeing for an interview to happen or form some engagement with media to happen they went further than that so they came to the office and they offered to support the community member before interview.

6. Journalists/media showcase more positives stories

Measure:

-Stories published with IMIX's support have a constructive or humanizing tone

Proactive groundwork has produced constructive story telling



- ⦿ Of course, positive or constructive story telling in the media can and does occur independently of IMIX. However, groundwork that IMIX has proactively undertaken with journalists and media outlets has produced positive story telling – nationally and locally. The counterfactual isn't knowable but what is clear is that stories have been instigated that may not have been told and stories that would have been told anyway have been informed and framed by IMIX's contribution.
- ⦿ IMIX relationship building (with a new editor) was even able to contribute to a wholesale change to the tone of local coverage about channel crossings.
- ⦿ IMIX relationship building and intervention resulted in moderated TV coverage of arrivals to the Kent coast. There can be no doubt that the coverage would have occurred anyway but IMIX's involvement likely shifted the tone of this coverage by creating access to narratives and voices that would have been otherwise missing.
- ⦿ Significant groundwork was undertaken ahead of the launch of the EU Settled Status scheme. This meant that when media interest piqued, there were already developed messages and human interest stories to share with them. Using IMIX has a route to the sector is attractive to journalists who are time poor and appreciate a knowledgeable organisation who can deliver case studies, stories and interviews.
- ⦿ IMIX is able to navigate on behalf of sector organisations which media opportunities will contribute most to their strategic goals, and which media opportunities should be turned down.



Looking forwards

Some overall remarks



- ⊙ There is a need to diffuse tensions about the presentation of ‘positive stories’. These tensions appear to be largely driven by misunderstanding.
- ⊙ There is a need to clarify exactly what sector organisations can come to IMIX for. This research suggests that many are unsure about how much help to ask for and are also unclear about what it is for them to do and what it is for IMIX to do. Is IMIX a media organisation in its own right as well as an organisation that can support the sector in dealing with the media?
- ⊙ Relatedly, questions are being asked about how IMIX decides what communication activity it prioritises and who it works with (and why).
 - ⊙ Going with the grain, not against? Is IMIX working on campaigns borne out of where there is the greatest opportunity?
 - ⊙ Or is IMIX working on stories and campaigns where there is the least resource?
 - ⊙ Or is IMIX just working on what comes to it?
 - ⊙ How are these decisions made and who by?
- ⊙ There is appetite to work together more strategically, especially on common messages and groundwork for forthcoming ‘events’, like the end of free movement. Parts of the sector have seen the power of this for their own work. Communications discussions are a way into this because they make alignment and cooperation real. There is huge potential for IMIX’s convening and independent arbiter role but there is also a huge burden of responsibility with this too. Additionally, IMIX faces a key person risk with this aspect of its work as its current CEO is strongly associated with enabling this.
 - ⊙ A 2-3 year plan towards amnesty and how well the UK treats and integrates those already with refugee status are suggested as forward looking strategic work

Sector wish-list



- ◎ IMIX has done some strong local work, especially in the West Midlands and in Kent. It is unclear whether a specific regional resource makes sense, or whether this work can be done from a central base. Signs are that attaching resource to a local organisation isn't an essential component to deepening relationships with local media outlets and local stakeholders. IMIX seems to have been shifting away from the perception that it is a London orientated organisation and people are aware of successful local relationships – but they want more of this! The appetite for local work is strong. There is belief in the power of shifting narratives locally and speaking to local concerns (real or imagined).
- ◎ Although media training is valued, there is a need for follow up effort with those who have had it. There is an appetite for pathways for those with lived experience/ spokespeople to use and develop their skills. This level of pastoral and on-going care could be difficult for IMIX to deliver.
- ◎ Some of those who took part in this research explicitly asked for messaging guidelines, suggesting that they are not as well socialised they could be.
- ◎ Almost everyone wants IMIX to develop a communications strategy with them on their issue!
- ◎ There is some concern that IMIX is doing too too much work with refugee voices. Clearly, the sector is largely made up of refugee organisations and IMIX has done significant work on EU nationals. However, this perception needs to be addressed and considered especially in light of IMIX's aspirations to trigger broader debate/ involve broader voices on migration issues.

Some final quotes on your value and the challenge you face



IMIX so important to us as they give us access to skills and knowledge that we would never have been able to pay for. advice that I would never otherwise get

They are making what I do so much better and more professional. They are stepping it up a level by giving me this advice

Everyone says they want to be more strategic but then they also want to prove they are better than other people. That makes it very hard for IMIX

We are at the most difficult end. when we are in the news, we are at the hardest level of the debate and at the edge of it.

I'd like to make more use of them for a strategic bird's eye view of what's going on across the sector

Not just about helping people say what they want as loudly as possible. It's about helping them see the implications of what they say and think about what is coming