

Strategy

2022–2027

migrant
VOICE





About our strategy

Our new strategy 2022-27 builds on our track record and twelve-year experience of systematically increasing migrant voices in the media and influencing it as a migrant-led, migrant-centred communications and campaign/advocacy organisation.

It marks a serious transition into becoming an organisation that, with migrants, sets the agenda on migration and addresses structural inequalities that surround migrants and shape society.

The events of the last few years have drastically altered the world's trajectory and our operating environment. These events include, to name but a few: the UK General Election in December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic which began in early 2020, the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 which then triggered the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and the completion of Brexit at the end of 2020.

In 2021, the global economy and millions of people's lives continue to be battered by the pandemic, while the collective failure to slow down the pace of climate change is increasingly felt in our everyday lives. There was a need for reflection and a new strategy to address these challenges.

The Strategy 2022-27 was developed on the basis of an organisational review process and in-depth reflection across the organisation, its staff and trustee team.

This reflection and learning led to a new Theory of Change being developed in September 2021 and our new Strategy 2022-27.

Both documents work together to accurately reflect Migrant Voice's current methodology, learning and ambition and emphasise the critical aspects of the work we do and why.

While incorporating many elements from our previous strategic plan, Migrant Voice's Strategy 2022-27 is clearer in describing steps the organisation is taking each year and more focused on creating structural-level impact.

“There was a need for reflection and a new strategy to address new challenges.”

About Migrant Voice

Migrant Voice is a migrant-led, national organisation which builds a community of migrant voices to speak for ourselves and to set the agenda on migration and address structural inequalities that surround migrants and shape society.

We strive to create a society where migrants have full equality and achieve positive change for migrants – countering racism and xenophobia, discrimination and unjust policies, bringing communities together and bringing social justice – change which benefits the whole of UK society.

To achieve this, we put migrant voices at the centre of debates about migration, for it is those with lived experience who are best placed to speak.

We also believe migrants need to build collective power and influence, ensure our rights are protected and have a seat at the decision-making table to set the agenda on migration.

We work with all migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, across the UK and specialise in migrant-centred communications and campaign/advocacy to achieve migrants' rights and justice for all.

The foundation for our work is our Migrant Voices for Change Network with hubs in three regions: London, the West Midlands and Glasgow.

Our hubs host safe spaces, where migrants come together to build relationships of solidarity, identify their common concerns and transform their experiences and stories into collective demands, identifying shared problems and solutions.

Building on this, our members speak to the media and intervene in the public

debate on migration to influence and shape it both through our bespoke programmes such as 'Meet the Editor' and Migrant Voice Ambassadors, which build participants' skills of communications and influencing.

We work with members to develop and conduct campaigns to change laws and policies of concern or achieve positive outcomes for individuals. Our lobbying centres on members' experience to ensure parliamentarians, policy makers and other targets engage directly with migrants.

OUR METHODOLOGIES FOR CREATING OUR DESIRED CHANGE ARE:



We build a bigger, stronger and deeper **community of migrant voices** across the UK via our Migrant Voices for Change Network, made up of regional hubs

We strengthen migrants' ability to **influence and shape the media** and public debate through training, brokering stories to the media and working with journalists and editors



We develop and conduct **migrant-led campaigns and advocacy** – that are accountable to participating migrants – in order to change law and policy and achieve positive outcomes for individuals

We facilitate and act as an anchor for migrant-led initiatives of a wider migration justice movement in alliance with other movements, by **convening, collaboration, capacity building and representation.**



The role of lived experience

Our **lived experience of the system and desire to challenge it** have driven us to establish Migrant Voice and continue our work.

Migrant Voice is **migrant-led** at the leadership, governance and staff-team levels. Collectively, we have a deep understanding of the immigration system and the impact of the migration debate as we experience them first-hand.

Our methodologies have evolved from our **insight as migrants** working with the media, decision makers, the migration sector and others and have been shaped by our lived experience of overcoming feeling exposed and stereotyped and shifting to occupy a **position of strength and confidence**.

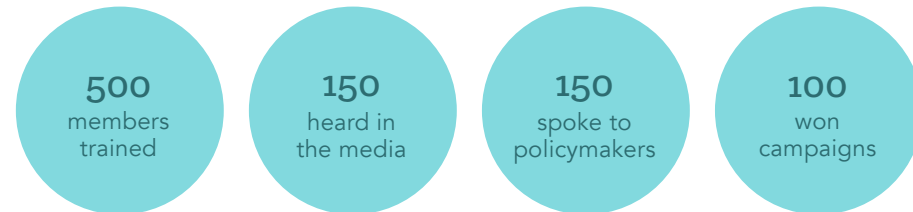
Over the past twelve years we have developed extensive experience in **supporting migrants to speak for ourselves**, in the media, directly to politicians and in their communities, **to generate changes in society**.

We believe that people with lived experience of migration and injustice of the immigration system are best placed to challenge and change it but often face barriers in doing so. If migrants and migrant-led groups are **mobilised and empowered** to use their voice and agency powerfully, they will be able to influence the system more effectively, migrants' rights will be better protected and **migrants can proactively set the agenda on migration** in a way that protects rights and dignity for all.



Our achievements & Our history

We are proud that we punch above our weight. With our small team, in 2019 alone we achieved:



In our campaigns we often address issues affecting tens of thousands of people. In fact, our members are powerful change makers when given the right support, encouragement, training and opportunities, and we have developed community resources, methodologies, programmes and tools - and most importantly, human connections and trust - to facilitate this over the last 12 years.

CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHT MY FUTURE BACK CAMPAIGN

We're fighting for justice for tens of thousands of international students who were wrongly accused of cheating in an English language test, had their visas revoked, and made undocumented and destitute overnight. Our work alongside them led to many affected students speaking out in the media and three major inquiries – by the National Audit Office, Public Accounts Committee and APPG on TOEIC – all of which produced damning evidence of the Government's mishandling of this matter. Through our campaigning, 70% of the students we worked with have won their cases and are finally getting the opportunity to restart their lives.



We know that our members' ability to convey their lived experience improves the media reporting on migration. In our 2017 survey with 25 journalists from BBC, ITV, Channel 4, etc, all respondents said our work connecting them with migrants (our members who have been trained by us) led to better reporting on migration.

MIGRANT VOICE AMBASSADOR **MARIANA**

Mariana is a Migrant Voice Ambassador from the West Midlands. She used her learning and support from Migrant Voice to challenge a racist poster put up by her local supermarket. The article she wrote in the Huffington Post has led to the store removing the racist poster from their window, achieving a positive change for the local community. "All my thoughts that I was keeping in my mind, I could express them in writing due to the support received from the programme. If I was not supported by Migrant Voice, I would probably never have said these words publicly."

Of the many achievements, we are most proud of the structural change we created in the media discourse on migration. Migrant Voice was established in 2010 to address an acute lack of migrants' voices or perspectives in the media coverage of migration: debate about us was taking place without us.

Our persistent work of placing migrants' stories in the media has influenced the industry's norm, and increasingly coverage about migration includes migrant voices and perspectives.

What we want to achieve in 2022–2027

Migrant Voice aims to achieve the following outcomes in 2022-2017.

- 1** Migrants who work with us will increase their confidence and skills to communicate and advocate for themselves and their communities in the media, on other public platforms and in solidarity with host communities. Using their voice and agency powerfully, they will win more campaigns and policy changes that improve their lives and society as a whole.
- 2** The media and other public platforms on migration will increasingly centre and include migrant voices and perspectives, moving away from a one-sided, simplistic or xenophobic approach with inaccurate or manipulative coverage and language.
- 3** Politicians and policy makers will increasingly understand migrants as human beings not numbers, recognise the necessity and the benefits of involving us as legitimate stakeholders in the policy making process, and ensure that policies affecting migrants are formed with our participation.

Increasing
our members'
confidence and
skills

Centring
migrant
perspective
and voices

Increasing
understanding
amongst policy
makers

Centring
migrants in the
social justice
sector

- 4** Partners in the migration sector will increasingly set priorities rooted in and shaped by migrants' experience and they will work in a more collaborative and coordinated manner while centring migrants' voices and perspectives.

- 5** The wider social justice sector will more proactively integrate migration and migrants within their understanding of society, rather than as a topic that only the migration sector works on, and work in alliance with us.

- 6** As an organisation, we will be more effective at creating long-lasting change by being clear about our working methodology and improving our organisational coordination and agility, while retaining our generous, thoughtful and kind way of working.



How does Migrant Voice create change?

We build a bigger, stronger and deeper community of migrant voices across the UK.

- MV Network, via regional hubs, provide safe spaces that transform migrants' experiences and stories into a collective demand through identification of shared problems and solutions

- Network mobilises migrants and helps forge connection between them, different migrant communities and with wider communities

- Network runs training sessions, Media labs, discussions to increase migrants' knowledge, confidence, and skills to speak for ourselves

We build partnerships with other organisations and stakeholders in the field of migration and social justice

We **strengthen migrant voices in the media & public debate** to influence and shape them and speak to power up and across

- Meet the editors
- MV Ambassadors
- Media training
- MV's own intervention as an organisation
- MV members' own production
- Proactively placing our members' stories and voices in the media and other cultural, public and community settings

We develop & conduct **migrant-led campaigns & advocacy** to change law/policy and individual outcomes

- Policy change work/law reform
- Individual campaigns
- Lobbying and briefing centred on migrants' experience
- Being directly accountable to migrants

We facilitate and act as an anchor for migrant-led initiatives of a **wider migration justice movement**, in alliance with other movements

- Convening, collaboration and mobilising
- Connecting migrants with other organisations
- Supporting other migrant-led groups and migrants' leadership development
- Embed migrants' perspectives and priorities in wider social justice movement and act jointly
- Represent migrant voices in the UK and abroad

Migrants building more collective power and influence, migrants' rights better protected, migrants setting the agenda on migration

OUR TARGETS...

We seek to transform behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of:

- migrants
- the media
- politicians
- political parties
- policy makers
- municipalities
- think tanks
- editors
- journalists
- cultural institutions
- local communities
- migrant-led groups
- migration organisation
- funders
- social justice organisations and groups
- civil society
- general public / society

OUR SUCCESSES LOOK LIKE...

- Migrants are mobilised and empowered to use their voice and agency powerfully to lead communities and transform society for better;
- The media and public discourse on migration centres, includes and is informed by migrant voices and perspectives;
- Migration and other policies which affect migrants are formed with migrants' involvement, respecting and promoting migrants' rights and dignity;
- Migrants, with others, win campaigns and policy changes, individually and as groups, that improve their lives and society as a whole;
- Priorities of migration justice movement are rooted in and shaped by migrants' experience;
- There is a strong, collective, voice of migrants that reflects their diversity and works towards social justice for all;
- There is strong connection and solidarity between migrants and non-migrants.

OUR IMPACT

A society where migrants and refugees have full equality: where they are heard, respected, have rights, and are embraced as equal members of our community

Positive change for migrants – countering racism and xenophobia, discrimination and unjust policies, strengthening communities, and bringing social justice – change which benefits the whole of UK society

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