

**Global
Exchange**
on Migration & Diversity

Building an Inclusive City Narrative

Briefing note

Learning and reflections from Inclusive
Cities: a workshop on strategic
communications and narrative

16 April 2018

Jacqui Broadhead

May 2018

COMPAS



Building an Inclusive City Narrative

Briefing note

This briefing note forms part of the [Inclusive Cities](#) programme – a knowledge exchange initiative working with UK city administrations and partners to deliver a step change in their approach to the inclusion of newcomers.

Building a strategic narrative of inclusion emerged as an early priority and focal point for the Inclusive Cities, with participating cities keen to look at the research and best practice available on how to develop narratives which tell the story of their city in ways which generate a sense of identity, belonging and inclusion for all residents.

This note captures learning and reflections from a practitioner workshop held at the Migration Museum on 16th April 2018¹². It aims to support cities in considering key issues and resources in developing their approach to inclusion. As part of the programme, each inclusive city will develop its own narrative particular to its values and population – this note aims to provide an overview of some approaches deriving from research and thinking in the UK and US which might prove useful in telling the story of inclusion locally. This note is predominantly concerned with how to shape long term inclusive narratives, rather than reactive communications in the light of events – though having a clear strategic narrative could and should inform more reactive responses to events.

Understanding public opinion on migration and inclusion

Central to building and shaping a city narrative of inclusion is to start with an understanding of the available evidence of public opinion on migration and inclusion.

Recent research to better understand and then segment or categorise into different groups public opinion on migration includes; Fear and Hope's 6 tribe methodology, the British Social Attitudes Survey and British Future's analysis identifying 'an anxious middle.'

The British Social Attitudes Survey (34) finds that “despite the debate about immigration becoming more prominent and contentious ... [we find] ... that in the 12 years up to 2014 our attitudes on immigration's impact on the country became largely more positive. However, underneath this change hides a social divide in attitudes which is among the starkest in Europe.”

¹ The workshop was kindly supported by Social Change Initiative, ESRC Impact Acceleration Account and delivered in partnership with the Migration Museum and the Open University

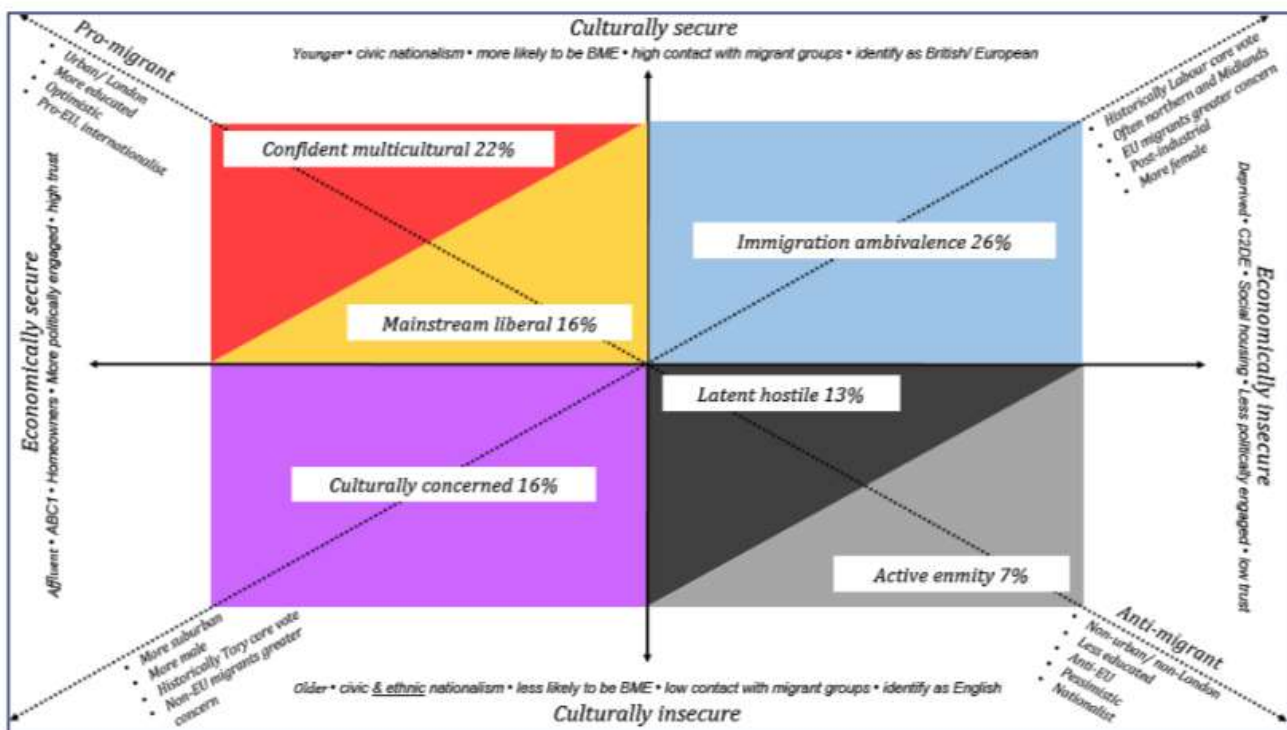
² The agenda of the workshop and participating organisations are captured in Annex A

This feeds into a common recent assertion that attitudes are divided broadly speaking into two categories; some commentators have defined this as ‘open’ versus ‘closed’.³

However, whilst divisions in opinion are clearly evident, segmentation research points to a more nuanced picture. When considering this type of research, it is important to bear in mind a number of key principles, as set out by Integration and Migration Exchange (IMiX). The approach should be:

- **Non-reductive** – these are schools of opinion, they are not binary categorisations for people
- **Non-judgemental** as far as possible – the aim is to aid understanding
- **Non-exclusive** – to be effective we need to take into consideration attitudes all segments, not just double down (even if some groups will remain a primary focus)

The Global Dialogue and the IMiX uses Fear and Hope’s methodology (figures from July 2016) and synthesises them into four poles based on economic and cultural security or insecurity.



IMiX

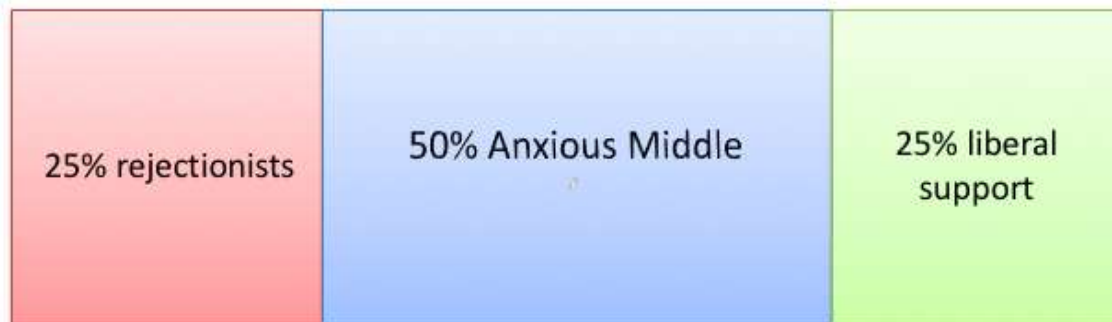
These have then been further broken down into four groups; liberals (top left), grafters (top right), traditionalists (bottom left) and sceptics (bottom right). These typologies are similar in their findings (with some country specific variation) to segmentation research conducted in other countries.⁴ More in Common found that, in keeping with the UK, all the research identified that, ‘a deep polarisation exists

³ See for example this Economist article (2016) <https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21702750-farewell-left-versus-right-contest-matters-now-open-against-closed-new>

⁴ More in Common has undertaken similar research in France, Italy, Germany and Greece

between those resolutely for and against migration. However, a large middle segment is largely ambivalent, less ideological, less politically engaged, and has views shaped largely by emotions based on personal values.’

Similarly, British Future’s analysis posits that the two central groups (in IMIX’s terminology ‘grafters’ and ‘traditionalists’ or the ‘culturally concerned’ and ‘immigration ambivalent’ in Fear and Hope’s typology) make up part of an ‘anxious middle’ in the UK on migration – with entrenched views both more strongly pro and anti, sitting on either side.



British Future

In keeping with this view of an ‘anxious middle,’ the National Conversation on Immigration⁵ found that **most people are ‘balancers’** when it comes to migration. It found that:

- **Most participants saw both pressures and gains from migration.**
- **Pressures on public services** were the most common pressures cited, more so than pressures on jobs and wages (though this emerged strongly in specific areas)
- **Contact matters** in how people talk and think about migration
- There is **very low trust in government and little confidence** in the management of migration, alongside low policy knowledge (for example, only a minority of people had heard of the net migration target.)

Crucially, it also found that positively or negatively, **people view immigration through its impact on the place that they live.**

⁵ The National Conversation on Immigration was organised British Future and Hope not Hate and fed into the Home Affairs Select Committee. It draws on 60 local citizens’ panels and stakeholder meetings across the UK, as well as an open online survey and polling.

Framing the city narrative of inclusion

In understanding this segmentation research, the next question is how cities can use this segmentation research in their communications with residents on inclusion and how they might be able to build a more inclusive narrative.

Research on Framing the Economy⁶ found three key steps in creating a new story or narrative:

- Defining a *shared vision*
- *Understanding the audience* and what the public think on the topic
- Identifying and testing *new frames* to change the story

All work around building an inclusive narrative should reinforce the core values of the place and therefore the aim is not to develop completely different ways of speaking to different groups on migration and inclusion, but rather to contribute to a shared vision. However, there may be different frames which appeal to different groups and this may support the development of a more inclusive narrative and build wider support.

The cognitive scientist George Lakoff describes frames as the ‘mental structures that shape the way we see the world’ – they are linked to our core values and often to our gut instincts and, as defined by the Narrative Initiative, ‘frames articulate our worldviews, which are in turn activated by language: cues in communication that generate unconscious, intuitive and emotional responses.’

Welcoming America’s Stronger Together⁷ toolkit seeks to put this approach into action. It identifies a number of themes which are, ‘pragmatic and focused on economic benefits’, though ‘still rooted in values rather than a transactional or numbers-first approach to communications ... [including] inclusion, cooperation, and building more prosperous, connected and successful communities.’

Message	Key lines ⁸
Stronger together	“Our community’s success depends on making sure everyone who’s a part of it—including immigrants—feels welcome here.”
Innovation	“Immigrants are innovators: entrepreneurs and small-business owners whose contributions are helping us grow our local economy... [they] bring new ideas and a willingness to work hard to see them succeed.”

⁶ Framing the Economy is a two year project to come up with a new story about the economy led by the New Economic Organisers Network (NEON) in partnership with PIRC, the FrameWorks Institute and the New Economics Foundation

⁷ Welcoming America is a US NGO which works with cities and communities to support them to become more inclusive for all residents. It is a partner in the Inclusive Cities programme.

⁸ This is an edited version of the full Stronger Together toolkit

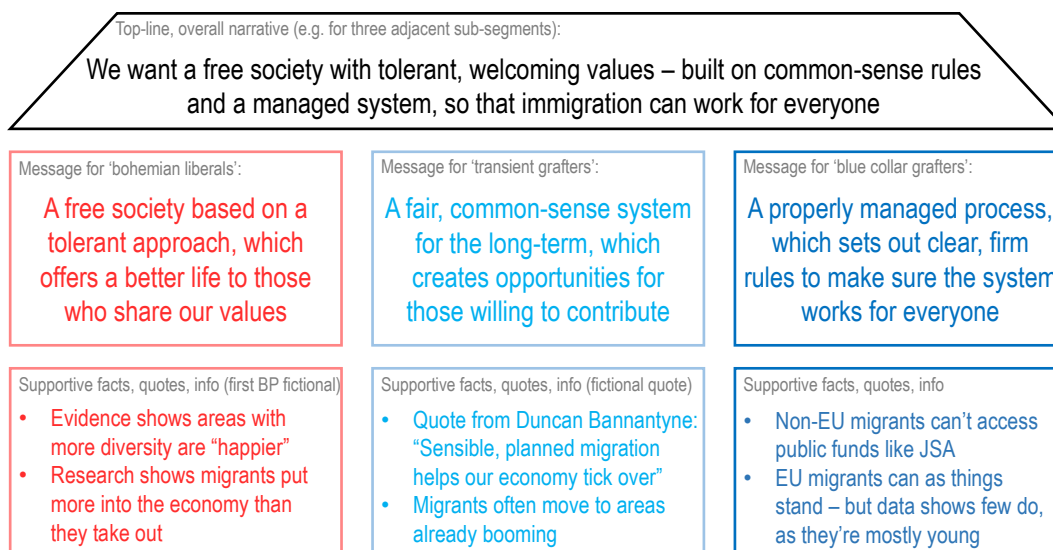
Vibrant Communities	“Immigrants are a vital part of our community—they bring fresh perspective and new ideas, start businesses and contribute to the vibrant diversity that we all value.”
Twenty First Century Economy	“Competing in a twenty-first century economy will require taking full advantage of our most important resource—our people. Communities across the country and around the world are in a race...to attract the human capital that will allow them to thrive in a global economy. Becoming a more welcoming place for immigrants gives us a leg up in that competition and helps us retain talented people of all backgrounds.”
Shared Values	“Our community was built by immigrants—hard-working people, our parents and grandparents, who believed in the American Dream. We should welcome those who are following in their footsteps and doing their part to create a thriving community. From those who cook the food that we eat to those who create innovative businesses, new immigrants realize the value of working hard and doing your part to help build a stronger community.”
Friendliness	“Our community has always been a welcoming community. We don’t care where you came from or what you look like, we care about what kind of person you are. We want people to know that our community is always willing to extend a hand in friendship to those who want to be a part of it.”

These messages can be seen in the narratives developed by a number of US cities. For example, Atlanta has focused on three of the messages above to develop a narrative which:

- Draws on the history of the city as the ‘birthplace of civil rights’ in order to make the case for its role as welcoming city (*shared values*)
- Defines Atlanta as a place which welcomes with ‘Southern hospitality’ (*friendliness*)
- Positions Atlanta as a fast growing city which wants to compete on a world stage (*21st century economy*.)

Broadly speaking, these frames appeal to different ways of thinking. For example, shared values and the link to Atlanta’s history of civil rights activism may speak more to ‘liberals,’ whilst economic competitiveness may appeal more to the practical outlook of ‘grafters’ and stories related to long standing traditions of friendliness may appeal more to ‘traditionalists.’

IMiX gives the example of a message house model which shows how to take an overall message and break it down into different frames which might appeal to different groups within its segmentation analysis:



IMiX

Importantly, whilst the different messages or frames are shaped to appeal to different groups, they all reinforce the overall narrative and are not contradictory to any of the values contained within it.

In seeking to develop this at the local level, the Inclusive Cities project has set out some draft guidelines⁹ for the development of a city specific inclusive narrative:

Principle	Why is this important?	Example ¹⁰
Take a positive, asset- based view both of the city and its people	The narrative should be rooted in a positive sense of place and start with the strengths of the city and its people	People Make Glasgow
Link to the overarching strategic priorities for the city and any	Inclusion should be mainstreamed within the activity of the city and therefore an inclusive narrative	London is Open

⁹ Please note that these guidelines have been developed as part of the ongoing Inclusive Cities programme and will continue to be refined and developed co-productively with the participating cities as the project continues. They are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, but to offer some broad guidance on approaching the topic.

¹⁰ These examples reflect those raised or showcased in the workshop – with a particular focus on the contributions from the Migration Museum Network. Further examples of good practice can be found in the Inclusive Cities background paper (see resources)

city branding strategies	must reflect the city values and vice versa and be embedded within it	
Both shape and be informed by service delivery	Inclusion should be mainstreamed within the activity of the city and therefore an inclusive narrative must reflect and be reflected within service delivery	New York Office of Migrant Affairs – Action NYC
Be aimed both at newcomers to the city and longer-standing residents	Inclusive Cities builds on research which defines integration and inclusion as a shared responsibility and two-way process – therefore communications must be targeted at everyone and aim to foster this shared sense of place	Welcome Dayton Plan Brighton Table Tennis Club Failte Isteach – welcoming migrants through conversational English classes Cardiff Story Museum
Aim to tell the story of the place, its history and values, its present and future	Creating a sense of identity and belonging is vital to creating a place-based narrative which is grounded and shared. Past and present stories are one way to do this	Migration Museum Project – all our stories Journeys to Oxford National Museums Liverpool Arrivals Sheffield
Be written in plain language and be no longer than 150 words	The narrative should be easy to understand and accessible to all	Welcoming America

Communicating your narrative

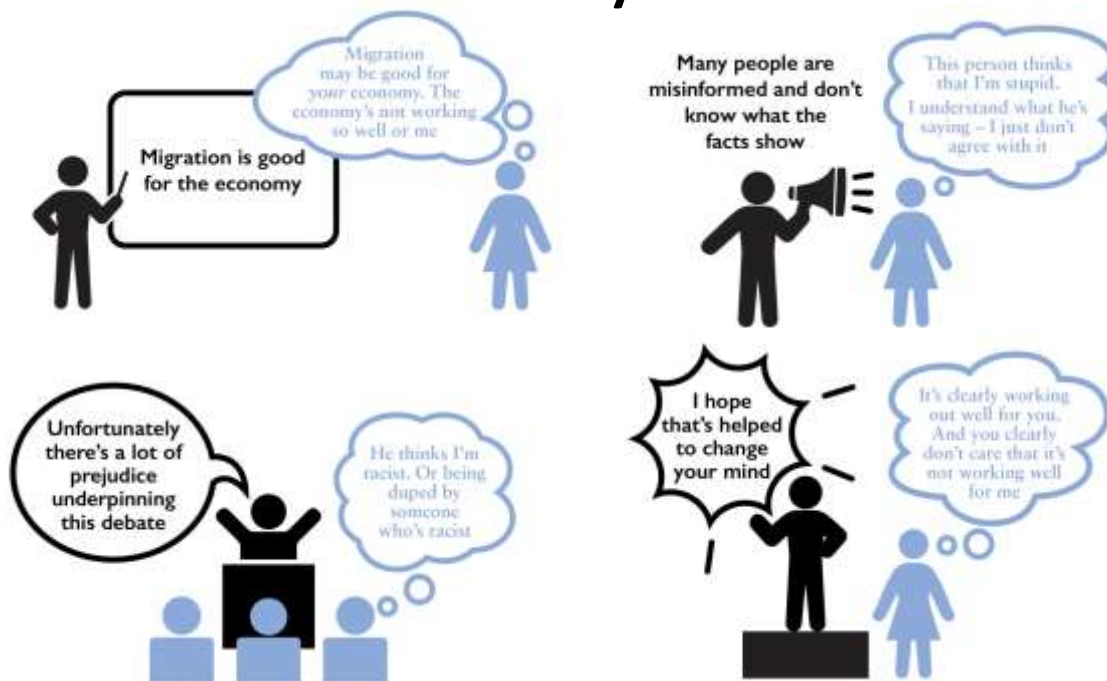
Alongside understanding the audience and defining messages which resonate, the next challenge is in communicating these messages and understanding how this can be done most effectively at the city

level.

The Migration Observatory¹¹ which aims to provide independent and evidence-based data and analysis, acknowledges that ‘data and analysis ... is only one side of what drives decisions ... the other side is perhaps less tangible, but no less consequential: values. Ideas about the ‘sort of place that I want to live in’ can drive people’s views and choices on migration just as much as the economic factors – and sometimes more.

IMiX emphasized that, facts often do not persuade – though they can be used to back up existing arguments. The way in which facts are presented is often important – clarity of message is important, especially in polarized debates. For example, data visualization, as examined by COMPAS research may offer one route to presenting fact based narratives in more accessible ways. However, British Future highlights how the use of facts can sometimes be interpreted in unintended and sometimes counter-productive ways.

What is said isn’t always what is heard



People want a **conversation**, not a lecture about why they are wrong.

4

British Future

This means that stories can sometimes be effective – including in areas which are usually associated more with facts such as economic arguments. Often the use of facts and statistics is elided with economic arguments, but NEON’s Framing the Economy research shows that to the extent that the public understand the economy, they do so predominantly through stories and so this can be an equally good way to frame economic arguments related to inclusion.

¹¹ Evidence and values the UK Migration Debate 2011-2013

IMiX also identifies the importance of the way of getting your story across as well as the method itself. Predominantly, friends and family are still the most trusted source of information, but social media and local media are other important sources. Local media remains more trusted than national media. Within these contexts, stories can be a powerful way of developing a narrative, with personal stories (including localized versions of national stories) being powerful ways to get messages out there.

The Narrative Initiatives compares the link between stories and narratives as, ‘what tiles are to mosaics, stories are to narratives. The relationship is symbiotic; stories bring narratives to life by making them relatable and accessible, while narratives infuse stories with deeper meaning.’

However, British Future and Welcoming America emphasise that it is not always the exceptional story (for example the refugee who wins a Nobel prize) that is most effective – ordinary stories of small scale change or endeavour can be just as, and sometimes more effective, than stories of extra-ordinary achievement.

Linking narrative to service delivery

Whilst this note is predominantly focused on developing communications and a narrative, it is important that this remains tethered to service delivery, both within the local authority and beyond in work with partners.

It is an emerging finding of the Inclusive Cities programme that the creation of a positive narrative can create policy space for the development of inclusive service delivery, but also vitally, that inclusive service delivery will reinforce and make real an inclusive narrative – ensuring that it ‘walks the walk.’ Within the structure of Inclusive Cities an action plan accompanies the development of a strategic narrative in order that this ‘virtuous cycle’ can be facilitated.

British Future sets out a number of ways in which local authorities can link their narrative of inclusion through to service delivery.

- **Engage the public in local integration priorities** – including through promoting a model of sustained, visible public engagement in what makes integration work & priorities for local action.
- Recognising **English language is foundational** and finding more creative ways to fill the gaps in provision
- **Promote meaningful contact** - given post-Brexit polarisations, this isn’t just about ethnic and faith diversity, but it has to be an everybody issue
- **Developing inclusive civic pride and identity** involves dealing with neighbourhood decline. A failure to deal with small scale neighbourhood problems such as overflowing bins or street drinking can be corrosive to the overall narrative.
- Effective measures to **reinforce norms** of decent behaviour

Resources and further reading

British Future: The National Conversation on immigration (interim report)

<http://www.britishfuture.org/publication/national-conversation-on-immigration-interim-report/>

British Social Attitudes Survey chapter on Immigration: <http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-34/immigration.aspx>

COMPAS research (Will Allen) on data visualization and migration:

<http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2018/visual-brokerage-communicating-data-and-research-through-visualisation/>

Frameworks Institute: <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org>

Framing the Economy - <http://neweconomyorganisers.org/our-work/framing-the-economy/>

Inclusive Cities programme and background paper: <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2017/inclusive-practices-for-newcomers-at-city-level-and-examples-of-innovation-from-overseas/>

Integration and Migration Exchange (IMiX) <http://global-dialogue.eu/projects/imix/>

More in Common segmentation research from France and Germany (with other countries to follow soon) <http://www.moreincommon.com>

The Migration Observatory <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/>

The Narrative Initiative <https://www.narrativeinitiative.org>

Reframe the debate! New Migration Narratives for Constructive Dialogue

The International Centre for Policy Advocacy

<http://www.narrativechange.org>

Welcoming America Stronger Together toolkit <https://www.welcomingamerica.org/content/stronger-together-toolkit>

Migration Museum Project: <http://www.migrationmuseum.org>

Observatory of public attitudes towards migration: <http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/observatory-of-public-attitudes-to-migration/>

Annex A – Narrative workshop agenda and participants

Inclusive Cities: Workshop on strategic communications and narrative

9.30am – 4.30pm

Monday 16th April, 2018

Migration Museum

The Workshop, 26 Lambeth High Street, London, SE1 7AG

10am – 10:15am – Welcome and introductions, Jacqui Broadhead (COMPAS)

10:15am – 11:45am – strategic communications and migration: an overview with **Sunder Katwala** (Director, British Future) **Emma Harrison** (Director, IMIX) and **Phyllis Abebreseh** (Greater London Authority)

12pm – 1:30pm – Framing the narrative: understanding and using value frames with **Jacqui Broadhead** (COMPAS), **Bec Sanderson** (Public Interest Research Centre) and **Ellie Mae O'Hagan** (New Economic Organisers Network)

Lunch

2:30pm – 3:45pm Facilitated workshop with city representatives and members of the Migration Museum Network (**Emily Miller**, Migration Museum Project) looking at place based narratives of inclusion

4pm – 4:30pm Feedback, closing remarks and next steps

Representatives participated from the following organisations

Birmingham Council	African Caribbean Kultural Heritage Initiative
Blackburn Council	Bristol Refugee Festival
Bristol City Council	British Future
Cardiff City Council	Cardiff Story Museum
Glasgow (represented by taskforce members from the Scottish Refugee Council and The Bridges Programme)	IMIX
Greater Manchester Combined Authority	National Museums Liverpool
Liverpool City Council	NEON
Greater London Authority	Oxford Museums
Peterborough City Council	PIRC
Sheffield (Cohesion Sheffield)	IPPR
London Borough of Waltham Forest	NEON
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Migration Museum Project
Local Government Association	



Global Exchange

on Migration & Diversity

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.