

Music In
Detention



Evaluation Report

Community Exchange project between
detainees at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre
and young people at West London YMCA, Hayes
March - April 2015



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Youth Music

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A. Preface

This report was commissioned by Sound Connections, as part of activity within the Sound Connections Challenging Circumstances Music Network. Sound Connections commissions action research based upon sector development needs, in order to identify excellent practice and extend its benefits. The brief was as follows:

The Challenging Circumstances Music Network will support one piece of action research or evaluation into music-making with young people facing challenges in their lives and barriers to music-making. Within this context, the research/evaluation can be based around any type of musical activity with children and young people in any setting, but must in some way address how the project can support a Music Education Hub to develop inclusive practice in its borough and reach young people who otherwise struggle to engage with music provision.

The following factors made Music in Detention's (MID) proposal particularly interesting:

- The opportunity to capture, learn from and share MID's model of a musical exchange across two marginalised and disadvantaged communities, where little or no other music provision exists.
- The opportunity to capture, learn from and share MID's music leadership approach.
- Hillingdon Music Education Hub's engagement in the project, and their interest in identifying a workable model for inclusion and integration in the borough.
- The opportunity to explore the world of music-making in detention centres, and projects with immigrants in particular, to inform Sound Connections' support of this area of the sector.

Whilst the report is a detailed evaluation of one particular project it captures issues, considerations and learning points that are relevant to the wider sector, including:

- The power of music to develop social cohesion and understanding between different communities, and address potentially tense or provocative topics through musical interaction.
- Music leadership approaches and characteristics, particularly relating to inclusive practice and sensitivity to profound needs in extreme settings such as a detention centre.
- Providing new access points to participation in music at grassroots level.
- Enabling and creating new musical progression routes.
- Managing a project in partnership with a non-music specialist grassroots/community-based organisation.

These themes appear throughout the report and recommendations, through an evaluative structure that covers a great range of aims and outcomes, and recounts some poignant and powerful personal stories.

Embedded within the report there are examples of music created and recorded during the project. We urge you to listen to these alongside reading the report to give musical context to the findings and impact.

The recommendations are divided into three categories:

- Concept - likely to be of particular interest to those working at a strategic level.

- **Planning** - likely to be of particular interest to project managers/coordinators and project planning partners from non-music specialist grassroots organisations.
- **Delivery** - likely to be of particular interest to music leaders and project managers/coordinators.

The list below summarises the recommendations and indicates (in brackets) where to find further detail in the main body of the report.

Concept: The report presents conceptual and strategic recommendations, with implications for potential future projects within the Hillingdon borough and beyond. These include:

- **The significance of exchange** (1.2.3 and 1.2.5) and the use of an exchange approach that could be a powerful means for addressing perceived geographical divide in boroughs such as Hillingdon
- **Social engagement** (1.1.6) through and alongside musical and creative engagement
- Implications for the development of **progression routes** (2.1.3) both within MID and beyond, and the creation of new progression route partnerships.

Planning: The report explores a number of practical considerations and planning issues. These include:

- The incorporation of **follow up activities** (1.2.4), **instrumental tuition** (1.3.4), and **taster sessions** (2.3.1).
- The **location** (2.2.2) and **structure** (2.3.2) of music projects
- The importance of **input from the community partner** (2.2.2), and **tailoring projects** (2.2.3) through consultation with participants to best meet their needs and interests
- Two suggestions about inclusivity through **music choice** (2.3.3) and **integration** (3.2.2).

Delivery: There are findings and recommendations about project delivery relevant to both project managers and music leaders. These include:

- Approaches to music leadership such as **supporting participants in exploring their viewpoints** (1.2.2), **managing different abilities** within one group, **encouraging participation** (2.1.1)
- **Characteristics of artists** (2.1.1) that are a factor of successful leadership
Empowering participant voice (2.2.3)
- Encouraging and enabling **staff participation** (1.1.3)
- The importance of a consistent leadership team and **continuity of artists** (2.3.5)
- The effective use of project outputs such as **CDs** (2.2.4).

Jennifer Raven
Sound Connections

B. Project outline

Music in Detention (MID) is a national charity that works with detainees being held in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) across the country. In the ten years it has been delivering its work MID has reached detainees in 11 different IRCs and worked with a variety of community groups in the localities in which the IRCs are situated. Once or twice a year, in each centre that MID works in, a community exchange project is organised. The project puts detainees in touch with marginalised community groups in the area local to the detention centre. MID's overall approach seeks to engage participants through creating music, encouraging them to express themselves, channel their emotions through music and improve their resilience. The specific aims of the community exchange projects are to improve understanding and engagement within communities and for detainees and community members to share their experiences and recognise the humanity they share through creating music together.

The concept behind MID's community exchange projects is as follows: in the wider community, detainees are almost entirely unknown. Like other closed institutions, IRCs are "out of sight and out of mind". This ignorance reinforces detainees' isolation and helps sustain widespread but largely abstract fears and prejudices around immigration and asylum. These fears, common in disadvantaged communities, reflect broader insecurities and arise more from shared and repeated messages than from actual experience. Their abstraction makes them all the more potent: able to freewheel in the imagination, easily inflated by new myths, and difficult to discuss openly and constructively.

MID's workshops with excluded groups in local communities (e.g. young people at risk of offending, homeless people, people with mental health problems) bring about human connections and understanding between them and the detainees living nearby. MID musicians go back and forth between the two, allowing songs, ideas, experiences, lyrics and instrumental tracks to be shared. They enable participants to create music that speaks to themselves and each other. These links, whether virtual or physical, develop empathy and understanding. The creative process generates a safe space in which stereotypes and assumptions can be positively challenged and people can reflect on attitudes to migrants. Creative outcomes and learning are often shared at the end of the project with a wider local audience.

Each project results in the creation of a CD, which is sent to all participants and uploaded to the MID website and SoundCloud page, allowing the voices of detainees and community participants to reach a wider audience. The tracks created in this project can be listened to here:

<http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/music/?location=hillingdon-harmondsworth-irc>

This report follows a community exchange that took place during the months of March and April 2015 between detainees at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre, Heathrow and young people at West London YMCA in Hayes. The musicians facilitating this project were:

- Yiannis Zaronis, an experienced MID musician originally from Greece. Yiannis is a multi-instrumentalist who specialises in a variety of instruments, including guitar, mandolin, bouzouki and darbuka.

- Yiannis was joined for four out of the six sessions by Oliver Seager, a new artist to MID on his first community exchange project. Oliver is a singer songwriter, rapper and producer releasing his own material under his stage name, Kotchin.
- For the other two sessions Yiannis was joined by MID musicians Tea Hodzic and Shammi Pithia.

This report seeks to profile Music in Detention's approach to working in detention centres and with vulnerable young people; assess the works' musical and social outcomes; and evaluate how this work supports inclusivity in the borough of Hillingdon, including recommendations relevant to the wider arts sector.

C. Context

Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre (IRC):

Harmondsworth IRC is located just across the road from Heathrow Airport. It is the largest detention centre in the country, currently housing 661 male detainees¹. IRC populations are in constant flux but a snapshot of the detainee population at the time of the most recent inspection (August 2013) shows that 49.8% of detainees were aged 18-29 and the main nationalities were Bangladeshi, Indian, Nigerian and Pakistani.

There are many different reasons why a person could end up detained at Harmondsworth. Detainees include those being held whilst asylum seeker claims are processed, former prisoners, people who have overstayed their visas, and those who have been trafficked or smuggled into the UK. Detainees may have lived in the UK most of their lives or could have recently arrived, they may have fled war, poverty, personal traumas or they may be here to join family members, or seek work.

There is currently no time limit on immigration detention in the UK leaving detainees unsure whether they are going to be detained for a number of days, weeks or in a few cases, a number of years. Detainees also face uncertainty in their futures, not knowing if they will be released into the UK or deported to their country of birth, a country for many of whom is unfamiliar. This uncertain environment creates huge anxiety for detainees and rates of depression and self-harm are very high, with 83% of detainees suffering from depression.²

West London YMCA:

The West London YMCA is located in Hayes, in the borough of Hillingdon. Within Hillingdon there is a marked socio-economic contrast between the wards in the north and south of the borough, with unemployment rates (for 16-74 year olds) ranging between extremes of 6.3% in the south and 2.6% in the north, and rates of individuals with no qualifications (16+) ranging from 24.7% in the south to 13.3% in the north.³ Hayes is in the ward of Botwell, a ward situated in the south of the borough that contains areas in the 20% most deprived quintile nationally, for all seven domains in the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The YMCA has a café that operates as a young people's centre giving the young people of Hayes a place they can socialise, play pool/table football and take part in projects. The young people who attend the centre, some of who are housed in YMCA accommodation above the café include asylum seekers/refugees and migrants, young and lone parents and young offenders. Many of these young people have experience of difficult family histories and relationships, exclusion from education, unemployment and social isolation.

An additional detail of interest for the evaluator was that the sessions at the YMCA were scheduled for two distinct groups. Wednesdays are the normal 'drop-in' sessions where anyone can come to the centre. Sometimes activities are put on but if not the young

¹ <http://www.aviddetention.org.uk/images/uk%20detention%20september%202014.pdf>

² Bosworth M., and Kellezi B., *Quality of Life in Detention: Results from MQLD Questionnaire Data Collected in IRC Yarl's Wood, IRC Tinsley House, and IRC Brook House, August 2010 - June 2011* (University of Oxford, 2012)

³ Data taken from the 2011 Census fact sheet for Hillingdon Borough:

http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/28815/Census-2011Factsheets/pdf/Census_2011_Ward_Factsheets_booklet.pdf

people who come are free to play pool/x-box/table tennis or simply socialise and chat. The Wednesday sessions routinely have good attendance from both regulars and those who come by every now and then. The Monday session was set up as a special session for a group of young refugees/asylum seekers living in the local area who had taken part in a project run by the YMCA in the summer of 2014, since which this group had not returned. The Lead Youth Café Worker who acted as MID's main contact for the project, described the group as being very focused, keen to participate in projects and build their skill set but not interested in coming to the YMCA if specific activities were not on offer. She was also concerned that there was a problem of social cohesion between this group and the regular attendees of the centre, some of whose boisterous behaviour, although quite normal in that peer group, may have been intimidating for the refugee/asylum seeker group.

The YMCA Lead Youth Café Worker suggested having the Monday slots as sessions open just to the refugee/asylum seeker group, to encourage these young people to come back to the YMCA, whilst encouraging everyone to attend the Wednesday sessions together in the hope that this project would help to bring these two groups together.

D. Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework is designed around three main research questions, each of which is broken down into more detailed sub questions to help the evaluator identify key lines of inquiry.

<i>Evaluation Question</i>	<i>Demonstrated by...</i>
Key research question 1: What difference did the project make to its participants? How much and how did the project:	
1.1 Strengthen participants' wellbeing and resilience?	1.1.1 Distraction 1.1.2 Increased communication 1.1.3 IRC staff participation 1.1.4 Building relationships 1.1.5 Confidence building 1.1.6 Encouraging reflexivity 1.1.7 Building confidence
1.2 Develop awareness and understanding between the young people and detainees?	1.2.1 Developing knowledge 1.2.2 Changing attitudes 1.2.3 Creative exchange 1.2.4 Increased communication between young people and detainees 1.2.5 Enabling reciprocal peer support
1.3 Develop their musical skills?	1.3.1 Participants who were already musicians 1.3.2 Participants with no musical training 1.3.3 Development of musical skills 1.3.4 Instrumental tuition
Key research question 2: In what ways does the project offer a workable model for inclusive music practice with children and young people in Hillingdon?	
2.1 How far did the project increase young people's participation in music activities, their musical skills, and their interest in progression routes?	2.1.1 Participation 2.1.2 Anticipated post-project engagement with music 2.1.3 Potential progression routes
2.2 What were the inputs/ways of working which contributed to success in these outcomes?	2.2.1 Role of artists 2.2.2 Role of organisational leaders 2.2.3 Role of pre-project planning 2.2.4 Outputs
2.3 What were the barriers to further delivery of these outcomes? Were these overcome, if so how?	2.3.1 Advertising 2.3.2 Structure 2.3.3 Music choice 2.3.4 Limitations on participation 2.3.5 Lack of continuity between artists

Key research question 3:	
What can be learned from the project about how inclusive music provision can deliver musical, social and psychological benefits at the same time	
3.1 What changes did the project bring about for the individuals and organisations involved?	3.1.1 Therapeutic techniques 3.1.2 Channelling emotions 3.1.3 Improved concentration 3.1.4 Stress release
3.2 What were the inputs/ways of working which helped deliver social and musical outcomes together?	3.2.1 Discussing immigration 3.2.2 Collaborating 3.2.3 Humour
3.3 How did the project help develop socially inclusive practice and attitudes in the local area?	3.3.1 Attitudes towards immigration 3.3.2 Developing understanding 3.3.3 Sustaining musical activities

E. Methodology

The following evaluation methodology was devised, drawing on MID's existing Evaluation Framework with additional evaluation tasks to gather further data specific to this report:

1. Baseline data collection: from YMCA participants, specifically focused on previous musical experience/participation in music projects in the area. This information was gathered through participant observation and informal conversations with participants during the first sessions.

2. Participant observation: regular visits to workshops throughout the project. Observation took a participatory approach with the evaluator joining in activities and holding informal conversations with participants where appropriate. The schedule of workshops was as follows, the workshops highlighted in bold were visited by the evaluator.

- **Monday 16th March (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC**
- **Monday 16th March (evening) - YMCA Hayes**
- Wednesday 18th March (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC
- **Wednesday 18th March (evening) - YMCA Hayes**
- Monday 23rd March (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC
- Monday 23rd March (evening) - YMCA Hayes
- **Monday 30th March (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC**
- **Monday 30th March (evening) - YMCA Hayes**
- Wednesday 1st April (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC
- Wednesday 1st April (evening) - YMCA Hayes
- **Wednesday 8th April (afternoon) - Harmondsworth IRC**
- **Wednesday 8th April (evening) - YMCA Hayes**

3. End of project questionnaires: completed by YMCA participants at the end of the final workshop.

4. Artist logs: completed by artists throughout the project.

5. Telephone interview with YMCA partner: interview conducted with the YMCA Lead Youth Café Worker on 13th April 2015.

6. Focus group with YMCA participants: conducted at YMCA Hayes on 15th April 2015.

7. Focus group with detainees: conducted at Harmondsworth IRC on 16th April 2015.

8. Telephone interview with artists: interview conducted with Yiannis Zaronis on 20th April 2015.

9. Analysis of music created (in terms of participants roles in the tracks, musical progression and how the music reflects different aspects of the project).

10. Analysis of data.

11. Report write-up.

F. Findings

The findings are presented in answer to each of the research questions outlined at the beginning of this report:

1. What difference did the project make to its participants?

Summary of findings (research question 1):

The workshops improved participants' wellbeing and resilience by:

- Distracting detainees from their problems, reducing their anxiety
- Helping young people gain confidence to express their feelings and seek support
- Increasing social and musical interaction among detainees, between detainees and some IRC staff, and between young people from different backgrounds
- Encouraging reflection and communication about personal experiences
- Developing confidence in themselves and appreciation of each other

The workshops improved participants' awareness and understanding by:

- Increasing the young people's knowledge of detention and detainees' experiences
- Changing the way some of them thought about immigration
- Facilitating the exchange of messages between the two groups
- Increasing contact and mutual support between the two groups

The workshop improved participants' musical skills by:

- Extending the musical experience of practised musicians
- Providing musical novices with their first experiences of creating and performing lyrics and music
- Developing experience of and interest in instrumental tuition

1.1 How much, and how, did the project: Strengthen participants' wellbeing and resilience?

MID's approach to strengthening wellbeing and resilience uses music to enable participants to achieve the following:

- express their feelings, thoughts, fears and aspirations
- strengthen their personal and cultural identity
- assert autonomy and leadership while making music
- relax and relieve stress and depression
- build confidence

1.1.1 Distraction: Due to the indefinite nature of detention in the UK, detainees have no idea how long they will remain in detention or where they will be sent following their release. Stress levels are therefore high amongst individuals in detention centres. Feedback obtained during the focus group with detainees revealed that for some detainees the music workshops provided a distraction from the apprehension most of them were feeling about their cases. One detainee from India revealed that most of the time in detention he was very focused on his case, which made him feel very anxious.

However, in the music workshops he did not think about his case at all, instead he enjoyed listening to fellow detainees singing songs from their countries and had a go at playing a drum. In all of the sessions observed by the evaluator there was a festive mood in the music room, with detainees visibly enjoying the activity, which provided an at least temporary distraction from their current difficulties.

Research shows that activities that offer distraction from a difficult situation can help improve participants coping mechanisms, thus having the potential to offer longer-term benefits:

“Distraction was a common process through which participants derived benefit from workshops. Although for many this was only temporarily helpful, some found this memory of momentary coping useful on the longer-term.”⁴

1.1.2 Increased communication: During the focus group detainees also talked about how the sessions had allowed them to establish contact with detainees they either had never met or had never spoken to before. Workshops gave detainees the opportunity to learn about each other’s cultures; it was evident from observation that they were keen to listen to songs sung in different languages and curious about each other’s musical traditions. The following track captures a snapshot of the variety of styles and languages brought to the music room. The track features detainees from Liberia, Bangladesh, India and Poland rapping and singing over the same beat:

‘Dub Mash Up’: <http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=606>

Each detainee who contributed to the track brought a distinct style and feeling to the track but through keeping in time with the same beat they were able to bring all of this together in fusion.

1.1.3 IRC staff participation: The sessions also tried to engage detention centre staff, with varying levels of success. Two sessions were supervised by Officer A, who declined to join in with the activity, visibly showing disdain by covering their ears and on a number of occasions leaving the room, complaining about the noise levels. The other sessions were supervised by two officers, one of whom was a talented musician (Officer B) and took great delight in showing off their skills on the drum kit, while the other officer (Officer C), although they had no musical experience, danced along, took photos and generally encouraged detainees to come into the room and have a go at singing or trying out an instrument.

Although the behaviour of Officer A did not seem to detract from the detainees’ enjoyment, even though the behaviour could be interpreted as rude, there was a much lighter atmosphere in the room when Officers B & C were supervising. When these officers joined in, their participation enhanced the session, the detainees appeared to the officers in a different role, enjoying themselves and having a go just like the detainees were. As one of the artists expressed in my interview with him, *“detainees and staff were all sharing the same experience. They stopped being detainees or officers, everyone was a musician”*. Research previously carried out for MID, backs up the assertion that removing hierarchies and power balances that exist between officers and detainees is hugely important for detainees’ wellbeing and resilience:

⁴ Underhill, James. *The Psychological Impact of Music Workshops on Immigration Detainees*, D.Clin.Psy Thesis, University College London: (page 98)

“In two of the IRCs, where music activities were more accessible, participants said that their relationship with the officer involved in music activities involved less of a power imbalance. They felt that the officers were there to support and tutor them... Where officers did not join in with music workshops, their normal role was confirmed and they were regarded with suspicion.”⁵

Regarding officers with suspicion could prevent detainees from sharing their concerns and anxieties with them, so breaking down these barriers in the music workshops can change the relationships detainees have with their officers thereby providing more people detainees feel they can turn to for support, thus improving their mental wellbeing:

“More equal power status amongst the marginalised has been found to promote improved mental health in a range of settings.”⁶

Recommendation 1.1.3: IRC staff participation

It was clear in this project that when IRC staff joined in and took an active role in the music sessions, detainees’ enjoyment increased. On top of this, changing their role from officer to participant allowed detainees to see the officers in a different light, something that could have longer-term affects for the relationships between officers and detainees. Encouraging IRC staff participation should be part of the practice of every MID artist and if IRC staff struggle to engage and demonstrate positivity or willingness, or behave in a way that could be perceived as rude, this should be discussed with the IRC.

1.1.4 Building relationships: During the focus group at the YMCA members of Wednesday group reported that, although most people knew each other already, the music sessions had brought the group closer together. For one participant in particular, this meant something really quite profound: the workshops had made him feel more comfortable to express himself and talk about his feelings. He said that in these workshops he had shared some personal experiences that he had never shared with any of his YMCA peers before. He also felt that he would be able to open up about his feelings with his peers much more easily in the future. He felt this had been possible through the lyric writing as writing lyrics is a personal activity, one which can involve a deep level of self-reflection. The participatory nature of the project meant that everyone in the group had a go at writing lyrics, and with everyone joining in in this way, participants felt more able to share their own lyrics with the rest of the group. This ability to share feelings and talk openly about experiences increases the young people’s resilience, and feeling able to discuss their problems means they are more likely to ask for the support they need to overcome them.

1.1.5 New friendships: One participant from the asylum seeker/refugee group at the YMCA, a 19-year old refugee from Somalia, started coming to the Wednesday sessions. New to this group of young people, he made some good friends during the project, who

⁵ Underhill, James. *The Psychological Impact of Music Workshops on Immigration Detainees*, D.Clin.Psy Thesis, University College London: (page 89)

⁶ Underhill, James. *The Psychological Impact of Music Workshops on Immigration Detainees*, D.Clin.Psy Thesis, University College London: (page 102)

he said that, when he saw around the local area he would say ‘hi’ to from now on. He became particularly good friends with one other participant, a talented freestyler who he enjoyed collaborating with. Together, with the contributions of a couple of other members of the group, they wrote and recorded this track of music:

‘Keep your head up’: <http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=602>

The pair are keen to work together musically in the future. Although this particular participant from the refugee/asylum seeker group has a well-established network of friends in his area, most of his friends are also refugees/asylum seekers. The Lead Youth Café Worker at the YMCA is hopeful that this new friendship could encourage more interaction between the different communities and peer groups living in Hayes. She also hopes that this participant will return to the Wednesday sessions and bring some more of his friends with him.

1.1.6 Encouraging reflection: 9 out of the 12 YMCA participants felt that the project had made them reflect on their own life experiences - these reflections (taken from the community questionnaire) include:

- “I went through tough times too so I can relate”
- “I am an illegal immigrant myself”
- “My family are from Pakistan but I don’t like Asian music, I like English music”
- “Helping me get my emotions out”
- “I want to be more creative”

Detainees too, found that through the music they were able to reflect on their situations. One young detainee from Nigeria explained during the focus group how he saw music as being all about the message:

“I think that coming here, for us to be singing, it’s a very good idea, you understand? I think it’s going to enable us to show how you’re feeling and to pass a particular message to people. Music is about passing a message to others, what you want them to know about your life, what is going on and what you’re hoping for the future.”

The importance of music for him was its ability to communicate a personal message, when he took to the microphone he sung about immigration and his time in detention. Rather reserved and shy in character, the microphone allowed him to express his experiences and feelings.

Recommendation 1.1.6: Social engagement

Social engagement through and alongside musical & creative engagement was particularly successfully achieved. The project encouraged participants to be reflective, to open up and reflect on their own lives and to think about those of others (possible due to the exchange element of the project). Lyric writing was taught as a means of self-expression as well as a way of sending messages between two communities through music. This is an effective way to develop participant interest and engagement, it

provides greater depth of meaning, and fosters understanding, empathy and ability to relate. The premise of this approach could be considered for other projects.

1.1.7 Confidence building: Confidence is another indicator of increased wellbeing. The artists felt that all the participants had gained in confidence to some extent. Describing one participant from the YMCA, one artist reports in an artist log:

“he was somehow reserved as he said he never had a similar experience. But as time went by his confidence grew and he was visibly enjoying the activity”

Even for participants that did have some musical background, performing in front of their peers was at first a daunting task. One such YMCA participant fed back on his questionnaire that he had particularly gained in confidence to be able to perform as a freestyler:

“I think as I know music and do it I found confidence to spit/grime in front of people”

This participant expanded upon this statement during a conversation with the evaluator in which he explained that although he had been freestyling for a few years he had just been doing it by himself, in his room. Most people didn't even know he had this talent, as he had previously been too shy to perform in front of his friends.

As this quote, taken from an artist log details, in the detention centre the artists also remarked an improvement in confidence in the participants:

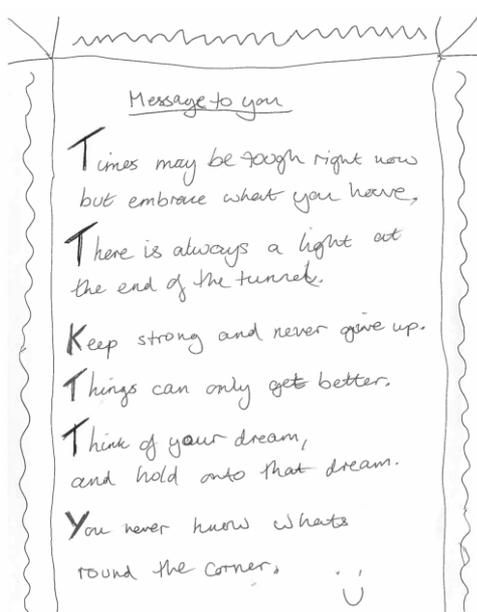
“During the workshops participants that stayed throughout started feeling more comfortable and more confident with their musical skills, additionally the crowd became more welcoming and appreciative of the performances. Some of the participants said that they never played an instrument before and they wanted to try. So I introduced them to some basic drumming techniques and some basic guitar chords”

As the artists point out, having a supportive group encourages participants to join in, as well as receiving encouragement from the artists, the participants themselves give each other the confidence to try new things and perform.

1.2 How much, and how, did the project: Develop awareness and understanding between the young people and detainees?

An important aim of Music in Detention's work is to increase awareness around the issue of immigration detention and to enable marginalised community groups to share their experiences of feeling like outsiders in their communities.

1.2.1 Developing knowledge: This aspect of the project seemed particularly important for the YMCA participants. All participants in the Wednesday group knew that immigration detention existed. In MID's experience this level of prior knowledge is unusual, many of the groups MID has worked with in the past have had no knowledge of immigration detention being used in the UK. In this project, one reason as to why the group might have had prior knowledge is that the area of London in which they live has a large population of refugees and asylum seekers due to its proximity to the airport.



Message written by a YMCA participant to Harmondsworth detainees.

However, in the focus group, when the group were asked if they felt that, following the project they knew more about immigration detention and the detainees they had been communicating with, most participants felt that they had learnt more about detention and had particularly learnt more about how the detainees might be feeling and about some of the reasons why they might have been detained:

"I felt we learnt more about the people inside because as we touched on when you were last here, upon hearing it at first we'd assume they were in there for bad reasons but obviously that wasn't the case all the time, they've literally come from countries where people have to flee and then they come here and they're put in there and I feel that opened our eyes up to it a

lot, because me personally I thought okay, these people deserve to be in there but that's really not what it is as we found out by listening to their music and hearing what they had gone through."

For participants from the refugee/asylum seeker group, knowledge about immigration detention varied considerably. Two of the participants had had close friends who had been detained and subsequently deported, and although they had never visited a detention centre they had first-hand accounts from their friends as to what the centres were like. However, one 20-year old refugee from Somalia was quite shocked when she heard about immigration detention. As a refugee she knew that there were consequences for failing to comply with strict Home Office regulations but she had not realised this meant that people were held in detention centres.

1.2.2 Changing attitudes: Results from the questionnaire show that the project made just over half of the YMCA participants change the way they thought about immigration in the UK. For two members of the Wednesday group, they felt like the project had made them feel more able to talk about the subject of immigration. In the focus group at the YMCA, one participant said that he would use this project as an example whenever the issue of immigration came up in future discussions:

"I now know more about the situation so I could probably use that in any sort of discussion, now I understand a bit more about it I can use this (project) as an example"

One YMCA participant who responded (to the questionnaire) that the project had not changed his view at all, explained his answer by the fact that he already had first-hand experience of being an immigrant in the UK, so had a deep and personal understanding about the issue already, but what this project had done for him, as reported on his questionnaire, was: *"showed that not everyone will look at me in a bad way"*. Witnessing the support the YMCA group had offered to the detainees, in the form of messages and lyrics had clearly given this participant reassurance that immigrants are not always viewed in a negative light.

Recommendation 1.2.2: Supporting participants in exploring their viewpoints

When discussing controversial and complex topics such as immigration it is important to keep discussions as open as possible and free from judgement. The artists facilitating this project did this successfully. Discussions started with very broad and open questions that left room for the participants to continue the conversation in whichever direction it naturally led. Feeling as if you don't know enough about a topic to discuss it can limit a person's ability to change their views, but the artists addressed this by encouraging all of the participants to join in with discussions and by respecting everyone's comments. They were also able to judge where and how they could challenge a participant on something he or she had said, an important balance to be able to make if your work aims to achieve attitudinal change.

1.2.3 Creative exchange: Particularly for the YMCA group, the presence of another group of participants, in this case the group of detainees at Harmondsworth, was a source of inspiration for their work and gave the project a direction. As has been found in previous MID projects there is a certain power attached to communicating with people that you haven't met in person. By recording your messages, or writing them down, the social awkwardness that is sometimes present when meeting strangers is taken away, yet receiving these messages is just as powerful as if they were spoken to you in person. In terms of developing understanding of detention, participants reported how the recorded messages brought home the fact that the detainees were not free to come to the YMCA and meet them in person. In this way, the recordings brought from inside the closed walls of the detention centre seemed to carry poignancy.

This track captures some of the audio messages that were passed between the two groups:

'Messages of Love': <http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=604>

Recommendation 1.2.3: Significance of exchange

Having two groups from different communities working together is central to Music in Detention's approach. Each group provides sparks of inspiration for the other and opens up the idea of collaboration to go beyond just one group of peers, and beyond the immediate space of the workshop. Passing messages back and forth proved a popular element of this project and enhanced participants' communication skills, understanding and empathy. Again, the premise of this approach may be effective in other settings. The ability to build relationships and understanding across communities could be a powerful means for addressing the perceived geographical divide in boroughs such as Hillingdon.

1.2.4 Increased communication between young people and detainees: Communicating with the detainees had such an impact on one participant that he expressed a strong desire to visit the detainees he had been put in contact with. Music in Detention responded to this request by organising for him to join the last music workshop of the project at Harmondsworth detention centre.

This participant's reaction to visiting Harmondsworth was in many ways surprising. He commented on how impressed he was by the centre, he was amazed by the music room which he described as being much better equipped than the music rooms at the college he attended, he felt that the detainees were happy there and ironically that the detention centre reminded him of the YMCA, a comment that was made in a positive way. In one sense this highlights the different perspective of the participant to those of the evaluator and MID artists. As a young refugee he understood that like himself, many of the detainees had fled war, poverty or trauma, and in comparison to such experiences, the detention centre provided a safe place in which detainees were provided food, a bed and had a room full of instruments that they could use (although only when supervised by MID artists).

He also reported back to his YMCA peers that the detainees appeared to be happy and content in the centre. On the one hand this backs up the evaluation point made above that the music workshops created a positive atmosphere in the centre, but it also reflects the fact that one can only tell so much about how a person is feeling by their external behaviour, they may be living a very different reality internally.

Recommendation 1.2.4: Follow up activities

For the YMCA participant who had the chance to visit the MID workshop this was a real highlight of the project. It brought the setting and people he had been hearing about to life. When requests are made by the groups to meet each other, it would be worthwhile for MID to follow these up on a regular basis as they deepen the level of understanding participants reach about one another and, as we saw in this case, change perceptions about detention.

1.2.5 Enabling reciprocal peer support: Two or three detainees engaged quite closely with the idea of sending messages to the young people, unfortunately they did not come along to the focus group so the evaluator was unable to attain their feedback. However from observation, the evaluator believes that being able to communicate positive messages to the young people made the detainees who really engaged with this feel like they could be some kind of role model for the young people. They were keen to share their life experiences, some of which were quite traumatic, but emphasise the message that it is important to stay strong and seek support whether that comes from family, friends or God.

One detainee who did attend the focus group had written a message of hope to the young people:

"After I heard about their message I wrote a message to them about hope. It was about like we don't know about the future and you should be proud of being here today because there are many people who have lost their life along the way. Yes the only thing you have to do is to trust in God because on our own we can't do anything"

However, although he had written this message, he said he would like to understand why they had been put in touch with the young people as he didn't fully understand the reason:

“I would like to understand the real outcome of the project because I was told about a group outside and about the music but I couldn’t quite have the full explanation”

Other detainees who came to the focus group simply hadn’t been aware of that aspect of the project or hadn’t understood it. This could have been because the sessions in the detention centre were more fluid: with people walking in and out of the room at various points it would have been quite easy to miss times when this concept was explained. The group also lost and gained members as the weeks went on, as detainees left or arrived at the centre or simply lost or gained interest in the sessions. One of the artists felt that the difference in circumstance between the two groups could have had an impact, he felt that whilst the detainees were deprived of their freedom and their lives had been put on hold, the young people were free to live their lives and were therefore more able to feel compassion. During a telephone interview, one of the artists also reported some misunderstandings about the concept, saying *“some guys took their phones out when asked if they had a message for someone on the outside”*, they had thought that the artist was suggesting they contact friends or relatives. Such misunderstandings were often caused due to language barriers, where message might have been interpreted as ‘text message’ for example.

The artists did not see the lack of awareness that had been raised about the YMCA group amongst detainees as a downside of the project, rather he thought that it was a deep concept and one that people are free to take what they want from. As one of the artist logs reported, *“I did record some music and I explain to the detainees the project but they seemed more interested in performing rather than conversation.”* For those detainees who sought escape from their situations via the music workshops, explaining their situation to the young people might have been an unwelcome reminder of their cases. However, since communication and understanding between the two groups remains an important aim of MID’s work, it might be worthwhile for MID and its artists to explore how to emphasise the idea of the exchange more and spend more time discussing this theme with detainees.

Recommendation 1.2.5: More emphasis on the exchange

Although the message about creating a line of communication between the groups was clear to the YMCA participants, this message reached rather few of the detainees who took part in this project, and when the message was received its intent was not clear. Although this did not detract from their enjoyment, having communication with people in the outside community could have provided an added element of interest/support for the detainees. This is also a clearly stated aim of MID’s work and therefore should be addressed.

Although lots of messages were passed between the groups there was not as much musical collaboration between the groups as has occurred in other MID projects. Being able to share lyrics and work on each other’s songs is an effective and creative means of opening up a dialogue and could have been used more in this project.

The difficulty felt by one of the artists in this project was that detainees were more engaged with the music-making element of the project and were not so keen to sit down and engage in discussion. Dealing with this sort of response is something that could be brought up at a future MID Practice Forum, an event organised once or twice a year for

MID artists to share examples of good practice, give each other advice on how to handle challenging aspects of workshops and generally to build on MID's community of practice.

1.3 How much and how did the project: Develop participants' musical skills?

In this section musical skills refers to a wide range of skills, including lyric writing, beat making, instrumental skills, singing, collaborating and recording.

1.3.1 Participants who were already musicians: There were a variety of musical abilities present in both groups. At the detention centre there was an older man from Pakistan who was a professional singer there and regularly appeared on television. He had gained quite a following of fans in the detention centre, particularly amongst detainees from India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan as he could sing in most of the languages spoken in these countries and always performed popular Bollywood songs to please his crowd. His fellow detainees, most of whom were much younger, took great joy in hearing this man sing, accompanying himself on the slightly dilapidated harmonium that lives in the music room at Harmondsworth IRC. This man, who took as much pleasure performing to his audience as they did in listening to him, inspired his younger peers, many of whom were also very accomplished singers. It became apparent that many people are brought up singing in these parts of the world, and slowly different people began to offer their own songs to the group.

A percussionist from India reported that he had not had the chance to play in many years, so until his release, around half way through the project, he religiously attended the sessions and took the role of 'lead percussionist' in the group. He was soon joined by an accomplished drummer from Algeria who also attended every session. Having two people who could keep in time and could demonstrate different rhythms gave other detainees the confidence to have a go on the drums and follow their lead, improving their ability to keep in time with the beat.

Two Polish men started to attend the sessions towards the end of the project. One was a talented rapper but had never had the chance to record his work. As soon as he realised this would be made possible during the sessions he really focused on writing some lyrics and rapping in time to the beat that one of the MID artists had created for him. His friend, although confident in the group, lacked musical experience, but became more willing to try out rapping and really improved in the last three workshops, taking advice from his compatriot.

Interestingly, one of the artists reported in an artist log entry that in the detention centre:

"The participants with some musical experience were the most reserved ones, the ones who were not familiar with the process of music making were actually the loudest and most enthusiastic."

The less experienced participants did not have the inhibitions that some of the more talented musicians had and they also displayed more appetite for learning new skills. This is not always a feature of MID projects - often the more experienced musicians dominate the group, making it more of a challenge to include others - but in this instance the more experienced musicians either entertained their peers for a while and then left the group, or quietly supported the less experienced, providing beats, harmonic accompaniments or vocals.

1.3.2 Participants with no musical training: From informal conversations conducted in the first workshops at the YMCA, apart from two of the participants, none of the group had any formal musical training or background. One participant who did have some experience was studying for a BTEC diploma at the local college where music was one element of his studies. Another participant had created two tracks of music during a previous music project run at another youth centre in the area a few years ago, but since that project he had not made or written any more music. Two other participants had done some rapping before but in their own time and with no training or support. All other participants described themselves as not being at all musical or having never had the opportunity to make music.

In the YMCA group, one participant confidently announced in the first session that he was a freestyler and had been ‘spitting lyrics’ for six years. However, when asked to show off his skills he suddenly became shy and nervous and found excuses not to perform, for example the beat wasn’t right, or he needed time to think about it. But after working with the artists to find a beat he was happy with he relaxed and lyrics flowed out of him for almost 20 minutes. Another participant felt that he had no musical talent whatsoever but when given a drum to play along with in the first session found he had very natural rhythm and in no time at all was not only playing the beat he had been taught but was making variations of that beat to fit in with his peer’s freestyling. One of the artists remarked on this in one of his artist logs:

“One of the guys was an MC who liked to freestyle his thoughts and ideas, the other participant started playing a drum, he was somehow reserved as he said he never had a similar experience. But as time went by his confidence grew and he was visibly enjoying the activity.”

This participant continued to play the drum throughout the sessions and even had a go at writing and rapping his own lyrics by the end of the project, something that at the start I had not expected, and imagine he himself had not expected, he would be doing.

A YMCA volunteer said she had always wanted to be a singer, but as a mother of two small children she rarely found the time. However in one of the sessions she quickly



came up with some lyrics that made up a chorus for a song. She also came up with a melody that she worked with one of the artists to refine. The song was popular with the group and each participant sang the main line of the chorus in their own language. The song features many different languages ranging from Spanish, to Tigrinya, to Arabic:

‘Who am I?’:

<http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=603>

Recommendation 1.3.2: Managing different abilities

The nature of MID workshops being open to all, means that the artists have no prior

knowledge of the musical abilities of the participants who will be taking part. They are therefore frequently presented with a notably wide variety of abilities that can be difficult accommodate concurrently. Some key methods employed by the artists to deal with this situation could be taken as learning points for other artists working in similar settings, and potentially explored in future Music in Detention and Sound Connections training sessions.

One such method was to encourage already accomplished musicians to support their peers by providing a beat, harmonic accompaniment or vocals that less experienced musicians could join in with, follow, improvise over the top of or accompany. Artists also encouraged more experienced musicians to perform for their peers, this often worked well in inspiring others to join in, and encouraged the sometimes shy, but accomplished musicians to demonstrate their talents.

1.3.3 Development of musical skills: According to the questionnaire results, by the end of the project, a quarter of the YMCA participants felt that they had been able to significantly develop their musical skills, scoring this aspect of the project 5 out of 5. However half of participants scored a 3 out of 5 indicating that they had only been able to develop their musical abilities to a certain extent.

The majority of the participants felt that they had been able to develop their lyric writing ability with several participants reporting back in the focus group, that they had surprised themselves with the work they had achieved. They also explained how hearing their lyrics being sung or rapped in the recordings of the songs was important for the participants and how the professional quality of the recordings made them feel like their work was valued.

1.3.4 Instrumental tuition: When participants were asked if there's anything they would like to see changed if MID were to run the project again, both YMCA participants and detainees said that they would like to spend more time learning to play musical instruments. The most popular instruments that participants wanted to learn were guitar, keyboard and drum kit. Although it was difficult to give the one-to-one time needed to teach participants skills on different instruments, participants did appreciate even a small amount of coaching that helped them to join in, as one of the artists describes in an artist log:

“A detainee from India who had never played a musical instrument before picked up the bass and with some help from Shammi he managed to understand the basic principle and join in with the rest of the group.”

Recommendation 1.3.4: Instrumental tuition

This is something that both groups, the detainees and YMCA participants, had hoped there would be more of. Although instrumental tuition is not necessarily suited to such large groups (most sessions at both locations drew groups of around 8-10, with much larger numbers at certain times in the detention centre) whose members come and go and do not attend all the sessions, it may still be possible to incorporate some basic instrumental tuition into future projects. For example, participants could be taught guitar chords to fit a song, or be taught melodies or chord patterns on the keyboard. This did happen on a couple of occasions, with one detainee learning very basic skills on

a bass guitar, but it would be beneficial if this opportunity could extend to more members of the group and become an established part of the project activities.

2. In what ways does the project offer a workable model for inclusive music practice with children and young people in Hillingdon?

Summary of findings (research question 2):

The project increased young people's musical involvement as follows:

- Participation dramatically increased as the project progressed
- It developed young people's perception of themselves as musicians
- Young people with and without previous musical experience talked about doing more music in future
- Lyric-writing was a popular activity for those unsure about their musical ability

The ways of working which contributed to success were:

- Young people's ownership of the creative process and content
- Tailoring the sessions to participants' needs and interests
- Making the sessions open to all
- Encouraging varied contributions without pushing too hard
- Having clear goals and an end-product
- The artists' relaxed and approachable style, and their skills in improvisation, production and a wide range of musical genres
- The commitment of a key worker at the setting
- Using an open rather than private space, at a community venue which participants knew and used for other purposes
- Pre-project contact with young people and careful planning

Barriers to address in future were:

- Young people not knowing in advance about the project or what to expect from it
- Lack of formal structure
- Range of genres did not appeal to everyone
- Childcare commitments limiting participation
- Some lack of continuity in the artists leading workshops

2.1 How far did the project increase young people's participation in music activities, their musical skills, and their interest in progression routes?

2.1.1 Participation: Towards the end of the project, all of the young people at the YMCA were actively engaging, either by singing, rapping, writing lyrics, drawing or writing messages to the detainees. This is a stark contrast to the earlier sessions, one of which attracted just one participant for the first hour and two more for the remainder of the session.

As the project went on, the artists worked with those who were keen but did so in the main space where everyone was socialising. Their work soon started to turn heads and

people soon became eager to get involved. Subtle techniques like this leave participants free to take part on their own terms. They attend the YMCA on a voluntary basis and in many ways the project was invading their social space, so introducing the project in such a way was crucial to participants not feeling like they were being told how to use their time, they joined in because they wanted to. Participants were happy with project because, as articulated on one of the feedback questionnaires, *“it was open to everyone”*. They didn’t have to sign up, have prior musical experience, or commit to attending all the sessions; the informality suited the group.

Something observed by two different YMCA volunteers, was the artists’ ability to encourage participation without pushing participants too far. During the focus group, one volunteer explained how she felt that if the artists had pushed the participants too much they would have shut down and refused to take part.

“Yiannis and Oliver (the artists) were pushing people enough to get them to join in on whatever level they want but not pushing them so hard that they’ll respond negatively, if you push too hard some people will be like ‘well, I’m not doing it, I don’t have to’.”

One artist said during his interview that achieving this balance was crucial to the success of this sort of project, and a skill he has developed over many years.

The artists also took time, talking to participants who were at first reluctant to take part and got to know them as individuals. This made participants feel more relaxed and gave them the confidence they needed to open up and participate. One participant commented in the focus group that:

“It felt like I’d known them for a long period of time and I felt comfortable to then go on and write lyrics, even to show them.”

The artists also tried to include as many people as possible by drawing on participants’ existing skills. Those who were not so confident playing or singing were encouraged to have a go at lyric writing. One participant in particular was very shy, she didn’t want to try singing or playing an instrument, even with lyric writing she struggled to express herself and was very reluctant to show anyone what she had written. However when one of the group shouted out that she was good at drawing, one of the artists leapt at the opportunity to encourage her to draw something for the detainees. This is something she immediately felt more comfortable with and engaged with straight away, even experimenting with different fonts:



Recommendation 2.1.1: Encouraging participation

One of the challenges of an activity that is open to all is that participation is entirely optional. In this case part of the artists’ job at the start of a project is to encourage

people to participate. The artists facilitating the project managed to achieve a crucial balance between encouraging participants to join in without making them feel under pressure to do so. This is an important skill that artists working in similar environments should seek to develop. Allowing participants to join in on their own terms is crucial to their sense of empowerment and autonomy during the project.

Also spending time with the participants and getting to know them is an effective means of judging how best to incorporate them into the activity and what sort of encouragement they might best respond to.

This is another skill area for exploration in training sessions for MID artists and the wider sector.

2.1.2 Anticipated post-project engagement with music: Many participants, having discovered their talents for writing lyrics were keen to develop this further and to work with musicians who could provide backing tracks for their songs. For several participants the project had challenged their perceptions of themselves: they had never seen themselves as being musicians or even capable of being part of a music project, but the project brought out skills they had not previously recognised and also taught them how music can have positive effects in other aspects of their lives:

“Obviously I listen to music but I’d never see myself in a position in which I’m having to write let alone be a part of someone’s track or anything like that but after joining in and getting involved as I said earlier it was a real good way to let out emotion, built up emotion through writing and then putting that into a track really gives you a sense achievement”

2.1.3 Potential progression routes: Following the project, the young people at the YMCA expressed a strong desire for the project to continue. They reported that they had never been offered these opportunities before, never at the YMCA and they weren’t aware of anything similar in the local area. Some participants expressed regret that they hadn’t engaged more with music whilst they were at school. It had taken some of them a little time to build up enough confidence to engage in the project, for example one participant expressed in the focus group how:

“At first I wasn’t too confident about doing it, but upon getting stuck in I found out it was actually really enjoyable and it’s a good way to let out a lot of built up emotion.”

This same participant felt that in future projects he would now have the confidence to engage right from the start. A closing remark from one of the YMCA participants was *“please come back to Hayes YMCA”*.

The Lead Youth Café Worker at the YMCA reported that she was already attempting to organise more music projects for the YMCA participants, planning to apply for funds for another music project for this group, and hoping to work again with Music in Detention and in particular the artists who had facilitated this project.

The YMCA participant who visited Harmondsworth IRC (see p. 16) was very keen after his visit to attend the next MID workshop there. He hadn’t thought of using music in this way before; studying for a BTEC at his local college where music made up part of his qualification, he had predominantly thought of music as a performance art and feared

that it was not a sensible career trajectory to follow. As a refugee from Somalia he felt very lucky to be in the UK and wanted to do his best at college and create a stable life for himself and future family. He was keen to keep his music up but felt that he should study something like Engineering at University to give him financial/employment security. Whether seeing music used in these ways changed his mind about music not being a viable career path is hard to tell, but having observed his natural abilities as a workshop assistant, the next time MID recruits for volunteer workshop assistants (a volunteer scheme established 18 months ago), staff should encourage this participant to apply, if he is still interested, thus offering him a further progression route.

Recommendation 2.1.3: Progression with MID

MID can further strengthen its model through reflecting upon its role in providing access to music provision and progression routes. MID could, as far as is possible with young people in perhaps unstable, changeable circumstances, seek to stay in touch with both detainee and community participants in order to include them in future work, thus extending the impact of its work, especially where there is a clear potential progression route, such as the Volunteer Workshop Assistant Scheme.

For short-term projects or interventions, the idea of an end-of-project signposting, 'what's next' session can be a manageable way of identifying next steps for participants and hearing from them what feels a comfortable and appropriate progression.

Recommendation 2.1.3: Other progression routes

Participants expressed a clear desire to continue their participation in a music project. Lyric-writing emerged as something many participants hoped to develop. Instrumental tuition, particularly on guitar, drums and keyboard, is something the participants were keen to have more access to. The MID project acted as an effective entry project, introducing the participants to music making, collaboration and lyric writing. A success factor of this project was bringing the project to the YMCA, a space that was a familiar environment in which these young people felt comfortable but was offering no other music provision. It would be beneficial to consider the possibilities for instrumental tuition providers, such as the Hillingdon Music Education Hub, to bring tuition to grassroots organisations, like the YMCA, who already have a pool of participants and a safe space in which to operate.

2.2 What were the inputs/ways of working which contributed to success in these outcomes?

2.2.1 Role of the artists: In an artist log entry one of the artists described how he had certain 'tricks' up his sleeves to help engage participants. These include providing a microphone and headphones, "*a working microphone can be quite tempting even for the most reserved individuals*". The artists also felt that it was helpful to have a range of instruments available. The YMCA did not have its own instruments but the artists were able to bring a selection with them that the participants could have a go on. The project demonstrated how hearing live music can effectively draw peoples' attention to the activity.

The two lead artists on this project, Oliver & Yiannis, also demonstrated certain characteristics that made them effective music leaders and respected by participants. Each of them had a very laid back personality which immediately put participants at ease. They took time to get to know the participants, being open and listening to what participants had to say, allowing conversation to flow off topic sometimes. Their approachable nature also meant that several participants opened up to the artists, telling them about their lives, worries and hopes for the future. The artists were able to respond to this with empathy and by providing support to these participants as they opened up.

The artists didn't take themselves too seriously, for example, Oliver specialises (amongst other things) in beatboxing, a musical style that is not normally part of Yiannis's style, but during the sessions Yiannis had a go, showing that anyone could try these things out, and that it wasn't about how good the results were, the point was to enjoy the experience.

The artists also showed great flexibility in this project. Having artists that can improvise well, play in a variety of musical styles, to suit the preferences of the participants, and have skills in recording are valuable qualities for this kind of project.

Recommendation 2.2.1: Characteristics of the artists

For music leaders working in an environment like the YMCA it is important that they are approachable and laid back in personality so that participants feel able to open up to them.

Having skills in improvisation, production and a wide knowledge of musical genres is central to being able to cater to the variety of musical tastes in the room and support participants in creating original tracks of music.

Being able to respond flexibly to participants' needs is also fundamental for work like that of MID. Having the ability to adapt and work with whichever participants turn up is an important skill to be honed over time.

2.2.2 Role of organisational leaders: The Lead Youth Café Worker at the YMCA played a key role in making the project work well. She devoted a lot of effort to encouraging the participants to attend, even texting or phoning just as the workshop was starting to remind those who hadn't shown up. She advised the artists on where to conduct their workshops and how to best gain the attention of the group. Like the artists, she was good at judging how far she could push the young people without putting them off.

Recommendation 2.2.2 Input from community partner:

The Lead Youth Café Worker was an important factor in the project's success. From advising MID artists on where to conduct the workshops and how best to engage different participants to phoning and texting participants who had not shown up at the session that day, she was completely committed to the project and gave it her full support. Working with a community partner who is passionate about the work and willing to put their own time into the project is powerful and perhaps necessary. Taking advice from the staff and volunteers of the community partner is crucial, as these are

the people best-placed to provide support relating to participant's needs, desires and barriers to participation.

It is important to consider how this role is recognised within planning and funding as an essential part of a project's success. It is also necessary to consider the reliance upon a key individual and how the relationship might be enabled to continue and flourish should the particular Lead Youth Café Worker leave.

Recommendation 2.2.2: Location of music project

Using a community space that is already accessed and used is of great value to this kind of music project. It provides a ready-made group of participants and also a wider pool of potential participants who can be reached by word of mouth (and also, though less effectively, by advertising in the local area), as well as a space that feels safe and familiar to participants. It is also crucial to think about the space within such a centre. The first workshop of this project took place in a room located down a corridor off the main space. Very few participants came to this workshop as it involved having to make a committed decision to leave the social area and engage with the project. It also created a more intense environment with the only focus being on the music. From then on workshops took place in the main space, in this space people could do their own thing but often got enticed to get involved by seeing and hearing the activity happen right in front of them. People could duck in and out of the session without leaving it completely. It also created a relaxed and familiar environment for the participants to open up in.

2.2.3 Role of pre-project planning: A further success factor was the planning. Two members of MID's staff visited the group of participants in advance to get a feel for which artists would work best with the participants in the YMCA setting. They asked what type of music the young people liked to listen to and got a sense of the set-up and atmosphere at the YMCA. As lots of the participants were into rap/dance/hip hop music Oliver was chosen; although a newcomer to the MID team, as a talented MC and producer staff felt that his personality and music would appeal to the young people. Oliver has his own CD out and a YouTube channel which he showed to the participants, and gained a new following of fans! Participants felt inspired by Oliver, and his story of how he only started making music when he was 18. The other choice of artist was Yiannis, an experienced MID musician who would be able to guide Oliver through the project. Yiannis is an excellent guitarist and drummer and can turn his hand to most styles and instruments. This versatility was key to the project. Participants could get whatever kind of beat/melody/mood they wanted out of Yiannis, who was able to respond to all their tastes. Both artists had a laid back style, creating an open and relaxed atmosphere that immediately put participants at ease.

Recommendation 2.2.3: Tailoring projects

Planning a project to suit the interests and personalities of the participants was an important success factor in this project. Tailoring a project to a group's interests is really important; although this was clearly a music project, what kind of music project it would be was thought about in advance, after discussions with Deepika, the young people at the YMCA and the artists, Yiannis & Oliver. There is also a strong element of

adaptation in practical details that must take place as such projects progress, for example the change of location referred to above. In future projects investing time in the planning before the project begins should be remembered as an important part of the process.

Recommendation 2.2.3: Development of creative content & participant voice

A key success factor of this project, and MID's work more generally is the inclusion of participants in developing the creative content of each project. Whilst practical and logistical arrangements are pre-established, the content of the project and the direction creativity takes is left very open. By engaging the participants in discussion around the topic, in this case immigration detention, and picking out the various skills and interests each participant has, ideas for how the sessions will be shaped naturally emerge. Participants respond well to this level of project ownership; if a project has been shaped by the group, it is more likely to engage them in a more meaningful way.

2.2.4 Outputs: Each participant will receive a copy of the CD featuring the tracks produced as a result of this project. These tracks will also be uploaded onto the MID website and Soundcloud site as well as being posted on its Twitter page. This will extend the reach of the project, allowing anyone who visits any of MID's online platforms to hear the voices of detainees and the young people at the YMCA.

As an input, the recording added to the professional feel of the project, with many participants clearly keen to get their hands on the final CD. For amateur musicians in the group, such as one of the Polish detainees, this had been his first opportunity to record his music onto a track that could be sent back to him.

As important as the CD was to a number of participants, the artists felt that it was also important to emphasise the process. Recording was an important part of the process and playing back recordings to the participants throughout the project helped inspire people, convince them of their abilities in a spontaneous way and give them something to build on. During the telephone interview, one artist explained how he felt that the product, in this case the CD, was important and something that the artists had to keep in mind though not the only focus of the project.

Recommendation 2.2.4: CDs

Producing CDs as an output of the project proved important for many of the participants. Writing lyrics and songs that will be recorded and put onto a CD gives the project a clear focus and goal. It also adds a professional quality to the project that the participants appreciated. CDs provide a type of documentation of the project, and evidence of achievement, something participants can keep and show to their peers and families. For organisations they also provide an invaluable source of evaluation material as their contact can reveal a lot of information about how the project progressed and how different participants developed in their musical ability.

However, production should not override process, choices over which content to include should not only be made on quality but should seek to include as many participants as

possible and reflect the project in full.

2.3 What were the barriers to further delivery of these outcomes? Were these overcome, if so how?

2.3.1 Advertising: Almost all of the participants felt that there hadn't been enough time on the project. Although the workshops had been advertised on posters all around the detention centre, around the local area and in the YMCA, many participants heard about them via word of mouth, from their friends. This meant that some participants only attended one or two sessions. For one participant, a rapper, who attended the final session at the YMCA, his leaving remark was "*why didn't I come to this from the start?*", although he had heard that the project was happening, he didn't know what it would entail and didn't think it would be worth his time to come along.

Recommendation 2.3.1: Taster sessions

The nature of an activity that does not involve participants having to sign up is that it can take some time to build up a core group. Advertising the workshops on posters can go some way to encouraging participants to attend but there is no guarantee that people will see the posters or pay attention to them. Offering a pre-project taster session could be a good way of giving participants an idea of what the project will be like and if conducted a week or so in advance of the official start would give time for the message to spread among peer groups.

2.3.2 Structure: The YMCA Lead Youth Café Worker suggested that if the project was to run again she would make it a sign-up activity and have a more detailed plan, so that people could see what to expect in each session. Such an approach might save the artists from repeated explanations of the project to new participants and enable them to build on material each time, so this is something worth considering for future projects. However, feedback from the questionnaire and focus group showed that many YMCA participants appreciated the fact that the sessions were open to everyone and respected being able to join in when and if they felt like it. As one of the artists sums up in an artist log entry:

"There were attempts made to organize the group, some of them were more successful but the free flow of the sessions participants didn't really allow a more structured performance. Yet it is the freedom and the opportunity for self-expression, that music activities provide that is the true essence of a project like this."

Recommendation 2.3.2: Structure

Although the Lead Youth Café Worker suggested that more could have been achieved in terms of musical accomplishments, if the project had been a 'sign-up' activity, it's not yet clear that requiring sign-up would encourage participation or deter it. For participants not usually exposed to such opportunities, the 'open to all' inclusive culture and tone is important. It extends the project to whoever takes the time to come along and find out what it's about. To some extent a structure naturally emerged in this

project in that the same people kept coming back as the workshops went on. If the project is interesting and engaging enough a core group will almost certainly form. Had the project lasted longer, or had there been clear progression routes in place, more could have been achieved with the participants.

2.3.3 Music choice: Several of the girls at the YMCA felt put off by the beat boxing, seeing it as a male style of music. They explained this reaction in the focus group:

“Music in general isn’t just for boys but I think that the way that the rapping and beat boxing, I think me and my friend we didn’t feel like we could get involved because it’s not something that a lot of females do, but the other side of the music, the whole writing down the lyrics and stuff, that we could get involved with.”

This is not something either of the girls had voiced during the project, and the artists reported their assumption at the time that the two girls simply lacked the confidence to join in.

When asked if they felt they would have preferred one male artist and one female artist, instead of two male artists, the female participants did not think this would have made a difference, it was simply to do with the musical genre. It is clearly important to think about gendered associations of different styles of music. If the issue had become apparent during the project the artists could have adapted their approach accordingly.

Recommendation 2.3.3: Music choice

It is important to consider any associations certain genres of music may carry and how these could affect participants. In this project, due to one of the artists being a talented rapper and beat boxer, styles that also appealed to several male members of the group, these genres somewhat dominated the style of the music tracks that were created. Although not realised during the project, it came to light in the post-project focus group that some of the female participants had found this off-putting. They expressed how they hadn’t felt comfortable trying out this style of music as they saw it as a male vocal style.

2.3.4 Limitations on participation: Another barrier for two more participants at the YMCA was that they always attended with their 18-month old son. As young parents they came to the YMCA to socialise with their friends and let their son play in the centre, but with such a young child they were not able to focus on the project and said they also lacked the energy to join in. For one of these participants, although there was little he could do about it, not participating in the project was something he clearly regretted, writing on his feedback questionnaire: *“I didn’t join in sorry”* and *“I didn’t create anything”*. Perhaps with more resources or structure to the project it would have been possible for a staff member or volunteer to look after the child to allow the parents to join in.

2.3.5 Lack of continuity between artists: One barrier that the lead artist Yiannis highlighted was a lack of continuity with his partner musician. For four out of the six sessions the second artist was Oliver, but for the second session, he was joined by

Shammi, and for the third session, by T ea. Music in Detention would normally have the same two artists working together throughout the project, but this was not feasible on this occasion due to scheduling difficulties and delays. Yiannis reported in his interview that he enjoyed working with different people and felt this was interesting for the participants, but it did slow down the start of the project, because it takes time to build up the trust of participants. In terms of the continuity of recordings this was also a challenge as Oliver was leading that side of the project. Although this is not normal MID practice this example serves as a good reminder of the need for continuity in project leaders.

Recommendation 2.3.5: Continuity of artists

This project highlighted the importance of having the same artist facilitators for every session. Due to difficulties in scheduling at the start of this project, although one artist was present the entire way through, there was not this consistency with the second artist. This continuity is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, participants are encouraged to open up, reflect on their lives and discuss complex topics and to feel comfortable to do this it is important that they trust the artists they are working with and feel supported by them. Continuity is also important in shaping the creative direction of the project. MID's artists are all very different in terms of their musical approach and this changes the ways in which they work together. Although the creative content is left as much as possible to the participants, the artists will inevitably play a role in how this manifests, and lack of continuity in this way can lead to lack of clarity over creative direction, which in a short project like this one, can delay progress in creating tracks.

3. What can be learned from the project about how inclusive music provision can deliver musical, social and psychological benefits?

Summary of findings (research question 3):

The changes for the individuals and organisations involved were:

- Opening up about difficult experiences and being more willing to seek support
- Channelling and processing emotions
- Improved concentration
- Relief of stress

The ways of working which helped deliver social and musical outcomes were:

- Incorporating discussion of a social issue (immigration) into a creative project
- Developing creative collaboration between groups who would not normally meet (young people and detainees, and young people from different backgrounds)
- The use of humour

The project helped develop socially inclusive practice and attitudes by:

- Increasing empathy and understanding
- Increasing young people's confidence to engage constructively in discussion about

immigration

- Increasing participation in other community activities (at the YMCA)

3.1 What changes did the project bring about for the individuals and organisations involved?

3.1.1 Therapeutic outcomes: The project had a profound effect on one YMCA participant in particular. Through lyric writing, something completely new to him, he had been able to open up about his life experiences, some of which had been very tough, and talk about his emotions:

“I’d say that it’s allowed me to be more open with certain people, as I said, through the lyric writing and all that I would have never shared that before and now obviously I can sit there and tell people, look, this is happening, and I’ll happily accept their support. Before I would never do that, I would always keep it to myself, like no-one would know anything about me so I thought after going through all the lyric writing and stuff like that, if I’m in need of emotional support then I can go out and seek help. Before that never would have happened.”

He reported that he found the process of writing down his experience and his emotions therapeutic and felt as if a weight had been lifted from him. He even felt that going forward this was something he would try to keep up, a technique he would employ to channel his emotions. This is the spoken word piece he wrote, a powerful work and a subject he had not discussed with many of his YMCA peers before:

‘Mother’: <http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=600>



3.1.2 Channelling emotions: Detainees reported that the music let them release their emotions and that through singing and writing lyrics and messages to the YMCA group they felt able to talk about their situations, past lives or hopes for the future. Being able to process these emotions is crucial to the psychological wellbeing of detainees and music provides a creative outlet through which such emotions can be channelled. Research shows that this sort of work can improve detainee’s coping mechanisms, an outcome which could have a much longer-term impact on participants:

“The accounts have the sense that the memory of being able to cope, even in the short term, was protective against future stressors. Research on

resilience supports this notion. Experiences of effective coping can increase resilience and so protect against the development of mental health problems.”⁷

3.1.3 Improved concentration: Staff and volunteers at the YMCA expressed amazement at the concentration of the participants throughout the project, including giving the focus group their full attention for 45 minutes, eloquently talking about the project and their experience of it. In the past, staff and volunteers reported that they had struggled to get the group to focus on projects and take part in more structured activities. They concluded that participants were passionate about music and would therefore give it their full attention.

3.1.4 Stress release: Past research conducted for Music in Detention gives examples of the release some participants get from the music making workshops:

“When people first come in here their lyrics are more usually violent and angry and they’re all frustrated. And then as time goes on they start progressing to like normal bars and normal lyrics and normal kind of music. They get rid of all that frustration...”⁸

In this project, one participant at Harmondsworth showed how just beating a drum is a great stress release. During a discussion about religion that ended up getting quite deep and was detracting from the music making, one Algerian detainee showed his frustration at the discussion by hitting the drum that was in front of very loudly, after which he quickly calmed down and laughed off his sudden outburst.

Another YMCA participant had a similar experience through his freestyling, which although not new to him, he had not been doing much of prior to the project. When he had a beat he was happy with, lyrics poured out of him, he spoke of his experience of becoming a parent at the age of 19, of his difficult relationship with his child’s mother and her new partner and other things he was going through in his life. The release he got from this was evident from the evaluator’s observations and probably clear to all who watched him. Starting out tense and nervous, by the time he had run out of words (he could often keep going for around 10-15 minutes) he was noticeably more relaxed and happy. He appreciated the support of his peers who were impressed by his talents and from observation clearly enjoyed working with MID artist Oliver who produced music in a style he really liked.

3.2 What were the inputs/ways of working which helped deliver social and musical outcomes together?

3.2.1 Discussing immigration: From the start of the project the artists encouraged open discussion about immigration detention and about how the detainees might feel. Based on the evaluator’s observations, hearing recordings from within the detention centre brought the detainees to life for the group, they became people the YMCA participants could communicate with, hear music from and get to know a little bit. This helped contextualise the immigration debate, which as one participant rightly pointed out, is highly complex and controversial.

⁷ Underhill, James. *The Psychological Impact of Music Workshops on Immigration Detainees*, D.Clin.Psy Thesis, University College London: (page 103)

⁸ Underhill, James. *The Psychological Impact of Music Workshops on Immigration Detainees*, D.Clin.Psy Thesis, University College London: (page 91)

Although there were regular discussions about immigration detention and immigration more generally, the artists ensured that music remained the clear focus of the project, and through the music lots of the social interactions and discussions came about very organically. The artists incorporated the complex topic of detention within the music, exploring the issues through lyric writing, song exchanges and written messages. This creative method engaged participants effectively; it provided an element of fun without retracting from the depth participants were able to reach in their understanding and emotion.

3.2.2 Collaborations: During the project there was an element of integration between what started out as the ‘Monday group’ and the ‘Wednesday group’. As mentioned earlier, one member of the refugee/asylum seeker group came to all sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays, and there was one Wednesday session where several members of the Monday group attended and everyone joined in together. The Lead Youth Café Worker reflected in her interview that she might have been wrong in thinking there was a problem of integration between the two groups, and that the problem may have been more that the refugee/asylum seeker group sought a focus and reason to come to the YMCA. When they did come to the sessions there was no problem of cohesion within the group, although not everyone knew each other they all worked on the music, wrote lyrics and supported each other in recordings.

Music making in this way is naturally collaborative, it encourages exchanges of ideas and demands that people draw on their skills and use those of others. For those participants who came up with good lyrics but didn’t want to sing them they had to seek out a singer to perform their words, and perhaps someone to play a drum beat to give some rhythm.

Recommendation 3.2.2: Integration

Having a Monday and a Wednesday group was potentially not necessary and provided no obvious benefit. It effectively halved the number of sessions for those who only came to one session or the other, giving them just three sessions each as opposed to the total of six that took place. Although the reason for planning it this way was in many ways well founded, observation showed that the project was able to bring the two groups of young people together through practical, creative collaboration on a shared project. Issues of cohesion should not be avoided by separating participants, rather a participatory music project can overcome senses of division.

3.2.3 Humour: One of the sessions at Harmondsworth demonstrated how music without being virtuosic or complicated, can capture a mood, make people laugh and improve the mood of everyone in the room. In this particular session, a detainee from Liberia, although he used to make music in his home country, had ‘creative block’ during these sessions and struggled to come up with a whole song. Although the man was of a very cheerful and laid back demeanour he felt that his incarceration, as well as limiting his freedom, had limited his creativity. He felt that his journey through the immigration system was just going round and round without moving forwards, a sentiment that sparked the idea for his song, Round Round. The song brought great laughter to the room, it’s silly yet satirical nature has a message but also a rather ridiculous quality in its repetitiveness and simplicity:

‘Round Round’: <http://www.musicindetention.org.uk/player#track=601>



3.3 How did the project help develop socially inclusive practice and attitudes in the local area?

3.3.1 Attitudes towards immigration: Several YMCA participants felt that prior to the project, immigration was a very difficult subject to talk about, describing the topic as ‘complex’ and ‘confusing’ they felt if they said the ‘wrong’ thing they could come across as racist, or offend different groups of people without meaning to. For this reason many of them had previously avoided discussing the subject altogether. However, particularly for one participant, the MID project had given him the knowledge he needed to take part in future discussions about immigration. Having the contact with detainees also provided a personal experience he could use to support his views.

“There’s so many people talking about it (immigration) that I don’t know where to look or what to say, you can say one thing and offend one person and say the opposite thing and offend another person... Now I feel I can talk more about it because I know more about it, before I didn’t know enough about it to actually say anything about it. Before I could say something, not mean to say anything racist but still come across as it. But I now know more about the situation so I could probably use that in any sort of discussion, now I understand a bit more about it I can use this as an example.” (Focus group at YMCA)

Participants had also developed a real interest in the subject of immigration detention, with many of them expressing concern and empathy for the detainees whose, recognised by the participants, freedom had been taken away. Many of them were keen to visit the detainees and give them their support and to find out more about them.

3.3.2 Developing understanding: One YMCA participant reported in the focus group that the project had made him realise how lucky he was. When he heard about how some detainees had fled their countries searching for a better life, only to then be locked up in detention in the UK, it had made him reflect that despite his problems, at least he was in control of his life in the sense that he had his freedom and felt safe in his community.

“It’s kind of made me appreciate what I have more, if you know what I mean. Because obviously I can go outside and do what I want to, so to speak, but people in detention centres they don’t get that luxury”

3.3.3 Sustaining musical activities: According to the questionnaire, a third of participants said the project had made them want to take part in other projects run at the YMCA, whilst a quarter of them wanted to take part in more community based activities. The YMCA seems to be a well-used centre with a regular group of people who attend, as well as others who pop in from time to time. Centre staff reported that the project's popularity increased participants' attendance at other activities at the centre and has also helped recruit some new people. It also enhanced the relationships between participants, as they learned more about each other and felt more able to open up to one another. Participants reminded us on a number of occasions that they didn't get opportunities like this one very often; they were keen to show their gratitude to MID and particularly the artists who had led the session when saying their goodbyes during the last session of the project.

G. Recommendations

Overall the project delivered most of the outcomes it set out to achieve. The following are learning points taken from this project and recommendations to consider for future projects. The recommendations are broken down into three categories: concept, planning and delivery and cross-referenced to the sections in the document to which they are relevant.

1. Concept:

- **Social engagement (1.1.6):** Social engagement through and alongside musical & creative engagement was particularly successfully achieved. The project encouraged participants to be reflexive, to open up and reflect on their own lives and to think about those of others (possible due to the exchange element of the project). Lyric writing was taught as a means of self-expression as well as a way of sending messages between two communities through music. This is an effective way to develop participant interest and engagement, it provides greater depth of meaning, and fosters understanding, empathy and ability to relate. The premise of this approach could be considered for other projects.

- **Significance of exchange (1.2.3):** Having two groups from different communities working together is central to Music in Detention's approach. Each group provides sparks of inspiration for the other and opens up the idea of collaboration to go beyond just one group of peers, and beyond the immediate space of the workshop. Passing messages back and forth proved a popular element of this project and enhanced participants' communication skills, understanding and empathy. Again, the premise of this approach may be effective in other settings. The ability to build relationships and understanding across communities could be a powerful means for addressing the perceived geographical divide in boroughs such as Hillingdon.

- **More emphasis on the exchange (1.2.5):** Although the message about creating a line of communication between the groups was clear to the YMCA participants, this message reached rather few of the detainees who took part in this project, and when the message was received its intent was not clear. Although this did not detract from their enjoyment, having communication with people in the outside community could have provided an added element of interest/support for the detainees. This is also a clearly stated aim of MID's work and therefore should be addressed.

Although lots of messages were passed between the groups there was not as much musical collaboration between the groups as has occurred in other MID projects. Being able to share lyrics and work on each other's songs is an effective and creative means of opening up a dialogue and could have been used more in this project.

The difficulty felt by one of the artists in this project was that detainees were more engaged with the music-making element of the project and were not so keen to sit down and engage in discussion. Dealing with this sort of response is something that could be brought up at a future MID Practice Forum, an event organised once or twice a year for MID artists to share examples of good practice, give each other advice on how to handle challenging aspects of workshops and generally to build on MID's community of practice.

- **Progression with MID (2.1.3):** MID can further strengthen its model through reflecting upon its role in providing access to music provision and progression routes. MID could, as far as is possible with young people in perhaps unstable, changeable circumstances, seek to stay in touch with both detainee and community participants in order to include them in future work, thus extending the impact of its work, especially where there is a clear potential progression route, such as the Volunteer Workshop Assistant Scheme.

For short-term projects or interventions, the idea of an end-of-project signposting, 'what's next' session can be a manageable way of identifying next steps for participants and hearing from them what feels a comfortable and appropriate progression.

- **Other progression routes (2.1.3):** Participants expressed a clear desire to continue their participation in a music project. Lyric-writing emerged as something many participants hoped to develop. Instrumental tuition, particularly on guitar, drums and keyboard, is something the participants were keen to have more access to. The MID project acted as an effective entry project, introducing the participants to music making, collaboration and lyric writing. A success factor of this project was bringing the project to the YMCA, a space that was a familiar environment in which these young people felt comfortable but was offering no other music provision. It would be beneficial to consider the possibilities for instrumental tuition providers, such as the Hillingdon Music Education Hub, to bring tuition to grassroots organisations, like the YMCA, who already have a pool of participants and a safe space in which to operate.

2. Planning:

- **Follow up activities (1.2.4):** For the YMCA participant who had the chance to visit the MID workshop this was a real highlight of the project. It brought the setting and people he had been hearing about to life. When requests are made by the groups to meet each other, it would be worthwhile for MID to follow these up on a regular basis as they deepen the level of understanding participants reach about one another and as we saw in this case, change perceptions about detention.

- **Instrumental tuition (1.3.4):** This is something that both groups, the detainees and YMCA participants, had hoped there would be more of. Although instrumental tuition is not necessarily suited to such large groups (most sessions at both locations drew groups of around 8-10, with much larger numbers at certain times in the detention centre) whose members come and go and do not attend all the sessions, it may still be possible to incorporate some basic instrumental tuition into future projects. For example, participants could be taught guitar chords to fit a song, or be taught melodies or chord patterns on the keyboard. This did happen on a couple of occasions, with one detainee learning very basic skills on a bass guitar, but it would be beneficial if this opportunity could extend to more members of the group and become an established part of the project activities.

- **Input from community partner (2.2.2):** The Lead Youth Café Worker was an important factor in the project's success. From advising MID artists on where to conduct the workshops and how best to engage different participants to phoning and texting participants who had not shown up at the session that day, she was completely committed to the project and gave it her full support. Working with a community partner who is passionate about the work and willing to put their own time into the

project is powerful and perhaps necessary. Taking advice from the staff and volunteers of the community partner is crucial as these are the people best-placed to provide support relating to participant's needs, desires and barriers to participation.

It is important to consider how this role is recognised within planning and funding as an essential part of a project's success. It is also necessary to consider the reliance upon a key individual and how the relationship might be enabled to continue and flourish should the particular Lead Youth Café Worker leave.

- **Location of music project (2.2.2):** Using a community space that is already accessed and used is of great value to this kind of music project. It provides a ready-made group of participants and also a wider pool of potential participants who can be reached by word of mouth (and also, though less effectively, by advertising in the local area), as well as a space that feels safe and familiar to participants. It is also crucial to think about the space within such a centre. The first workshop of this project took place in a room located down a corridor off the main space. Very few participants came to this workshop as it involved having to make a committed decision to leave the social area and engage with the project. It also created a more intense environment with the only focus being on the music. From then on workshops took place in the main space, in this space people could do their own thing but often got enticed to get involved by seeing and hearing the activity happen right in front of them. People could duck in and out of the session without leaving it completely. It also created a relaxed and familiar environment for the participants to open up in.

- **Tailoring projects (2.2.3):** Planning a project to suit the interests and personalities of the participants was an important success factor in this project. Tailoring a project to a group's interests is really important; although this was clearly a music project, what kind of music project it would be was thought about in advance, after discussions with Deepika, the young people at the YMCA and the artists, Yiannis & Oliver. There is also a strong element of adaptation in practical details that must take place as such projects progress, for example the change of location referred to above. In future projects investing time in the planning before the project begins should be remembered as an important part of the process.

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- **Integration (3.2.2):** Having a Monday and a Wednesday group was potentially not necessary and provided no obvious benefit. It effectively halved the number of sessions for those who only came to one session or the other, giving them just three sessions each as opposed to the total of six that took place. Although the reason for planning it this way was in many ways well founded, observation showed that the project was able to bring the two groups of young people together through practical, creative collaboration on a shared project. Issues of cohesion should not be avoided by separating participants, rather a participatory music project can overcome senses of division.

3. Delivery:

- **IRC staff participation (1.1.3):** It was clear in this project that when IRC staff joined in and took an active role in the music sessions, detainees' enjoyment increased. On top of this, changing their role from officer to participant allowed detainees to see the officers in a different light, something that could have longer-term affects for the relationships between officers and detainees. Encouraging IRC staff participation should be part of the practice of every MID artist and if IRC staff struggle to engage and demonstrate positivity or willingness, or behave in a way that could be perceived as rude, this should be discussed with the IRC.

- **Supporting participants in exploring their viewpoints (1.2.2):** When discussing controversial and complex topics such as immigration it is important to keep discussions as open as possible and free from judgement. The artists facilitating this project did this successfully. Discussions started with very broad and open questions that left room for the participants to continue the conversation in whichever direction it naturally led. Feeling as if you don't know enough about a topic to discuss it can limit a person's ability to change their views, but the artists addressed this by encouraging all of the participants to join in with discussions and by respecting everyone's comments. They were also able to judge where and how they could challenge a participant on something he or she had said, an important balance to be able to make if your work aims to achieve attitudinal change.

- **Managing different abilities (1.3.2):** The nature of MID workshops being open to all, means that the artists have no prior knowledge of the musical abilities of the participants who will be taking part. They are therefore frequently presented with a notably wide variety of abilities that can be difficult accommodate concurrently. Some key methods employed by the artists to deal with this situation could be taken as learning points for other artists working in similar settings, and potentially explored in future Music in Detention and Sound Connections training sessions.

One such method was to encourage already accomplished musicians to support their peers by providing a beat, harmonic accompaniment or vocals that less experienced musicians could join in with, follow, improvise over the top of or accompany. Artists also encouraged more experienced musicians to perform for their peers, this often worked well in inspiring others to join in, and encouraged the sometimes shy, but accomplished musicians to demonstrate their talents.

- **Encouraging participation (2.1.1):** One of the challenges of an activity that is open to all is that participation is entirely optional. In this case part of the artists' job at the start of a project is to encourage people to participate. The artists facilitating the project managed to achieve a crucial balance between encouraging participants to join in without making them feel under pressure to do so. This is an important skill that artists working in similar environments should seek to develop. Allowing participants to join in on their own terms is crucial to their sense of empowerment and autonomy during the project.

Also spending time with the participants and getting to know them is an effective means of judging how best to include them in the activity and what sort of encouragement they might best respond to.

This is another skill area for exploration in training sessions for MID artists and the wider sector.

- **Characteristics of the artists (2.2.1):** For music leaders working in an environment like the YMCA it is important that they are approachable and laid back in personality so that participants feel able to open up to them.

Having skills in improvisation, production and a wide knowledge of musical genres is central to being able to cater to the variety of musical tastes in the room and support participants in creating original tracks of music.

Being able to respond flexibly to participants' needs is also fundamental for work like that of MID. Having the ability to adapt and work with whichever participants turn up is an important skill to be honed over time.

- **Development of creative content and participant voice (2.2.3):** A key success factor of this project, and MID's work more generally is the inclusion of participants in developing the creative content of each project. Whilst practical and logistical arrangements are pre-established, the content of the project and the direction creativity takes is left very open. By engaging the participants in discussion around the topic, in this case immigration detention, and picking out the various skills and interests each participant has, ideas for how the sessions will be shaped naturally emerge. Participants respond well to this level of project ownership; if a project has been shaped by the group, it is more likely to engage them in a more meaningful way.

- **CDs (2.2.4):** Producing CDs as an output of the project proved important for many of the participants. Writing lyrics and songs that will be recorded and put onto a CD gives the project a clear focus and goal. It also adds a professional quality to the project that the participants appreciated. CDs provide a type of documentation of the project, and evidence of achievement, something participants can keep and show to their peers and families. For organisations they also provide an invaluable source of

evaluation material as their contact can reveal a lot of information about how the project progressed and how different participants developed in their musical ability.

However, production should not override process, choices over which content to include should not only be made on quality but should seek to include as many participants as possible and reflect the project in full.

- **Continuity of artists (2.3.5):** This project highlighted the importance of having the same artist facilitators for every session. Due to difficulties in scheduling at the start of this project, although one artist was present the entire way through, there was not this consistency with the second artist. This continuity is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, participants are encouraged to open up, reflect on their lives and discuss complex topics and to feel comfortable to do this it is important that they trust the artists they are working with and feel supported by them. Continuity is also important in shaping the creative direction of the project. MID's artists are all very different in terms of their musical approach and this changes the ways in which they work together. Although the creative content is left as much as possible to the participants, the artists will inevitably play a role in how this manifests, and lack of continuity in this way can lead to lack of clarity over creative direction, which in a short project like this one, can delay progress in creating tracks.

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