

**Music In Detention**

# **Evaluation Report**

**Part 1:**

**Data Review, 2014-2017**

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# 1 Introduction

Music in Detention (MID) is a unique organisation focused on music provision in UK immigration detention centres. In 2016, 28,900 people entered these centres, which house people detained under UK law including asylum seekers, new arrivals who have been refused permission to enter the UK, foreign national ex-prisoners, people who have failed to comply with the terms of their visas and undocumented persons living in the UK. The majority of detainees are held for less than two months although detention can sometimes extend to four months and about 3% of detainees are held for more than 6 months (Silverman, 2017).

Music activity is offered as part of recreational and educational activities that are governed by the 2001 Detention Centre Rules, which stipulate the provisions that should be made for health and welfare of detainees. Through a variety of delivery formats, including regular one-off workshops and more sustained musician in residence programmes, MID uses music activities to encourage self-expression and support the wellbeing of detainees. Professional musicians lead weekly to monthly sessions drawing on a wide variety of genres and approaches and including singing, playing and creating recording music. The musicians provide tuition and facilitate performances and recordings. MID also organises community exchange projects in which groups of detainees work in collaboration with community groups to create and record music. The groups do not meet each other but MID musicians transmit messages and materials between them to enable them to work together. Community exchange projects seek to connect detainees with the outside world, building empathy and solidarity at the same time as educating community participants about immigration detention and supporting their wellbeing.

## 1.1 Evaluation aims

The current MID evaluation strategy was introduced in 2013, with a logic model used to devise a framework and tools that have been subsequently used to collect qualitative and quantitative data around key outcome areas. While a large amount of feedback has been collected, these data have not been brought together or analysed in any systematic way and the purpose of this independent evaluation is to undertake a review of data. Further, MID has revised its strategy and over the next six years seeks to build sustainability by expanding its coverage of the UK detention system, increasing its work in the community and extending its provision with a stronger focus on artistic leadership and artistic quality (MID 2018). Hence this independent review seeks to examine and strengthen MID's evaluation framework in line with the revised strategy. MID has commissioned an independent review in order to:

- Bring independence, additional rigour and credibility to evaluation.
- Undertake more far-reaching enquiries to understand better how best to act on delivery environments.
- Strengthen MID's intellectual framework, including its theory of change, and ensure that as delivery models are developed, they draw on research findings in related fields.
- Add to wider understanding of the settings in which MID works in and the issues they address.

(MID, 2018).

This report forms the first part of a two-part review undertaken by Professor Norma Daykin. Part 1 reviews existing data collected by MID evaluators and provides an independent analysis of key themes and findings. Part 2 reviews the framework, methods and tools currently used by MID for evaluation. Findings from both parts of the review have been used to guide stakeholder consultation with the purposes of generating a revised theory of change and a renewed outcomes framework that inform project and programme evaluation in future.

## **1.2 Evaluation questions**

Three broad questions guide the analysis:

- 1. What are the impacts of music activity on detainees and other participants?*
- 2. What factors mediate positive and negative impacts of music in detention?*
- 3. How does artistic quality affect MID delivery and impact?*

## **1.3 Theoretical framework**

The impacts of music can be physical, psychological and social. Current understanding of mechanisms of impact in arts and wellbeing have drawn heavily health and medicine disciplines, and have consequently focused on the first two levels, with a neglect of social and cultural processes that shape positive and negative music experiences (Daykin, 2008, 2012). Engaging vulnerable people in music activity involves both benefits and risks, including physical, psychosocial and discursive risks (Daykin 2005). Physical risks from music are evident, such as playing related injuries, although these are more likely to occur in professional music contexts rather than participatory arts.

Psychosocial risks include impacts on personal attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, including challenges to notions of personal identity that can arise in music making. These are influenced by societal discourses: ideas and assumptions that surround and shape music and creativity in different cultural contexts. For example, in Western societies, the notion of talent as something that is essential, innate and belonging to an exceptional few has served to exclude many people from creative activity (Daykin, 2005). Further, the association of artistic engagement with ideas about the necessity for suffering (Boyce Tilman, 2000) have served to disconnect the notion of creativity with that of wellbeing. These ideas have historically shaped perceptions of artistic quality in Western societies. People who find themselves in UK immigration detention centres may be influenced to a greater or lesser degree by these ideas, and they also bring a wide range of beliefs and musical practices that can facilitate or hinder their engagement and the impact that music activity has on them.

Another discursive risk that needs to be addressed in the immigration detention context relates to stigma. Detainees are likely to be affected by negative portrayals of immigration in the media as well as policies framed using language such as a 'hostile environment'. Music as a form of social action in immigration detention has the potential both to reduce and compound stigma.

In this report, the potential for music to affect wellbeing is discussed with reference to the notion of mediated affordances developed by Daykin et al. (2017) following De Nora (2000, 2013). According to De Nora, music affords consciousness, thought and action. However, music is not like a prescription drug, rather, its effects must be appropriated by participants in specific contexts. In participatory arts, musical affordances are mediated by a number of factors

including participants' biographies and experiences, the values, attitudes and behaviours of music leaders, the actions and inactions of gatekeepers, and the effects of institutional rules, roles and imperatives (Daykin et al. 2017).

Notions of artistic quality have come to the fore in recent discussions about participatory arts and wellbeing. Quality considerations are increasingly a driver of funding decisions. In participatory arts, quality is important, and not just for funding purposes, since perceptions of artistic quality are a potential mediator of impact: participants are unlikely to benefit from an activity that they perceive as low quality. However, quality, like talent, is a socially constructed notion. Dimensions of artistic quality cannot be imposed from above using a one-size fits all approach, rather, they need to match the experiences and priorities of participants and stakeholders. Hence artistic quality in participatory arts contexts requires a grounded understanding.

#### **1.4 Methodology and evaluation data**

This report reviews data collected by MID evaluators from up to 270 participants and stakeholders between 2014 and 2017. Data include feedback from over 150 detainees as well as musicians, IRC staff, community participants and community partners. The primary method of data collection is that of focus groups and interviews. MID staff undertake these with small groups of participants, usually at the end of a series of workshops. Participants are volunteers and there is no particular sampling frame used to select focus group participants. Focus group participants are self-selecting and likely to be drawn from those who had the most positive experiences of the project: little is known about the experiences of detainees and participants who did not engage with music activity. However, focus group data are supplemented by data from other sources, such as brief postcard feedback following music activity and responses to open ended questionnaires. These data sources extend the sample.

Interview participants are selected according to roles, for example, key staff in IRCs. MID staff obtain verbal consent for participation in qualitative data collection for evaluation purposes as well as for audio recording and transcribing. Data were anonymised before being handed on to the external evaluator. Participants are not named or otherwise identified in this report.

A small amount of quantitative data are collected, mostly evaluation forms completed at the end of workshop series and used for routine monitoring. There is no particular sampling frame used for selection of respondents, and there is no baseline data collected. These data provide a picture of participants' views about music activity and MID delivery, but as there is no baseline data they cannot show changes in participants following music activity.

The independent evaluator reviewed these data and selected a sample for secondary analysis. The sampling frame used to select documents for review is presented in Appendix 1. Data from a three year period were selected in order to reflect the range of MID delivery models, settings and time-periods and to include a range of perspectives of detainees, community participants and stakeholders. The purpose of the analysis was to identify key themes from the data but also to identify strengths and limitations in MID evaluation procedures. Qualitative data were analysed using an inductive thematic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The results are discussed below. Part 2 of this report reviews MID's evaluation framework, methods and procedures, and makes recommendations for improvements.

## 2 The impact of music activity on detainees

### 2.1 Introduction

This section reviews quantitative and qualitative data on the impacts reported by detainees of a range of music activities in different delivery formats including workshops and tuition, community exchange projects and a choir project for female detainees. Since 2013 the main method of evaluating these activities has been focus groups, which are audio recorded and transcribed, subject to verbal consent from participants. Questionnaires are also used to a limited degree and these are included in the analysis.

### 2.2 Detainees' responses to music activity: Quantitative data

Quantitative data reviewed here include questionnaires (22) completed by detainees at the end of three community exchange projects and evaluation forms (n=69) from female participants who took part in group singing activity.

The community exchange projects were held in detention centres and community mental health settings during 2016. They were evaluated using a brief questionnaire with four closed questions exploring feelings about the project. The findings and tables are presented in Appendix 1, while key findings are summarised below:

- Less than half of respondents attended five or more community exchange sessions, while just under a third attended between two and four sessions. Five respondents attended only one session (Table 1).
- The majority (20/21) of detainees rated the community exchange sessions as either 'good' or 'very good.' (Table 2).
- The majority (22/22) of detainees reported that the community exchange sessions made them feel better or made them feel a lot better (Table 3).
- Three quarters of detainees reported that the community exchange sessions helped them to relax and learn something new. Over half reported that the sessions helped them to make friends and meet new people, feel good about themselves, create something good, and make good use of their time (Table 4).

Quantitative data also include 69 questionnaires completed by female detainees who took part in a group singing activity. Weekly sessions involved between 2 and 8 participants, with an average attendance of 4-5 women. Questionnaires were administered at the end of each session, and participants were asked how they felt at the start of the workshop and at the end. Key findings from the choir evaluation include:

- While 20% of participants reported feeling sad or very sad at the start of workshops (Table 5), only one person reported feeling sad at the end of a workshop (Table 6).
- 62 participants (90%) stated that they were able to express themselves during the workshop.
- 51 participants (74%) stated that they met new people at the workshop.

## **2.3 Detainees' responses: Qualitative findings**

Qualitative data discussed here are drawn from five focus groups with a total of 18 detainees, feedback postcards (41) completed after workshops, and responses to open ended questions on a group singing questionnaire.

The focus group transcripts provide rich data on detainees' experiences of music activity, however, focus group participants are self-selecting and likely to be drawn from those who had the most positive experiences of the project. While the data from postcards and questionnaires are not as rich or nuanced as those from the focus groups, they are drawn from a broader sample. They generally support the quantitative and qualitative findings, indicating mostly positive responses to MID delivery.

Detainees, who included experienced musicians and people with no prior experience of music activity, talked in focus groups about their experiences of music activities, which included singing, playing, drumming, rapping, 'freestyling', 'spitting' and beats, as well as writing, performing and recording music. They also reflected on their experience of community exchange projects and discussed their views on the organisation and delivery of music sessions by MID staff and musicians.

Seven key themes emerged regarding detainees' accounts of the impacts of MID's delivery.

1. Distraction and coping with detention
2. Mood and relaxation
3. Expression and freedom
4. Social connection
5. Stigma
6. Learning and development
7. Identities

### **1. Distraction and coping with detention**

While not all detainees engaged with music, some clearly preferred the music workshops to other activities offered in detention.

*D4: So yeah, it really helped. And aside from that on the days when it happened it was a lot of fun, it helped time pass quicker than just ... because it gets boring just being in the computer room (FG5).*

The data reveal various ways in which music activity helped engaged participants to cope with detention. Firstly, music offered a distraction, energising participants and providing a sense of structured time that mitigated the boredom of each day.

*I: And what made you come to the music workshop?*

*D1: Out of boredom ... I live across from the place so I heard it from my room! I could hear the drums and the music and that, so that's the reason I went down (FG1).*

Music sessions provided a sense of structure to the week.

*D2: Yeah, we look towards Friday. We look towards the music (FG3)*

Some detainees reported that music activity helped them to feel that they were using their time productively.

*D1: If there's someone here in detention like this guy who loves singing... he will feel like it's not a waste of time, like 'I did something in my life, in detention'. Like something useful (FG3)*

*D1: ... in this place you need to keep yourself busy, it's an important part of keeping your mental health (FG2).*

*Secondly, music activities also provided for some a means of coping with negative thoughts and feelings, offering temporary relief from worries.*

*D1: ... being here is stressful, honestly for every single one of us, so at the end of your day when you're in your bed, some people cry, some can't sleep, a lot of stuff, so when someone is doing something that he loves it's kind of like his life outside is here. Part of it, like the other parts aren't here, he cannot move, he don't have any access to his life outside so when he finds something like playing music like he used to do outside, and he finds it here, he will be comforted (FG3)*

#### **Questionnaire feedback**

Taken my stress level down. We love you so much.

I feel different

Relaxing and was able to get my mind off things

It's somewhere you can shut off from the world and enjoy

This would really help detainees lift up their low self-esteem while being detained.

I felt so much happier in the group because this time made me forget what I'm here for

A welcome relief. It take my mind off being in detention

## **2. Mood and relaxation**

Music can affect mood, and focus group participants reported that the activity supported positive moods and relaxation, often engendering a sense of happiness in the moment. While most detainees found distraction in the immediate experience of music activity, others spoke of lasting effects.

*D2: ... it was an experience to savour, you know what I mean? An experience that's probably going to stick with me for a very long time, like he said, to stay positive in a place like this is very, very hard, trust me. So yeah, this is gonna be ... something I'm gonna tell people about, when I was in there ... there was something to look forward to and it helped me pass time like that. It was nice (FG5).*

#### **Questionnaire feedback**

It is really good and relaxing



Very relaxing, makes you feel good about yourself  
I'm very, very happy  
Not bad relaxes always  
Very nice  
Great session!!!  
I like the workshop  
Was a very lovely time singing with all the ladys!  
Where have they all my life?  
It was an entertaining activity  
Keep it up. Thank you.

### **3. Expression and freedom**

Some detainees enjoyed the expressive power of music activity:

*D2: So I write music and imagine a melody in my head, and then if I come here I can hear it live, and I can express myself live (FG3)*

In these accounts, expression is often linked with a sense of freedom:

*D4: It sets the soul free (FG4)*

The theme of expression was also recorded in artists' logs. In response to a question about whether participants were able to express themselves through music, artists reported that most participants took an active role in shaping the creative direction of the activity, and visibly improved in confidence during the activity.

**Postcard feedback**  
I was just free and felt good and the ladies were amazing before and in the music and after.

### **4. Social connection**

Many detainees wanted to socialise, and music activities provided a vehicle for this. Some detainees reported that the activity helped to build connections with others.

*D2: And I'm one of those people that I usually seclude myself, I like to keep myself to myself because I don't like people to disrespect me.... So the (music activities) brought me out ... when I started to do that music I let go and forgot about the fact that I'm actually shy (FG5).*

*D3: getting involved in the activities helped me ... 'cause in here it's obviously hard to speak to people, everyone's got their own situation going on and not many people even want to talk to you after their day ... in the end people you didn't used to speak to, you start talking to now because you know a little bit more about them than you did before so yeah (FG5).*

Detainees' accounts reveal the pleasure of making music with others and the value of making new friends.

*D2: Everybody was participating that time ... It was a nice gathering, everyone was pushing you to do something (FG1).*

Music was described as helping to overcome barriers between people.

*D1: Yes, it's like sport ... you know in this place you can find cultural barriers, language barriers, even religious barriers but with music you just put that to the side and go through because everyone wants to learn an instrument, well I mean a lot of people want it (FG2).*

As well as connecting with each other, detainees valued the opportunity to forge connections with non-detainees through music. Many appreciated the involvement of IRC staff in activities.

*D3: The whole thing was nice, to have everybody coming together, the staff and that (FG3).*

*D3: It was good. Singing all together, talking to each other all together, respect each other (FG4).*

*D3: Yeah I never knew he (officer) could play the drums.*

*D4: Yeah, he's fantastic! (FG5)*

The visits by MID artists and staff were welcomed as a further connection with the outside world.

*D4: You're normally used to seeing the same faces everyday so when we meet some people from outside you feel much better. Like we have seen someone from the outside, like you guys came today (FG1)*

Likewise, the experience of working with community participants also created experiences of meaningful connection.

*D4: Yeah it was nice you know, you speak to someone and hear his story ... that was quite emotional because for me ... so I also wrote something relating to that as well. I didn't get to meet him one on one but sharing a common interest and a common goal, that made it real. It made it a lot more fun ... working with a faceless person and still being able to communicate and make good music, yeah it was quite nice (FG5).*

#### **Postcard feedback**

The collaboration of the music was fabulous, great vibes, good diversity atmosphere

I like it. I feel good. I feel happiness here is like my family

Music & new friends/New people + happy people

Enjoyed singing with others

## 5. Stigma

Stigma strongly affects detention environments. The music activity offered an opportunity for some detainees to feel that they were challenging stigma and addressing unhelpful stereotypes by showing that they could work cooperatively to create something worthwhile.

*D3: They can see that deep down inside we're good people, it doesn't matter what it says on paper, how they're judging us... At least they can see "these people do have a good side to them and they can come together at the right time and make something nice" (FG4)*  
*D4: Just because we're here, being detained for immigration matters, it doesn't mean we're not normal human beings like everybody else. We can do things. ... So I felt proud that they saw what we're capable of, saw that we can be civil, amicable, and perform, which we did do. So it was a good day (FG4).*

Some detainees felt awkward about how their music activity might be viewed by the outside world. They were concerned about being portrayed as having fun and worried that this might undermine them by minimising the difficulties of being in detention.

*D2: ... they're going to think "oh, they're turning into rock stars in detention". You know what I mean? (FG3).*

## 6. Learning and development

Some detainees were keen to have fun and socialise, reported by IRC staff as having too much on their minds to want to learn, and needing simply to enjoy music for its entertainment value.

Others were motivated a stronger desire to learn and make music.

*D4: I've always wanted to learn how to play the guitar, so they told me they were going to teach me guitar lessons, so I was interested (FG1).*

Detainees who were more experienced musicians were able to reconnect with skills through facilitated music activities such as songwriting.

*D1: It helped me to rediscover my writing skills... it had been a very long time that I had ever wrote music, that I had ever wrote lyrics, you know, so when we started at first I just used to do freestyles you know, but when they started giving me topics to write to it kind of brought that out back in me, and ever since then I've been trying to write just a little bit of bars (FG5)*

Activities such as improvisation and songwriting also provided positive challenges.

*D1: ... there were a lot of people and everyone was doing their own thing and I actually just went there to listen to it, it was just the guy who put me on the spot and I had to say something!... So it was just a spur of the moment thing and that's my first time doing it so it was nice (FG1)*

### Postcard feedback

Amazing start of my music life! This class made me curious about learning music. Thank you very much for the lesson and your patience

I've always wanted to play guitar, but until today, I hadn't the opportunity to do so. But today I

got a chance to learn some little things, but very special ones, and I liked it very much. It's like starting to make a dream come true. Thank you

I really love and enjoy today what our music teacher played and really easy to learn and understand what he teaches us. I would love to learn from him.

## 7. Identities

Beyond distraction, the notion of identity emerged from some detainee accounts as the basis for a deeper engagement with music activity. Many participants found their general sense of identity diminished in the detention environment, where they are cut off from usual activities, roles and relationships. MID's delivery offered a point of connection, affirming aspects of personal and cultural identity.

### Postcard feedback

Good the teacher lets me write the words in Chinese.

Because I miss my family and I was singing to my husband. I really enjoyed it.

More specifically, music activities enabled musicians and non-musicians to engage reflexively with the role of music in their lives. This was particularly apparent for detainees who were strongly identified with music.

*D1: I'm outside having my freedom, my house and everything, and I do music and everything but here I don't have that stuff but if I've got music it's an important part of my life and I've got it here so that's really positive (FG3).*

For these detainees, music activities enabled them to use their skills and have their experiences and identities affirmed by others.

*D2: I don't think a lot of people knew I was into music. But after that day I was able to come out and actually do... (FG5).*

For those with previous musical experience, music activity reopened possibilities, such as the opportunity to create and record new material.

*D4: Before I got into all this mess I had just one track, and I've been doing music since 2001, but I had just one track ... Yeah, that's probably going to boost a little bit of my morale too, like this is actually something I did (FG5).*

Music activities also enabled detainees to share and develop their skills. As a follow on activity, one detainee was encouraged to offer guitar lessons to other detainees.

*D1: Well they always see me with the guitar but after that they were always saying "ah, you are good, you are good!" and "I want to learn how to play" so since a lot of people have been asking me for that I came up with this idea (FG2)*

While music activities had meaning for detainees who strongly identified with music, they also created opportunities for detainees who had relatively little experience of music to explore their creativity.

*D2: I used to do this music just for the fun of it... but coming in here, ... whenever I did this lyric stuff everybody was like yeah, that's nice, that's nice ... So I'm thinking about it and think yeah I might as well just take it a little bit more serious ... you guys come in and actually give me a boost, yeah I can actually take it out there and see what happens (FG5)*

MID's delivery therefore opened future possibilities for some detainees.

*D2: I'd like to maybe one day be with you guys because I love music and maybe learn from you and you guys might learn from me, you never know, because you're still learning, and maybe we could do something together to help other people. Maybe not in this detention centre but if there's a charity or anything, I'd help with anything (FG2)*

Hence MID's delivery supported existing musical identities and created space for emergent ones, engendering hope in what could be a despairing situation.

*D3: For me I want to do something like community work and that, personally I see myself as a people's people, like bringing people together and being involved with that obviously made me think that, you know what, I can do this. So yeah, it really made a big difference (FG5)*

## **2.4 The impact of music activity on detainees: Summary of key findings**

Detainees generally attend a small number of music sessions. The inconsistent nature of attendance means that collecting quantitative pre and post-test data in detention settings is challenging. However, some detainees were asked retrospectively how they felt at the beginning and at the end of some sessions. The data are insufficient to be able to attribute changes directly to the programme or its specific attributes, but the results show that participants generally enjoy music activity and report that it has a positive effect on their mood. Music activity may support coping and wellbeing by promoting learning, engagement and constructive social activity.

This finding is supported by qualitative data drawn from a broad range of detainees. The richest data are drawn from participants who were motivated to attend and had positive experiences. These suggest that music activity helped engaged detainees to cope with detention by providing distraction, relaxation and a sense of structured time, offering a means of dealing with negative thoughts and feelings, and providing temporary relief from worries. Some detainees spoke of lasting effects of music activity on mood. Engaged detainees enjoyed the expressive power of music activity, from which they gained a sense of freedom as well as the opportunity to connect with others and make friends. Music activity helped some participants to feel that they were challenging the stigma that surrounds detention, as well as learning new skills and affirming identities diminished by detention. Some detainees gained a strong sense of future possibilities and hope from their involvement in music activity.

## 3 The impact of music activity on community participants

### 3.1 Introduction

Community exchange projects involve groups of detainees working in collaboration with community groups to create and record music. The groups work together via the medium of musical messages that are transmitted by MID artists, although the groups do not actually meet. This review includes evaluation data from four community exchange projects, three of which took place in mental health settings during 2017, with the fourth being a youth project. They were evaluated using questionnaires and focus groups. The data review includes questionnaire responses from 17 people who took part in community exchange projects in mental health settings and transcripts from two focus groups with 10 participants following a youth project.

### 3.2 Community participants' responses to music activity: Quantitative data

In the projects in mental health settings, community participants' responses were elicited using a brief questionnaire. This is similar to that used with detainees and explores participants' views about the activity, with additional questions about their attitudes to immigration. The responses and tables are presented in Appendix 1. Key findings from the questionnaires are as follows:

1. The majority of community participants (11/17) attended between two and four sessions (Table 7).
2. Over three quarters rated the sessions as 'very good', the remainder rating them, 'good' (Table 8).
3. Over three quarters reported that the workshop 'made me feel a lot better', the remainder reporting that participation 'made me feel better' (Table 9).
4. Over three quarters of community participants reported that the activity helped them make friends, meet new people, relax and learn something new. Over half reported that the activity helped them make a difference, learn more about immigration detention, 'feel like someone cares', 'feel good about myself', remember good things, create something good, 'make good use of my time', and think about or express anxieties (Table 10).
5. The majority (11/16) of participants stated that the activity had increased their understanding of IRCs and detainees 'a lot' or 'very much' (Table 11).
6. The majority (10/16) stated that the activity had increased their understanding of the experiences and feelings of detainees 'a lot' or 'very much'.
7. The majority (12/16) stated that the project had affected their attitudes towards detainees in the community 'a lot' or 'very much' (Table 13).
8. The majority (12/16) stated that the project had affected the way they think about immigration in the UK 'a lot' or 'very much' (Table 14).

### **3.3 Community participants' responses to music activity: focus groups with young people**

This section reviews transcripts from two focus groups involving 10 young people who participated in community exchange projects in 2016. Music activities included singing, drumming, playing, rapping. Participants also took part in drama and art activities.

Focus groups were facilitated by MID staff working closely with teachers and youth workers. The community participants were not always vocal during focus groups, giving brief comments about their experiences and views.

Five themes emerged in relation to community participants' experiences of the project.

1. Enjoyment
2. Learning and achievement
3. Learning about detention
4. Connection and empathy
5. Power of music

#### **1. Enjoyment**

Focus group participants generally enjoyed the activities, despite the fact that some had experienced negative responses from peers for attending.

*P4: So they were like 'oh are you going?' and I was like 'yeah' and they were basically like taking the piss out of me at first, but I came along and I really liked it (FG1)*

They enjoyed laughing and joking during the music sessions and they also enjoyed being able to experiment and try out different activities. They often described the project as 'good,' but their accounts also reveal challenges. For example, some young participants were sensitive to the fact that certain activities made them feel like children:

*P2: Sitting there with the drum I felt like a bit in primary school, smacking the drum like (FG1)*

#### **2. Learning and achievement**

Young people also valued learning and achieving goals.

*P6: I think we probably wouldn't have got as much done, I think because we had something we were working towards, we had a goal, it pushed us to work that much harder (FG1).*

*P1: Well like, I've done a little little bit of stuff, but I've always wanted to do it and they kind of said 'stop sittin on your arse and do it!' (FG1)*

The project gave some young people an opportunity to voice and discuss expectations and aspirations.

*P2: It's gonna spread all round the world innit. We'll be on TV, next, turn it on, and they're just blasting out our tunes. It's actually on BBC news, like this mixtape went worldwide today after 6 men bought it back from Syria (FG1).*

### **3. Learning about detention**

Most of the young people had little awareness of immigration detention prior to taking part in the project. Their comments highlighted the general invisibility of the detention system:

*P1: It's weird to think that I live a couple of miles away from it but I don't even know it's there (FG1)*

*P6: Well it was quite eye opening to hear about people being in detention centres, how it work and stuff, I wasn't really aware of that before (FG1)*

Some participants reported difficulties in relating to detainees, who were generally older than themselves. While some thought that the project would be better if the age gap were smaller, others were able to relate to detainees, describing them as 'ordinary people like us'.

*P1: Yeah I mean you like look at people on YouTube and stuff, and they're from England and they're having rap battles and stuff and it's quite good fun, jokin' around and having a laugh and then they were doing exactly that but in a different language. And you kind of understand that they're jokin' around and dissin' each other in a nice kind of way, but it makes you think that they're just like us. They're not any different (FG1)*

From this perspective, detention was seen a harsh and detainees viewed as unlucky.

*P1: It's a bit harsh on them because they're just like normal people like all of us they're just the unlucky ones that didn't have the right background where they lived, so they have to be sent back to their country or put in detention (FG2).*

Although young community participants were initially reticent in focus group discussions, as the discussion went on some started to ask questions as they tried to imagine life in detention. They asked about meal times, routines, family visits, and about what happens to child migrants and children of detainees. One young participant tried to imagine what it would be like to be deported following detention:

*P2: It's very good for the people as well, cos like if you were born here, going back to your country is quite hard to go back because you're not really there a lot, or you've not seen there, so you don't know a lot, it's like a baby starting from the bottom (FG2)*

Comparing themselves to detainees helped some young people to reflect on their own life goals:

*P2: Quite like, it took me time to think, cos we're very privileged, we're not in that kinda situation, so I have to take my life more seriously, and do stuff what I wanna do before it's late (FG2).*

### **4. Connection and empathy**

Young people were able to find points of connection with detainees. For example, several of the young people were experiencing difficulties in their lives and they seemed to value the



opportunity that the project gave to connect and empathise with people who were also experiencing difficulties.

*P1: Yeah, it's good to come here and have people to talk to cos at school, the counsellors, I'm not saying they're shit but they're not understanding in the same way some other people are. Especially when you've got people who are in a similar situation as you, like they haven't got perfect lives either, and it's nice to talk to, exchange ideas and see what's going on (FG1)*

Some participants felt a sense of connection with detainees through the exchange activities.

*P1: Yeah that was really cool, like they're hearing exactly what I'm saying, I can't go in there and walk straight in and be like 'Hi guys, I'm X, nice to meet you' but it's something special that you feel, that they're actually listening to what you're making it's just a really good feeling (FG1).*

They also appreciated the support they got from detainees during the project:

*P6: Well I don't really know how they'd react, like whether they liked it or not but it was quite nice that they were telling us to keep our heads up, even though they were the ones in like a more difficult situation (FG1).*

### **5. Power of music**

Some participants seemed aware of the power of music as a vehicle for creating supportive connections:

*P1: Yeah, cos it's not like, if I said to you, 'hi my name's X, and I'm supporting your cause', it's different if you have a beat to it as well, and do some stuff with it (FG1).*

### **3.4 The impact of music activity on community participants: Summary of key findings**

Participants generally attended a small number of sessions, and there is an insufficient volume of quantitative data to be able to draw firm conclusions. However, those who completed questionnaires enjoyed the music activity and reported that this had a positive effect on their mood. The majority also reported positive aspects regarding learning and socialising. Most respondents reported that they had learnt about immigration, the detention system and the experiences of detainees as a result of the music activity.

These findings are reinforced by qualitative data, drawn from participants who were motivated to attend. Although these young community participants were not always expansive in focus group discussions, they reported that they enjoyed having fun, and valued learning about music and setting creative goals. Most of the young people had little awareness of immigration detention prior to taking part in the project. They demonstrated curiosity about the lives of detainees, and used what they learned to reflect on their own lives. Despite the age gap, they found points of connection with detainees, who they saw as in some ways as struggling like them. They gained support from detainees even though they didn't meet them, and they stressed the power of music as a vehicle for creating supportive connections.

## 4 Staff and stakeholder accounts of MID delivery

### 4.1 Introduction

Staff and stakeholder accounts of MID's activities are evaluated using interviews undertaken by MID staff. These are conducted with the aid of a topic guide and are recorded and transcribed, with verbal consent from participants. The review includes data from eight interviews: four with IRC staff, two with MID musicians, and two with community exchange partners. Interviews were selected to reflect different roles, settings and time frames. IRC staff interviewed included a head of regimes as well as those involved in delivering activities. Interviewees were drawn from three different detention centres and spanned 2014 to 2017.

Some interviews followed an easy conversational style, while others seemed to stick more rigidly to the topic guide. Interviews seemed to flow best when they allowed the interviewee to shape the discussion and explored the interviewee's own standpoint. Attempts to steer discussions with staff and musicians towards impacts on detainees, such as changes in mood, improvements in skill and confidence, were less successful, with more than one respondent stating that such questions were difficult for them to answer and that it would be better to ask the detainees themselves. Nevertheless, the interviews with staff, musicians and community partners yield rich data on delivery impacts and processes.

Themes from these interviews with stakeholders were grouped into the following categories: staff experiences of MID activities, factors affecting their delivery, institutional imperatives and artistic quality.

### 4.2 Stakeholder accounts of MID delivery.

Interview data suggest that generally, stakeholders and musicians enjoyed their involvement in the sessions. Within this category there were four themes:

1. Learning and development
2. Relationships and connections
3. Engaging participants
4. Impact on the detention environment

#### 1. Learning and development

IRC music teachers spoke positively about the opportunities that MID activities offer to them.

*... I'm not a singer so I have to push myself outside my comfort zone to sing ... That's my area of development...*

*... these projects help me as much as they help the detainees because I get to pick up ideas and songs and things from other cultures that I can then use in my teaching.*

MID musicians also identified benefits in terms of their own learning and development, both as facilitators and musicians:

*It was a good experience and it helped me. It confirmed some things ... if you are open to people and ... they know that you don't judge ... then it's much easier to find the*

*common link ... yeah, it was good for me as a musician I had the opportunity to explore different ways of arranging things or making the balance work as a community. Definitely I learnt loads of stuff (M2).*

Data from a practice forum provides further feedback from 51 musicians who suggested areas for future development including: sharing work, exploring digital music, delivering projects of longer duration (5 weeks), techniques for workshop facilitation, dealing with challenges when running workshops, working with non-English speakers, and cultural awareness.

## **2. Relationships and connections**

MID musicians enjoyed the opportunity to meet diverse range of people through their contact with detainees and community participants. They reported that they formed meaningful relationships and were sometimes sad when projects came to an end:

*When it finished I felt sad... But I feel like this with most projects if they last for more than two or three weeks because you get to know the people involved and create and develop relationships (M2)*

Musicians also enjoyed seeing a sense of connection develop between detainees and community participants.

*There was definitely a sense of solidarity. Because I think both felt like they had something in common. There was this unrest in both groups, for different reasons but that was a link that brought these two groups together (M2).*

Relationships and connectivity were also mentioned by community partners. In a project for adults with visual impairments, the theme of empathy was invoked by a partner who observed that participants seemed able to connect with detainees because of challenges, such as social isolation, that they themselves experienced.

## **3. Engaging participants**

Interviewees observed different levels of engagement among participants, with a tension between active and passive forms of engagement. For some IRC staff, the key was keeping detainees occupied.

*I'm ... interested in kind of how we can have a busy session, how we can keep as many different types of characters busy as possible. And I think because you send different musicians it helps, different nationalities ... and so on (Head of Regimes).*

MID musicians were keen to facilitate active engagement from participants. The artists logs reveal that a proportion of participants leave before the end of each session and that approximately 65% of participants are active contributors. This seems relatively high given the detention environment in which there are frequent external distractions in the form of visits and phone calls and in which detainees may often be pre-occupied, for example with their immigration concerns.

Some IRC staff observed that, while some detainees were keen to engage and learn, others preferred to view the sessions as a form of entertainment.

*... A lot of the guys here can ... stressed out and they don't want to try to learn something new ... I've talked to them afterwards and said: why didn't you get*

*involved? And they've said: Nah, I've got enough going on, I just want to enjoy the music (Head of Regimes)*

Music leaders found it rewarding when they observed participants being more engaged and taking control of the process as time went by:

*We'd start off the first session with "we're gonna write a song" and most people sort of go "Mm really?". And then by like session three everyone's really got into it and is taking it really seriously. And then by the end everyone's kind of really vocal, you know, literally, like with their singing and kind of taking control of the shape of the music and what sections should go where and who's gonna do what (M1).*

Community partners also spoke about engagement challenges. For example, there were difficulties in engaging children in regular music activity, especially where participants were living in challenging circumstances. Attendance at projects involving children was also affected by external circumstances, such as the timing of school holidays. Attention spans were short and so short bursts of activity seemed to work best.

#### **4. Impact on the detention environment**

IRC staff commented on the way in which MID activities contributed positively to the detention environment.

*It sort of brightens up the room when everyone starts singing (music teacher)*

*... they might not speak the same language but they'll have a bit of banter say in the dining room queue and they'll say, whatever their nationality is: hey Portugal, you were good on the drum! And then they never speak again apart from the drum thing! So you know it breaks down those kind of barriers (Head of Regimes).*

#### **4.3 Stakeholder accounts: Summary of key findings**

Qualitative data from IRC staff, musicians and community exchange partners provide feedback on MID delivery. IRC staff commented on the way in which MID activities contributed positively to the detention environment. Music leaders spoke positively about the opportunities for learning and development as well as connecting with diverse participants that they gained by being involved with MID. Community partners spoke positively about the connections forged between detainees and participants.

Project challenges were also identified, including managing sessions where participants are from diverse backgrounds, bring diverse skills and experiences and seek different levels of engagement.

## 5 Mediators of delivery impacts

### 5.1 Introduction

As well as identifying delivery impacts, the data review has identified a range of factors that mediate positive or negative impacts from music activity. Seven themes emerged from the accounts of detainees, community participants, staff and stakeholders.

1. Time and resources
2. Institutional rules, roles and imperatives
3. The experience of detention
4. Detainees: demographic and cultural diversity
5. Musical experiences, identities and roles
6. Project management: information and communication
7. Music leader attributes

### 5.2 Mediating factors: Qualitative data from detainees, participants, staff and stakeholders.

#### 1. Time and resources

In the detention environment, time and resources for music activity were limited, and several detainees expressed a desire for more frequent music sessions.

#### Questionnaire feedback

We need more time to study

I wish it happen every day

We want a new mic please, Thank you

The transient nature of detention environments meant that music activities that may have benefited from longer duration, such as preparation for performances and recordings, needed to be compressed over a few sessions. Detainees often commented that it took time for people to get into the groove during sessions, yet facilitators needed to lead people towards specific goals in a tight timeframe, creating challenges for even the most engaged detainees. When it came to recording, some participants felt rushed and therefore unable to come up with ideas or give their best.

*D1: There's not enough time.... if they'd give us earlier notice.*

*D2: Some people didn't know.*

*D3: I didn't know what was going on, I just got told saying, "Do you want to perform?" I was like, "Alright then." (FG4)*

Staff and stakeholder accounts acknowledge that delivering sustained programmes in environments where there is high turnover is challenging. Managing fluctuating attendance was difficult for music leaders.

*...attendance (was)... up and down ... only... one detainee that came to four or five of the sessions ... so there was less of a sort of continual exchange (M1)*

Feedback from IRC staff suggests that brief one-off sessions did not always allow enough sufficient time for skills and relationships to develop. Community partners also commented that participants may have needed more time to fully engage with the creative process.

Resources for music activity were often limited in the detention environment and several detainees made comments about the lack of availability of resources. Resource challenges included availability of rehearsal space and equipment. Some detainees questioned why musical instruments could not be made available for practice between sessions.

*D1: Like maybe each day there could be two hours for guitar, two hours for drum and then we have the instruments we need to do the Friday sessions, so that would be great.*

*D3: ... during the week we've got nothing to do here but that's the time we could use to learn and then on Friday we could come in and play what we've learnt (FG4)*

Detainees also commented that the quality of equipment used for creating, performing and recording music was poor.

*D3: the equipment could be better yeah? (FG5)*

#### **Postcard feedback**

Need more classes as I love to learn guitar.

I would like it to be three or four times a week so that one can have enough time to learn something

Need more time - it's really short. By the time we come up with a song the time is gone.

Would have been nicer if there was a cam-corder where you raise your opinion through the cam-corder

## **2. Institutional rules, roles and imperatives**

Within detention environments, institutional rules, roles and routines affected music delivery in several ways. Routine operational requirements included rules about what could be brought on site, which seemed to change according to who was on duty:

*.... the last session we weren't allowed anything we could record on. So no laptop... And we didn't do any recording in the final session... the rules can be (different) depending ... on who's there. You'd think they would be the same all the time... (M1).*

Institutional rules also imposed limits on expression, since there was a general requirement not to use language or forms that were offensive or otherwise deemed inappropriate by the authorities. Occasionally this influenced music sessions:

*D1: So, as a result of that we had to rearrange the lyrics and somehow put 'Christmas' in there to make it... stick to the theme ... The word 'prison' - is that anything new in Britain?*

*D2: Yeah, I'm agreeing with what he's saying because obviously they're saying to us that we have to put our own input into it, and then when we did put our own input into it, it was deemed not suitable.... It's not a prison, but it is like prison because you're sort of locked up, you're not free, you know what I mean? (FG4)*

In the detention environment, issues such as security take priority over recreation and education. As a consequence, when there were staffing shortages music was often the first thing to be cancelled:

*So if we're really short... then the Regimes and Activities department always take the hit because they'll always close the sports halls over say the induction unit or a residential block and the operational requirements mean that having fun is always going to get cut before procedures.... (Head of Regimes).*

Regular staff were familiar with MID's requirements, but sometimes agency staff were needed and they were unfamiliar with supporting music sessions. Detainees were aware of operational challenges:

*D4: Yeah, you were asking how we can make this better, well you have to communicate with the staff who are going to be here with us all of the time and at the same time their shifts have been cut, they have to be taken to somewhere else, so if sometimes we come here they're not here and they've been moved to another room (FG3).*

In detention environments, IRC officers act as key gatekeepers: they are required to be present at sessions and escort musicians; and MID staff also rely on them to convey information about activities between visits and encourage detainees to attend. While some IRC officers were very supportive of the activities, they were also balancing many priorities, including detainees' access to other popular activities such as sport and TV. Hence music delivery required planning and scheduling by IRC staff.

*I mean we still get people complain when you come in sometimes because we've got to turn the big (TV) screen off... (Head of Regimes).*

Staff roles and attitudes had a significant effect on delivery. While most staff seemed supportive of MID's activities, not all were keen to be involved:

*I don't think most officers it's their cup of tea. I am sort of the weird one! I was talking to my colleague... when I said I was gonna do music you could see the relief (Activities Coordinator).*

Musicians were keenly aware of these variations in staff responses.

*Sometimes they're pretty good and quite positive and helpful, and other times they just want to go home... When you get a really good officer, when you get someone who actually joins in and smiles the whole time that's amazing, but obviously you*

*don't expect that from everyone. They might not have the confidence to do it or whatever, but just basic civil friendliness goes a long long way (M1).*

For IRC staff, working with external organisations could present additional challenges, including managing the expectations and behaviours.

*Sometimes we have had difficulties in the past when organizations... they're trying their best to create sponsorship ... for themselves so they'll try and promote the organization via us, so they'll try and get video cameras in and recording detainees saying positive things about the place ... but ... we're not really interested, we just want to keep the detainees happy.... and it's actually a clearance level above me so then I have to go away and speak to my bosses... I'd rather be doing other things (Head of Regimes).*

The fact that MID has an established relationship with IRCs was viewed as an advantage and this familiarity meant that such problems could be avoided:

*I'm content... it's fairly simple to organize, you don't need much kit, you send familiar faces which means they understand the time it takes to book you in, they understand about the documents you have to bring... for simplicity, that's why MID are good because they've got that background and they've got all the proof they've been here before... once organizations are set up here I quite like using them again (Head of Regimes)*

### **3. The experience of detention**

Detainees are cut off from their families, roles and routine activities, often having experienced recent traumatic circumstances. The experience of detention further diminishes identities and can engender boredom as well as stress and worry. The data indicate a general sense that there was too much time to kill in detention, and not enough to do in between music sessions.

While some detainees waited keenly for music sessions, the challenges of detention are not conducive to sustained creativity and collaboration. Detainees' engagement was affected in various ways. Attendance at sessions was inconsistent, with participants often missing music sessions due to legal and other appointments. Some detainees were too preoccupied with immigration issues to engage fully with the activities:

*D4: [translates for another detainee] He says he will definitely come to guitar lesson but you have to give him money and visa! (FG1).*

#### **Postcard feedback**

Had to leave early because of legal appointment

Music leaders also needed to respond to the changing needs of new people arriving and it wasn't always possible to include everyone in more focused activities.

*D1: So I didn't even get time to do my own lyrics. These lot did because they were in there before me. I came after and just found my space (FG4)*

Detainees may feel stigmatised, and some detainees felt awkward about how their music activity might be viewed by the outside world. They expressed concern that they would be portrayed as



having fun and that this might undermine them by minimising the difficulties of being in detention.

*D2: ... they're going to think "oh, they're turning into rock stars in detention". You know what I mean? (FG3).*

#### **4. Detainees: demographic and cultural diversity.**

Detainees came from diverse demographic and cultural backgrounds: age, ethnicity and gender affected delivery. For example, younger detainees and those who had spent time growing up in the UK sometimes seemed embarrassed to take part in some activities:

*... people who ... are maybe a bit older and... haven't spent much time in the UK ... they seem a lot more willing to engage and talk about their stories and their backgrounds... (Head of Regimes).*

*.. when you have young boys... they felt a bit conscious about what they're doing and how their friends will take it... it's also a cultural thing. And an age thing... When you are 20, 21, you need to look cool... (M1).*

For some detainees, English was a first language, but this was not the case for many. Language was often mentioned as a potential barrier to participation, but detainees also appreciated being encouraged to express themselves in their own language:

*D3: they're singing their own language. They don't sing in English. Everywhere they come from, they're singing their own language ...*

*D4: Respect each other. Everyone is good.*

Although not everyone could understand the words that were being sung, most detainees could relate to the rhythms being played:

*D3: In beginning most people didn't understand it. But when they come in, once they've been there for 20 minutes... once their friends were telling them about it as well, like you get to sing your own country's song or whatever, like before the end I could see everybody was getting involved, you know like usually the room used to be packed, from the front to the back, 'cause obviously you had Afghanistan boys coming in and singing their music, you had Pakistani, Indian, basically it was very good so it was enjoyable, even if you can't understand the words you can relate to the beats and the instruments as well, so yeah, in the end everyone got to understand it (FG5)*

There was a sense that music, particularly singing, can transcend linguistic divisions:

*D4: If you ask me, music is like the language that everyone speaks, you know what I mean? ... everybody sings, even though it might be in different languages, but because it's music, it brings everybody together so it causes a kind of integration between everybody (FG5)*

In summary, the sensitive management of diversity was needed to enable participants to contribute in a meaningful way.

## 5. Musical experiences, identities and roles

In addition to diverse cultural backgrounds and language differences, diverse musical experiences and identities mediated delivery impacts in various ways. Little is known about the views of detainees who chose not to take part in music workshops. Participants who joined the sessions varied widely in musical skill and experience. These variations were relatively easily accommodated during activities such as jamming, and some detainees simply enjoyed the entertainment value of the music. Having more ambitious artistic goals and focus in the form of recording a CD was a strong motivating factor that helped musicians to engage detainees in rather chaotic environments.

*... everybody was very keen and happy to do that ... to be focused and engaged and work with the best behaviour... They really wanted to come up with a CD and record some music (M2)*

When it came to more focused rehearsals and recordings, a division of labour emerged, and even some detainees who were relatively capable musically were unable to contribute because of the timing and pacing of the activity. More than one detainee commented that they were 'just' a backing singer:

*D4: When we first started I was helping with the chairs, then I went away, so I didn't get a specific role to play in it. Like... the other guy was rapping. Me, I was just singing with X and Y.*

Such comments were gently challenged by MID staff, who sought to emphasise the value of all the different elements that contribute to the final output. Nevertheless, the accounts of staff and stakeholders suggest that managing diverse roles, needs and expectations was a challenge. Musicians were aware of the tension between offering an open access group and leading a group towards progressive achievements.

*Because the group was small... everybody has a specific role. Newcomers, they didn't always fit... if some new person comes in, yes, it will be difficult to find something to do. Not impossible, but it might upset the balance ... you have to see what they bring in... and then see how you can take those skills, how you can make them work with the rest of the group. So if you have 2 drummers, for example, it's difficult.... But you can just add flavours to the already-existing piece... or an extra vocal line or some backing vocals (M2).*

In one scenario, a member of IRC staff had to explain to detainees that they may not access resources in the music room for personal practice while MID group activities were going on. Staff were aware of the need to head off developments such as the formation of splinter groups and cliques that might generate tension between detainees.

For detainees with more established musical identities, there were clear benefits of engagement, but not in every case. While the opportunity to be seen and acknowledged as musicians had a restorative effect for some, but musicianship could be a barrier for those who lamented their lost status and livelihoods. For these detainees, music activities in detention were an unhappy reminder of their disrupted careers and identities:

*D2: Fifteen thousand people usually stand in front of me when I'm singing... I'm a professional... I'm just now in Bollywood with Punjabi songs, in the movie, singing a*

*track. I've got two or three songs releasing next month but I'm here now so I can't. We made one video song, but after two days they arrested me and bring me here (FG4).*

## **6. Project organisation and management**

Project issues, including programme planning, delivery models, information and communication, were all reported to affect delivery. Information about the activities in IRCs was provided to detainees via posters and through word of mouth via IRC staff and peers. More than one detainee commented that they hadn't seen the posters advertising the sessions:

*D1: I just turned up and they were here - and then later I found the poster! ... Well the thing is it wasn't advertised, there was a poster on a board but I think there are plenty of people who like music but they never hear about it, because for me, I came by accident, I didn't even see the posters.... (FG3).*

Word of mouth and encouraging ad hoc attendance seemed to be a more effective means of communicating about the sessions, but this limited opportunities for MID staff to discuss the programme with participants. Some detainees indicated that they hadn't understood expectations or known what to expect at various stages of activity:

*D1: Yeah, because on the advertisement, on the poster, when they told people that some professional singers are coming.... I assume that they are coming to perform to us... So it was a bit misleading, to be honest... I didn't realise what was going on. ... I didn't really know there was something to perform and create together.*

Some detainees got to the end of a programme leading to a final CD recording session and didn't know whether their work had been included in the final output.

Communication issues also affected delivery of community exchange projects. One community partner described an instance where some participants were confused about expectations and needed to work at a slower pace with expectations made clearer at the start.

Communication and team working between MID musicians and IRC staff was also discussed, one area that could be enhanced is that of ensuring continuity for detainees between MID visits.

*I think perhaps there could be a bit of back-and-forth between me and whoever's running the workshop, so we can discuss even just some chord sequences or just ideas that I can put forward so that my guys are ready (IRC music teacher).*

Information and communication issues also arose in relation to evaluation. One detainee wanted to know what would happen with the information that was being collected, questioning whether this would benefit detainees.

*D4: What are you actually going to do for the centre here?*

*I: What are we going to do?*

*D4: Yeah, what are you going to do for us if we give you information? (FG3).*

## 7. Music leader attributes

Music leader attributes emerged as a key mediating factor in the accounts of community participants. The facilitator skill set, which includes musical and general facilitation skills, was described by musicians. Musical elements included good practical musicianship, knowledge of music genres and history, and respect for different musical cultures. Being musically literate was viewed as offering a way of overcoming differences in language and culture. Other elements include being friendly, kind and relaxed, being able to work in a supportive way with people who may have communication difficulties or feel intimidated by the process, and offering sensitive encouragement.

*... getting the balance between knowing when to push people and when to stop and let them just not do something cos they don't want to do it. So like knowing the difference between being encouraging and being pushy, knowing how to not make people feel put on the spot (M1).*

Detainees and participants valued these qualities of music leaders, who were described as friendly, 'cool', professional, inspiring, well organised and skilled.

*D2: ... (musicians) being there actually inspired people to learn more and be shown the things they don't know how to do... encouraged them to do more and that actually helped people as well, and you guys have a good spirit, you know laughing, teaching and smiling, I think it's a good thing so I would say keep it up (FG2)*

When working with younger participants, it was important that music leaders could relate to young people without talking down to them.

*P1: They were really friendly as well, and that makes you feel more welcome as well (Community Exchange FG1)*

It was also important that music leaders adopted genres and styles that participants could relate to. Some young participants made favourable comparisons between MID delivery and music lessons in school.

*P4: Cos, in school they're all about here's a piano... they don't say oh this is the other side of music. Here's a posh classical ... no-one wants that, well some people do, but some people like other kinds of music, that's why I never really felt like at school I got music (FG1).*

Teaching skills were an important part of the music leader skill set.

*D4: ... the way he was teaching us, like was really easy way he was teaching. So just two basic steps, I still remember those ones (FG1)*

However, didactic and highly structured approaches were unlikely to work in detention environments. The ability to work flexibly was important to musicians.

*... we'd never go "I'll email you with a plan of what we're gonna do" because it just doesn't work like that. It's impossible. So I think we were just kind of open, really positive and happy to give each other space when you lead different bits of it. It all happens naturally and you don't have to plan (M1).*

Another aspect was being participant centred and able to facilitate creative processes in others. One community partner commented that it was difficult for observers to tell whether the participants or the musicians were driving the creation of materials. However, musicians seemed aware of the need to empower participants.

*The ability to work with lyrics but without actually writing anything yourself, but to help people write their own. And not to use it as a chance to kind of show off yourself, and try and write something... you know, don't have the ambition to write something that's really amazing that you can take ownership of, because it's about allowing everybody to contribute to something (M1).*

Empowering approaches were illustrated in the accounts of younger participants, who needed to feel that they had a degree of choice and a sense of control during activities.

*P4: Yeh, it was different, because if it were to be done in school, they would focus on one particular bit of it, but while we were here we could choose what you wanted to do (FG2)*

*P5: He'd give us something to do, and if we didn't wanna do it, he'd give us another option. Like, we weren't just there to play instruments (FG1)*

*P3: We wrote that song, he was like 'yeah, it's really good', this that the other and then the next session he was like 'we're gonna change this this and this'... He didn't ask us if it was okay though. It was just kind of like 'we're changing this this and this.' (FG1)*

Beyond this, music leader attributes include aspects such as ethnicity and gender, which can affect delivery in subtle ways.

*Musician: And X kept saying that a lot of people were listening or responding more to my orders, or my instructions more than him, just because I was a girl.*

*D1: Yes, of course, exactly. For sure they were more respectful on the second day since you came.*

#### **Postcard feedback**

Music In Detention is always organised. They well prepared and have objectives. They played the music with taste and present dialogue skills. They deserve credit for their presentation.

As usual they were always well organised and a reasonable amount of professionalism.

I like the music teacher, she was very kind and helpful.

### **5.3 Mediating factors: Summary of key themes**

As well as identifying delivery impacts, this data review has identified mediating factors that influence outcomes. Limited time and resources for music activity, together with the transient nature of detention environments meant that music activities created pressures for participants and music leaders. Many detainees expressed a desire for more music provision and better quality equipment to support sessions.

Institutional imperatives, including operational requirements, scheduling, rules and security procedures influenced delivery, as did staffing levels. Within detention environments, IRC staff were key gatekeepers with power to influence delivery. While they were generally supportive, they also needed to balance competing priorities. The familiarity of MID with operational procedures was seen as an advantage by some IRC staff.

For detainees, the experience of life challenges and the detention environment can get in the way of creativity and engagement. While MID activities offered a point of connection for many detainees, a small number found it challenging to be reminded of the suspension of their careers as professional musicians.

Detainees are drawn from diverse backgrounds and have widely divergent experiences and attitudes to music. While music can transcend social, cultural and linguistic divisions, addressing the diverse needs of participants required sensitivity and skill from music leaders. When it came to more focused activities such as recordings, it was not always possible to include everyone to the same degree: music leaders were aware of the need to balance openness and accessibility with the motivating force of artistic achievement.

These various factors all had a bearing on project management and communication. While of mouth was often the most effective means of communicating about the sessions, this could limit opportunities to discuss expectations with participants, stakeholders and staff.

Music leader attributes, beyond musical knowledge and skills, emerged as an important mediating factor. Being able to work in an empowering and respectful manner was, for musicians, key to being viewed as 'professional' by participants and stakeholders.

## 6 Dimensions of artistic quality in MID delivery

### 6.1 Introduction

As well as examining project impacts and exploring mediators of impact, the analysis sought to identify dimensions of artistic quality, using a grounded approach based in qualitative data. The reason for this is that artistic quality is a key element of MID's revised strategy, and is increasingly emphasised in funding and decision making in the arts. However, there are other reasons for understanding artistic quality, which is likely to be a strong mediator of impact in participatory arts contexts. Participants are unlikely to engage with or benefit from activities that they perceive as poor quality. In this section, a grounded understanding of artistic quality is presented, drawing on qualitative data. Participants and stakeholders were not directly asked about their views on artistic quality, although this was frequently alluded to. Six themes relating to aspects of artistic quality that are salient in the detention context emerged from the analysis.

1. Product versus process
2. Musical outputs: risks and 'works in progress'
3. Musical creativity: diversity and innovation
4. Celebrating talent
5. Professionalism
6. Meaningful expression and authenticity

### 6.2 Artistic quality in MID delivery: A grounded analysis

#### 1. Product versus process

While some detainees weren't particularly interested in producing musical outputs, preferring to simply have fun and enjoy the process, others took the music more seriously. However, having artistic goals was a key motivating factor for many participants. For these to succeed, there needed to be genuine skills development. Musicians observed the developing skills of participants, which enabled participants to contribute more effectively to performances and recordings.

*I mean you could see, he had the chance to play each week for two hours solidly so that's a good practice. As a musician, you practise regularly and you see progress (M2).*

*M: Like I say, the singing got much better... (M1)*

Some detainees were aware of the tensions between product and process, linking artistic quality with the need to move beyond simply having fun:

*D1: you can know who's joking with the instruments or who actually wants to do something and record something ... But it's not possible if every day new people just show up in the place and they are just joking, they are just making noise they are not making music, which is ... I know it's hard because everyone wants to have fun and you can't just say "no, you can't have fun." (FG2).*

## **2. Musical outputs: risks and ‘works in progress’**

The experience of performance was generally valued by participants, particularly for the sense of pride and connection with the audience that it engendered. Detainees also talked about performance risks, including nerves and stress associated with performing. There was often a sense of things coming together at the end, and some detainees suggested that a ‘good enough’ rather than perfect performance was acceptable:

*D1: I felt good, because, obviously, I was doing the rapping there, and being part of the whole thing. It was good, although it didn’t come off as one of the best performances, it could have been better; but overall I liked it (FG3).*

Music leaders also valued performance risks, but were aware of the fact that the production of musical outputs is part of an ongoing process.

*So if you’re making stuff that’s good, obviously recording it and making it sound good is really important... you’ve got to balance that with it being kind of low pressure, so it’s natural and none of it’s forced. Because if you force it won’t sound good, no matter how good you produce it or whatever (M1).*

For musicians, recording provides an important feedback mechanism, rather than a final statement.

*I think that creative listening, like going back and listening to what you’ve recorded is very important. It helps musicians to reflect and evaluate their music.... when you play or when you record, you’re in the moment. You’re thinking of the instrument you’re playing and how it fits with everybody else, but when you’re just listening you see the whole thing from a different point of view. So maybe your mind is a bit more clear and you can identify things a bit easier. You have the whole thing planned so you can put it in your mind, dress it or undress it, or add things to it. It’s a great tool, that process of listening back, that creative listening. You listen and then you evaluate your music, you evaluate... even what you’ve done. You think, I could do this differently (M2).*

Hence performances and recordings are viewed as works in progress rather than final statements.

## **3. Musical creativity: diversity and innovation**

Many detainees described the cultural diversity of the detention environment as encouraging creativity.

*D2: I listen to all kinds of music. Multicultural, you can’t just be stuck in one dimension....*

*D1: ... Any artistic work cannot just be one-sided. Different artists- you’ve got Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh - they’ve got their different influences and styles (FG4).*

In musicians’ accounts, notions of diversity were also linked with creativity.

*.... it took their (community participants) minds to different places. It made them think of different environments, of different countries. Of different people, that they are not that different.... Okay, probably not everyone was affected in the same*



*way, to the same level, but everybody had a moment to think, and had a moment to express their thoughts... (M2)*

One musician discussed the idea that detention may invoke curiosity that might inspire creativity.

*... I don't know if it's just me but the concept of people living behind bars, it has something. Because these places are always a mystery ... we don't want to visit or we don't want to be involved ... But they have some sort of, you know... They can be attractive in their own way ... I think for every musician there is a sense of attraction to prison and to create music and make music within this environment... I might be romantic, but with all my musician friends they talk about that. They all want to have this experience to create music in a prison or with prisoners (M2)*

Some detainees emphasised opportunities for musical innovation within multicultural detention environments.

*D1: Yeah, well it was amazing... we played Romanian music mixed with a little bit of Jazz ... and I just thought that it will fit and it does so yeah you know that's the good thing about music, you can make a fusion of anything and it's going to work... that's actually a really good thing that you can mix a little bit of all the cultures that are here in a musical way. (FG2)*

Originality was also an important dimension of artistic quality in musicians' accounts.

*... it's original music. That's the thing that really does it. I mean, we did a few covers just to kind of bind sessions down ... but it's when you do original music with people... they're offering something inside themselves... original music's always way better than anything that you cover. Because when you're covering something you have the original in your head and you know that you're doing a different version and it may not be quite as good, whereas when you're doing your own music you're going to make it the best it possibly can be because it's from you and it doesn't belong to anyone else. There's something, naturally it's just better (M1).*

#### **4. Celebrating talent**

Participants seemed to enjoy discovering, encouraging and celebrating each other's musical talents:

*D1: he was like really nervous and stuff. It was the first day, everyone is nervous. So I took him to the wing and showed him where all the Romanians are, because he basically couldn't speak English...*

*He's a man who's got talent, that's what we called him (FG3)*

The notion of talent also featured in the accounts of staff and stakeholders. This played out in several ways, through the discovery of hidden talents of detainees, but more often through acknowledgement of the contribution of detainees who are established artists, who they were keen to engage.

*.. he was actually quite critical at first because he was actually a singer, an artist in his own right ... he didn't engage at first but in the end he made a really brilliant*

*contribution ... It was really good and he got a massive amount of respect from everyone because it was just quality (IRC music teacher).*

## **5. Professionalism**

The notion of professionalism emerged as a dimension of artistic quality in detainees' accounts. For example, with regard to equipment, some suggested that something 'more professional' was needed:

*D2: On the music front, I could say... something a little bit more professional, I know it's probably gonna cost you a little bit of money, like for me to make beats, if there was a computer with some software on it I could probably just sit there and make an original song right there on the spot (FG5).*

Another dimension of quality was the need for professional skills: in music performance, production and post production.

*D2: Yeah, I'm thinking of the next level.... making it a little bit more professional, because I heard some of the songs on the website, the mixing and the mastering was nice... so if it were just a little bit more upbeat then...(FG5)*

IRC staff were also aware of the importance of professionalism, not just in the behaviour of musicians but also in the production values underpinning final outputs. Generally, IRC staff were complimentary about the quality of the final outputs.

*I think the results of the workshops were great, the songs that we had recorded sounded really professional. (IRC music teacher)*

*I think (they) did a really good job with the mixing (IRC music teacher)*

However, musicians were aware of the constraints of IRC environments and the need for realistic expectations of what could be produced:

*It's a bit optimistic to hope for a high-quality recording in an environment like this, because for a high quality recording you need a controlled environment. Now, X was a wizard. He really did his best, he had the right equipment and he did a really good job. But, you know, the man was working in a room in a detention centre with people coming in and out. It's difficult (M2).*

## **6. Meaningful expression and authenticity**

Expression, linked with the notion of freedom, has been identified as a key delivery impact. It emerged as an aspect of artistic quality in detainees' accounts:

*D1: Exactly, this is an expression, a way of expressing your feelings, it's an art (F2)*

The importance of expression, in the form of musical communication, was also mentioned by musicians discussing the responses of community exchange participants.

*It was not just music for the group... but music was carrying a message ... they knew where it was going. So that gave them the motivation to compose more, to play better... (M2)*

The importance of meaning and authenticity emerged from young community participants' accounts. One young participant emphasised the importance of real life story-telling when describing the difference between music that is meaningful and music that is not:

*P1: Basically, if you're writing lyrics or a rap for a song, first of all you've got to have a good topic to rap about. Cos if you listen to a song and think that's a banger, that's a good song, it's always got a good meaning to it, like you really believe that what the person's trying to tell you. But if you listen to a song about painting windows, or watching paint dry or like how you go to the gym and lift weights and shag birds, no-ones like 'yeah I totally feel that guy that's what I do' they're not like, but if someone talks about their struggles and maybe their ups and their downs, or maybe tells a story through it, or has a meaning to do it then that's where it becomes good I think. Like you really feel their lyrics (FG1)*

Authenticity was also a theme within staff and stakeholder accounts. IRC staff commented positively on the ethnic diversity of MID musicians, linking this with artistic quality.

*It's good that the guys see genuine specialists in different fields ... with the best will in the world I'm white middle class with loads of western influences (IRC music teacher).*

Musicians emphasised the notion of honesty as an artistic quality of project outputs:

*But I think there is high quality in the music, or at least the music is... In some ways it is honest... Honest, you know, it has nothing to hide and it doesn't pretend to be something else. It is the music of these people. That for me compensates for the quality (M2).*

### **6.3 Artistic quality in MID delivery: Summary of key dimensions.**

Rather than viewing artistic quality as a set of components that can be universally applied, this report suggests that artistic quality is a nuanced concept, understanding of which needs to be grounded in specific contexts where it holds power as a mediator of impact. At the heart of discussions about artistic quality in participatory arts is the tension between product and process. Although some participants simply wanted to have fun and enjoy the music activity for its entertainment or distraction value, others took the music more seriously. Having artistic goals was a key motivating factor for many participants. Participants saw that achieving these required dedication and effort as well as talent, which could be latent and emergent from the activity as well as established, and a degree of professionalism in areas such as teaching, music performance, production and post production. However, participants were aware of the limits to creative activity and delivery of outputs in the detention environment. In general, they were pragmatic, accepting that performances and recordings needed to be 'good enough,' concurring with the view of musicians that musical recordings should be seen as a work in progress supporting reflection and growth rather than a definitive artistic statement.

While cultural and linguistic diversity within detention environment posed challenges, they were also a source of strength, enabling exploration, sharing and leading to innovative fusions. The notion of originality emerged as a key dimension of artistic quality. Linked with this was the notion of meaningful expressions. There was a sense that dimensions such as honesty, empathy and real life story telling were valued by participants more than elitist notions of innate talent, or technically driven production values.

## 7 Discussion and further research

This Part 1 report provides an independent analysis of key themes and findings from data collected by MID following its review of evaluation framework and tools in 2013. This report draws on data provided by up to 270 participants between 2014 and 2017. Most of the data are qualitative, as there is relatively little quantitative assessment of delivery outcomes.

The quantitative data collected by MID do not allow effects of music activity to be identified, as there are no baseline data and no comparators. However, responses to feedback questionnaires show that participants generally enjoy music activity and report that this has positive effects on mood, enabling them to relax as well as to meet new people and make friends. Community participants report changed attitudes towards immigration issues, with increased empathy and understanding regarding the experiences of detainees.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with detainees, community participants, musicians, IRC staff and stakeholders provides a richer description of MID delivery and its impacts. While focus group data is likely to be skewed towards the accounts of those who were motivated to attend, the inclusion of postcard data and responses to open ended questionnaires broadens the sample and confirms the inductive analysis of qualitative data. This examines project impacts, identifies the factors that are most likely to mediate delivery outcomes, including artistic quality in the context of MID's work.

In IRCs, music activity may help detainees to cope with detention by energising them, providing a sense of structured time, reducing boredom and providing distraction from stress and worries. Music activity can provide a sense of happiness in the moment, and for some detainees these effects may last for some time beyond the session. Detainees can gain a sense of release from musical expression as well as a sense of connection by communicating musical messages to participants in the outside world. Music can offer an effective means of overcoming barriers between people. In IRC contexts, it can also challenge stigma by addressing unhelpful stereotypes and demonstrating the skills and creativity of many detainees. Successful music activities can foster learning and development, opening opportunities and future possibilities, enabling reflexive engagement with notions of identity and offering a sense of hope in difficult circumstances.

In community exchange projects, music can offer an enjoyable experience that participants can relate to as well as an opportunity to learn: about music and about the experience of detention. Community participants drawn from disadvantaged and marginalised groups, may be able to find points of connection with detainees, despite barriers of age, culture and musical taste and experience.

For musicians delivering activities, MID delivery can provide opportunities for learning and development, as well as opportunities to forge supportive relationships with participants in IRCs and community settings. Music can have a generally positive effect on the detention environment.

These impacts are not a pre-given consequence of music activity. If music can promote positive impacts, it also has the potential to engender negative moods, limit learning and expression, isolate participants and diminish identities. Not everyone enjoys music making, and music that is associated with negative learning experiences is unlikely to engender connection and empathy in community participants. Hence successful delivery depends on understanding

and effective responses by music leaders and project managers to mediating factors, including time and resources, institutional imperatives, the experience of detention, demographic and cultural diversity of participants, different musical experiences and identities, and project communication.

This is demonstrated in accounts of delivery challenges that can potentially impede delivery. Hence the experience of detention can limit engagement, combining with operational challenges and lack of time and resources to impede sustained creativity. Detainees' diverse cultural experiences, including different languages and musical histories, shape a complex range of needs and expectations and sometimes limit participation. Being strongly identified with music may increase the appeal of music activity for some detainees, but reinforce a sense of biographical disruption and fragmented identity. In order to successfully negotiate these elements, project managers and music leaders must be equipped with a wide range of musical, social and interpersonal skills.

As well as exploring project impacts, the analysis has begun to frame a grounded understanding of artistic quality as a mediator of impact in the context of MID's work. Having clear artistic goals, such as performances or the production of recordings, is an important motivating factor for participants. These require genuine skills development in participants, as well as a level of professionalism in music leadership and production processes that can be difficult to achieve in detention environments.

On the other hand, detention environments contain some strong elements that support creativity. The diverse backgrounds of participants is viewed as a positive feature, stimulating creativity, challenging ideas, exchange and innovation. In the data reviewed here, participants and stakeholders emphasised the notion of meaningful expression and authenticity. Telling a real life story, connecting with others facing similar difficulties, and sharing works in progress may be important dimensions of artistic quality in the context of MID's work.

### ***Further research***

This evaluation report has a number of limitations and strengths. The data were collected for evaluation purposes: a research study would pay greater attention to sampling and consistency of recording in both qualitative and quantitative data collection. While data collection was guided by a theory of change, this is quite broad and includes multiple outcomes: clear identification of the primary aim of MID's work would make it easier to assess its effects. The limitations of the quantitative data make it difficult to draw conclusions about project outcomes. Future evaluation should consider the collection of baseline data as well as the use of validated outcome measures in key areas.

The report has reviewed a substantial amount of qualitative data collected over a number of years by MID staff. These are drawn from participants who were motivated to take part, and little is known about the views of detainees who choose not to engage with music or who had negative experiences. Understanding a wider range of responses to music activity in detention contexts would help MID to address factors that limit and encourage participation. It would also contribute to a broader understanding of what works for whom and in what circumstances.

Detainees who contributed to evaluation clearly perceived music activity to be beneficial. A question arises regarding the lasting impact of music activity. Some participants reported positive effects of music on mood that lasted for some time after the session. This is borne out by a recent ethnographic study that examined impacts of music in detention up to two weeks

after the activity (Underhill, 2011). This study focused on psychosocial mechanisms of lasting impact, including emotional regulation, positive self-image, protective memory and supportive relationships. Further research with quantitative measurement and longer-term follow up would establish the extent of lasting impacts. Further, it is important to recognise the influence of social context on these mechanisms and impacts (Daykin 2008, 2012). Hence rigorous ethnographic research would allow a critical exploration of musical affordances and the way these are mediated and appropriated in immigration detention environments.

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# Appendix 1

## *Data review: sources and sampling for secondary analysis*

Data tool	Data collected to date: Number of participants/cases	Analysis sample for independent review
Focus groups with detainees (DG)	8	5 groups (data from 18 detainees)
Musician in residence detainee feedback questionnaire	4	4
Postcards completed by detainees	41	41
Detainee and community participant feedback questionnaires	143	108 (data from 91 detainees and 17 community participants)
Feedback from community participants	8	2 groups (data from 10 participants)
Formalised conversations with IRC leaders and staff	9	4
Community partner recorded conversations	2	2
Interviews with musicians	2	2
Artists' Practice Forums	51	Summary provided by MID
Artist and IRC staff logs	545	30: artists (25), visitors (5), staff (2) and volunteers (3)

### **Tables 1 - 13**

**Table 1. Number of community exchange sessions attended (detainees)**

1	2 - 4	5+	Total
5	7	10	22

**Table 2. Detainees' ratings of the community exchange workshops**

Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good	Total
0	0	1	5	15	21

**Table 3. Effects of the community exchange workshop on detainees' feelings**

Made me feel a lot worse	Made me feel worse	Did not change how I was feeling	Made me feel better	Made me feel a lot better	Total
0	0	1	6	15	22



**Table 4. Aspects that the community exchange workshops helped with (detainees)**

Relax	16
Learn something new	16
Make friends	14
Feel good about myself	14
Meet new people	13
Create something good	13
Make good use of my time	11
Remember good things	10
Forget my problems	10
Feel like someone cares	9
Better connection with an officer	8
Think about or express anxieties	6
Make a difference	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

**Table 5. Singing group participants' feelings at the start of the workshop.**

Very sad	Sad	Fine	Happy	Very happy	<b>Total</b>
7	7	17	18	20	<b>69</b>

**Table 6. Singing group participants' feelings at the end of the workshop**

Very sad	Sad	Fine	Happy	Very happy	<b>Total</b>
0	1	3	15	50	<b>69</b>

**Table 7. Number of sessions attended (community participants in mental health settings)**

1	2 - 4	5+	<b>Total</b>
3	11	3	<b>17</b>

**Table 8. Ratings of sessions by community participants in mental health settings**

Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	4	13	<b>17</b>

**Table 9. Effect of workshops on feelings (community participants in mental health settings)**

Made me feel a lot worse	Made me feel worse	Did not change how I was feeling	Made me feel better	Made me feel a lot better	<b>Total</b>
0	0	0	4	13	<b>17</b>

**Table 10. Aspects of the workshops that were helpful (community participants in mental health settings)**

Make friends	15
Relax	14
Meet new people	14
Learn something new	13
Make a difference	12
Learn more about immigration detention	12
Feel like someone cares	10
Feel good about myself	10
Remember good things	10
Forget my problems	10
Create something good	9
Make good use of my time	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

**Table 11. Effect of the project on understanding of IRCs and detainees (community participants in mental health settings)**

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Very much	Total
1	1	3	6	5	16

**Table 12. Effect on understanding of the experiences and feelings of detainees (community participants in mental health settings)**

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Very much	Total
1	1	4	6	4	16

**Table 13. Effect on attitudes towards detainees (community participants in mental health settings)**

Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Very much	Total
1	1	2	8	4	16