



Music In Detention



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Interim evaluation report Overview and impact of delivery work in year 2

April 2008 – March 2009

Report by Karin van Maanen

***“I must be someone special
‘cause God don’t make no junk.”***

Title of song created by inmates at IRC Dover, from a story told by an Age Concern member.



The Baring Foundation



CONTENTS

1 Introduction (p. 3)

2 How was *Music in Detention* able to meet its aims? (p. 4)

2.1 The music interventions (p. 4)

- 2.1.1 Self-expression
- 2.1.2 Culturally relevant music provision
- 2.1.3 Group dynamics

2.2 Quality of life (p. 9)

- 2.2.1 Stress relief
- 2.2.2 Cultural wellbeing
- 2.2.3 Enjoyment

2.3 Channels of communication (p. 14)

- 2.3.1 Detainees, places of detention and music organisations
- 2.3.2 Detainees, places of detention and local communities
- 2.3.3 Detainees, places of detention and the wider public

3 Conclusion (p. 20)

4 Recommendations (p. 22)

- 4.1 Year 1 recommendations revisited (p. 22)
- 4.2 Year 2 recommendations (p. 24)

1. Introduction

This evaluation is a participant-focussed evaluation, looking at the responses of detainees actively participating in the project, members of IRC staff who were directly involved, and how members of the community responded to two of the community exchange projects which took place in 2008/2009. This report looks at whether MID's main aims are being achieved, and will identify strengths and weaknesses of the work, as well as threats and opportunities. This interim evaluation is formative and suggests recommendations for the next year of MID's programme of work inside and outside IRCs.

Interim evaluation questions

- a. **What types of music interventions MID has been delivering are most effective in facilitating self-expression? (Supporting MID strategic aim 1)**
- b. **Have MID activities to date improved detainees' quality of life through independently delivered music activities? (Supporting MID strategic aim 2)**
- c. **To which extent has the community exchange work created channels of communication between detainees, places of detention, local communities and the wider public? (Supporting MID strategic aim 3)**

Documentation of the project

Karin van Maanen aided by MID's staff, delivery partners' staff, IRC staff and participants, gathered documentation focussing on two project elements that took place in 2008 and 2009. This report is based on this evidence.

The following documentation was gathered:

- Observation – the evaluators (Karin and Ceri) visited projects Dover IRC, Haslar, Campsfield House and Yarl's Wood, and two community exchange projects, in Dover and in Gosport (with Haslar IRC). This included observing activities facilitated by Drum Runners, Asian Music Circuit, Music for Change, and Oxford Concert Party.
- 36 detainees, 9 workshop facilitators, 12 members of IRC staff and 29 participants in community exchange groups were interviewed
- 51 completed artists' logs were returned
- 9 members of IRC staff completed questionnaires and informal feedback
- Staff from all delivery organisations provided feedback at the practice forums, attended by Karin van Maanen in 2008 and 2009
- MID staff provided feedback
- A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was undertaken based on the evidence gathered

2. How was MID able to meet its aims?

2.1 The music interventions

What types of music interventions MID has been delivering, are most effective in facilitating self-expression?

The range of activities provided by MID partners during the period this evaluation covers has largely been very effective in facilitating self-expression. Although some sessions have performance elements, which are very well received by detainees, all sessions also have interactive elements. The make-up of the programme lends itself to encouraging people to participate at different levels, whether they have existing musical skills or not, and its activities have been successful in involving detainees from a wide range of nationalities (40 nationalities recorded in the sessions analysed in year 2). Section 2 looks at self-expression, cultural relevance and group dynamics in more detail.

2.1.1 Self-expression

For the purposes of this report, self-expression is defined as:

Expression of your personality, emotions or ideas, especially through art, music or acting.¹

The evidence that would indicate that people have the opportunity to express themselves during MID activities, is closely linked to providing them with a measure of freedom to be creative, and giving them the space and opportunity to contribute to the session in a way that suits them – mainly through music, which could be as simple as clapping their hands, tapping their feet, singing along, or playing an instrument – but also through contributing to ideas for the session.

Enabling self-expression is also linked to providing culturally appropriate session content.

¹ dictionary.cambridge.org, July 2008

Evidence of self-expression

Activity elements that facilitate self-expression	Present in MID activity?
Encouragement of creativity and experimentation	Yes
Encouragement of participants contributing to the session (in a way that suits them) – evidence of active participation	Yes
Evidence of participants being able to share their own cultural heritage	Yes
Freedom to express thoughts, emotions and opinions in lyrics and speech	Yes
Freedom to share opinions and experiences during sessions	Yes
Creating opportunities for detainees to communicate with each other as well as with staff and external facilitators	Yes
A commitment to providing culturally relevant and appropriate activities	Yes
Consultation with detainees as to the creative direction of the workshops/projects	Mostly

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that self-expression of detainees was central to the MID activities. It is evident in the lyrics that were produced, the content of the music workshops, and in the way that the facilitators ran sessions. Creative processes and time for reflection was built in, and participants were encouraged to be creative and make their own choices in terms of what they contributed.

Several detainees who were interviewed made comments about self-expression:

[Do you feel you were able to express yourself? How?]

“Yes, by playing the instruments on display.” (Detainee)

“This is your day, this is your space.” (Detainee)

“Use your mind like a whip.” (Detainee)

“I come back next one because I got more things to say.” (Detainee)

“It’s all about messages.” (Detainee)

“Is that music or is it anger?” (Detainee)

There was also evidence that the sessions enabled the participants to be creative, although in some cases other creative activities were used for those who felt shy about taking part in music, singing or dancing, and for some it took them a while to feel confident and comfortable to take part:

“There was also one quiet Jamaican young man who didn’t want to make any noise or play any instrument but he really enjoyed making a flag with ‘Jamaica’ on it and was happy to be in the background – later on he really joined in with the singing and the flag dance and became quite expressive. [...] During the last high energy session

there was a lovely surprise when a Pakistani man, who had been very shy about dancing, got up and danced magnificently! I thought that it showed that he felt in a safe place and was amongst friends and I think he surprised himself too.” (Facilitator)

It is clear from the programme of activities that great efforts were made to include a range of musical influences and instruments from around the world, as well as other opportunities for participants to express themselves through movement and visual arts. The activities attracted a wide range of nationalities:

[Do you feel you were able to express yourself?] *“Yes, because this project brought together different cultures as one.”* (Detainee)

“People have to come out and share their cultures so that we can join all the bits.” (Detainee)

“The different nationalities appeared to bond well”. (Member of staff, IRC Haslar)

Staff commented that often the sessions managed to engage nationalities that they found difficult to engage in other activities in the centre, or detainees who had been insular and quiet, but came into their own during music activities.

Detainees confirmed the sessions enabled them to get to know other detainees and staff, and for many it was the best thing about the workshops:

“Music is powerful for everybody.” (Detainee)

2.1.2 Culturally relevant music provision

Due to working with an extremely diverse participant group in the IRCs, it is essential that the facilitators that deliver the MID programme are effective *cultural facilitators* or *enablers*, drawing out the stories, messages, communication and self-expression which feel culturally appropriate to the participants.² Although music is a universal language, detainees involved in the MID programme are from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, for whom some of the music or related activities may be religiously or culturally taboo or undesirable. In a practical sense, some facilitators reported their sessions clashed with “other religious activities” within the IRCs, or the location of the music activity was deemed inappropriate by some detainees (for example activities taking place inside the chapel or too near the mosque).

Working with these groups, it is not possible to offer ‘one size fits all’ provision and the issue of space is always a tricky one within IRCs. What is required is sensitivity, a flexible approach, and a high level of awareness of the needs, interests and expectations of the participants. This has been explored extensively during the practice forum days MID has been organising for delivery partners and musicians.

It is clear that MID endeavours to provide a musically diverse programme, which was the case during the first year of the programme and was enhanced further during year two, with the Asian Music Circuit coming on board as a delivery organisation. Working with musicians who share a cultural identity, and in some cases a common language, has been very well received by participants and has helped them express themselves.

“The detainees really appreciated and have commented on the excellent quality of the dancing and the tabla playing. What everyone commented on was how lovely it was to

² Eames, P, *Cultural provision for Black, Minority and Ethnic offenders in Criminal Justice Settings*, Anne Peaker Centre, 2008.

see Africans, Chinese as well as the Asian countries joining in.” (Member of staff, IRC Haslar)

“[Facilitator from Drum Runners] seems to try to diversify what is available as much as he can, e.g. bringing singers from different cultures with him.” Member of staff, IRC Yarl’s Wood)

“I think MID allows cultural expression beyond the norm.” (Member of staff, IRC Campsfield House)

2.1.3 Group dynamics

The activities can improve general group dynamics within the centres as well as group dynamics within sessions. Staff and facilitators reported that because most detainees don’t know their length of stay, making friends and communicating with other people is not usually a priority to them. This can make it especially isolating for new arrivals. The music sessions help people bond with other detainees and can initiate channels of communication within the centre.

In the first year, several facilitators mentioned that small groups of detainees or individuals would “hijack sessions”, or wanted “to do their own thing.” Of course “doing your own thing” is self-expression too. Managing the group dynamics, to enable everyone to express themselves, and managing the fine line between some people expressing themselves, at the exclusion of other people having the space to do so, was a challenge at times. Various tactics to manage this were used by facilitators and IRC staff:

- Choosing a neutral space for the sessions – i.e. not a space that would normally be used for general recreation, and a space that is free from other distractions
- Being pro-active about where people sit in the space – separating people from their usual groups, ensuring detainees mix
- Facilitating a sharing environment where people take it in turns to contribute
- Ensuring participants know why MID is there, and what the focus of the sessions is

This again came out in some of the reports from year 2, and it is clear facilitators need to expect at times challenging group dynamics, especially when they always have a mix of participants who have been engaged in longer term projects and people who just drop in:

“You never know what will happen in IRCs. Sometimes you meet people who are really interested in what you are doing. One guy had done some song writing before hand and wanted to sing so badly, but there was another guy who was very undisciplined and was just carrying on playing and preventing him from singing. Facilitating this is very difficult. You want everyone to take part, but you also don’t want people to dominate sessions. Therefore there is a tension between those who have rehearsed and prepared and those who just want a free flow.” (Music facilitator)

Facilitators did mention it was easier to facilitate self-expression and creativity when working with smaller groups:

“A smaller group [in this case 12 detainees] enabled us to engage with individuals in more detail and to develop creative improvisation – in this case based on favourite foods from their own countries.” (Music facilitator)

Other feedback from artists’ logs echoes this. Many of the larger scale events, for example when between 30 – 50 detainees joined in Diwali or Chinese New Year celebrations, allowed for cultural expression but less for individual creativity to be

nurtured. These celebratory events were very much appreciated because they really lifted the atmosphere of the centre for their duration and got many nationalities celebrating and enjoying music together – whence facilitating very positive dynamics between a large number of people.

When working with very large groups, some facilitators reported a sense that they were no longer in control of the event. This has not been a problem to date in terms of safety, but there was some discussion about this at the practice forum held in April 2009 - as to whether this could cause things to be too out of control and potentially hazardous. At times, facilitators were left alone with detainees for a period of time, which not everyone was comfortable with. It is also worth bearing in mind that some IRCs mainly house detainees who were previously foreign national prisoners, and could pose a higher risk to MID delivery staff than others.

Another issue reported was that it was difficult to have continuity when delivering an activity over several sessions or days:

“We managed to get three pieces recorded (...). We got the three songs recorded by sheer persistence. Detainees are unreliable. Even when you have spent an hour in the morning with someone there is no guarantee that they will show up after lunch. (...) We had real trouble getting continuity.” (Music facilitator)

A member of IRC staff confirmed it was difficult to get detainees to fit into a planned structure:

“They [detainees] don’t notice posters. They also don’t plan for the future. It’s a very temporary existence; it’s reactive rather than proactive.”

This at times made it difficult to achieve the objectives of the Community Exchange programme (see also section 2.3.2) or recording projects:

“It has been difficult to get consistency and commitment over 4 days. There was suspicion from one that the event is only to make immigration and the centre look good. The guys taking part don’t think that. Detainees have very little power and refusing to come to this when they are good musicians and we need them and are showing that gives them a bit of power. One key ringleader decided not to attend and 3 others followed. One of key contributors was removed on Wednesday morning before we got to record any of his stuff.” (Music facilitator about recording project in Harmondsworth)

2.2 Quality of life

Have MID activities to date improved detainees' quality of life through independently delivered music activities?

As in year 1, much of the feedback that was received from detainees, IRC staff, and artists, confirmed that the MID activities were beneficial for detainees' wellbeing. The majority of the activity was of a culturally diverse nature which helps to increase participants' sense of cultural wellbeing. The vast majority of detainees continue to enjoy the activities and this indicates the activities improve their quality of life, at least in the short term.

2.2.1 Stress relief³

Stress is a well-known trigger for depression and it can also affect physical health. Therefore, if the MID activities are stress-relieving for detainees, they are likely to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, and therefore their quality of life. Widely accepted stress relieving activities include:

- 1) Talking to someone about what is causing you stress
- 2) Letting off steam in a harmless way
- 3) Removing yourself from stressful situations
- 4) Spending time with people who are rewarding rather than critical or judgmental
- 5) Practise slow breathing, extending the exhalation

There are clear links between the above activities and the MID programme, shown in the table below:

MID activities	Stress relieving aspects (1 to 6 as above) incorporated	Comments
Taking part in a social, enjoyable activity – communal music making	3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detainees have indicated they feel that MID activities take them away from their problems • The workshop facilitators take an encouraging role and are not involved in the IRC regime, and can therefore build a more equal relationship with detainees
Writing lyrics	1, 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vast majority of the lyrics produced by detainees are on the theme of freedom, or discuss how it makes them feel to be living in captivity
Singing	1, 2, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing encourages the lengthening of the exhalation

³ Sources

Clift & Hancox, *The perceived benefits of singing: findings from preliminary surveys of a university college choral society*, The Journal of The Royal Society for the Promotion of Health; December 2001, 121 (4), pp. 248-256

Dance and Health, the benefits for people of all ages, Arts Council England & NHS, 2006

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk, July 2008

		<p>which lowers blood pressure and naturally helps the body to relax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing the lyrics physically helps to release negative feelings, and “let off steam” • The fact that the songs are recorded and distributed outside the IRC means detainees’ messages are heard outside which reduces their isolation
Drumming	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drumming is a safe, natural way to let off steam
Dancing	2	<p>The personal and social benefits of dance are reported to include:⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved general and psychological well-being • Greater self-confidence and self-esteem • Increased trust • Better social skills • Reduced social isolation and exclusion

Aside from the inherent stress-relieving benefits of music and dance activity, direct feedback from detainees and IRC staff gathered in year 2 confirms that the MID programme is stress-relieving for participants:

“We could see them a little bit more happy. Interacting with others, dancing. They looked more happy and relaxed.” (Member of staff, IRC Harmondsworth)

“It has a calming effect.” (Member of staff, IRC Harmondsworth)

“The music events reduce conflict – people have a way of venting frustration. Otherwise they are just sitting and staring at the wall.” (Member of staff, IRC Yarl’s Wood)

“I got hope in myself and a lot more.” (Detainee)

“You made me forget my worries. I can face things again.” (Detainee)

“Takes you away from the pressure.” (Detainee)

“More relaxed.” (Detainee)

“It makes you feel better temporarily. You forget your problems whilst you’re doing it.” (Detainee)

“We want to forget problems. We go crazy, all the same here. Just thinking, thinking. This makes us happy. You forget problems for one minute. Can’t forget problems outside this room.” (Detainee)

“It helps you to expose hidden things within you.” (Detainee)

“I leave with a great feeling, done something musically productive.” (Detainee)

“Everyone when they come here they feel happy. Music makes it better.” (Detainee)

“MID definitely reduces depression and gives the residents something to learn that is productive. (...) This gives them all a sense of worth.” (Member of staff, IRC Yarl’s Wood)

⁴ *Dance and Health, the benefits for people of all ages*, Arts Council England & NHS, 2006

Some stressed that the positive impact did not last very long:

“It makes you feel better whilst you’re doing it, but as soon as you get back to your room you feel depressed again.” (Detainee)

During a children’s session at Yarl’s Wood, the music had a calming effect on a small baby:

“One small baby was crying quite a bit but my Jaws harp sound soothed them which allowed the session to continue.” (Music facilitator)

Sessions were shown to leave an impact on the children after they finished:

“A follow up call on [a week after the session] revealed that children and staff were still talking about the session and were amazed by the results. The children wrote two more verses for the song [that was created during the session].” (Music facilitator)

The music activities and interaction with musicians from outside often provides detainees with the opportunity to share how they feel:

“Music is a powerful art form that seemed to open an emotional space within the detainees in different ways. Those who were more expressive started singing gospel songs, others danced & some joined in and played various instruments. Some [detainees] also started talking about how some guards didn’t talk to them respectfully at times. They felt that as they were going through immense pressures this didn’t help.” (Music facilitator)

“Detainees expressed feelings of missing family and children, through being in prison. Also talked about life and conditions in detention.” (Music facilitator)

“If that person is singing to me then I can do what the message is telling me, like if I had that track in my collections and it’s all about change, then I can decide to change.” (Detainee)

“It brings us together. Maybe you think your situation is worse, but then you realise it isn’t when you hear about other people’s situations.” (Detainee)

The music enabled detainees to be in a different place for a while:

“One Afghan man who had been to a couple of previous, recent, sessions and hardly been able to clap in time (seemingly due to severe lethargy) was actively joining in and enjoying himself very much. He didn’t speak any English but we communicated by actions and many smiles and I was delighted that he seemed more lost in the music and less in his own thoughts which I think will have helped his whole well-being, for the day at least.” (Facilitator)

“One thing that has been said by detainees is that the music has the affect on removing them outside the fence and the locks and bolts, and they can forget where they are for a while.” (Member of IRC staff)

Enjoyment is a factor in the relief of stress, and feelings of depression, and the majority of participants gave very positive feedback. All detainees interviewed said they enjoyed the activities (see 2.2.3).

2.2.2 Cultural wellbeing

For the core principles underpinning the processes of increasing cultural wellbeing through the arts, please refer to section 4.2.2 in the year 1 report.

The wellbeing of MID participants

During year 2, participants who were interviewed by the evaluators and artists all confirmed that music was important to how they felt:

“It made me feel better because it wasn’t boring.”

[Did the project make you feel better? Why do you think that is?]

“Yes. Learning about other people’s culture and the UK.” (Detainee)

“Yes, because I had fun.” (Detainee)

“By de-stressing and relaxing.” (Detainee)

“Yes. I used to do drumming at school back home [Congo] so it reminds me of home. Trying to remember rhythms that we used to do.” (Detainee)

“Yes, for a while, a lovely distraction from our problems.” (Detainee)

“Dancing and singing, forgetting our situation.” (Detainee)

[The best thing about the project was] “The last song, made us feel better.” (Detainee)

One music facilitator reported:

“One detainee who had been feeling very low said that his spirits were really lifted by taking part.”

The activities also promoted a sense of group cohesion, and in some cases had a positive effect on the atmosphere with the centre – although there are some indications the atmosphere is not improved for long (see quote below) - and relationships between IRC staff and detainees:

“Detainees made positive comments about how they had enjoyed it and that it had been nice to be able to relax and mix with people from outside. They said that they enjoyed the music and it brought the centre to a normal relaxed atmosphere, which it is not normally. Unfortunately it very quickly reverts to how it was before.” (Member of IRC staff)

“There were people I have never seen before but this made everybody come together. I have more Chinese friends now.” (Detainee)

“I made a lot of friends through the music.” (Detainee)

“This has made the officers understand the desire of detainees and this has allowed for more respect for both detainees and officers.” (Detainee)

[What was the best thing about the project?] “Bringing people together.” (Detainee)

“If detainees are happier, it is better for the centre. Less stress.” (Member of IRC staff)

[Do you feel the atmosphere and the behaviour of detainees was different while the workshops were taking place?] “High and pleasant.” (Member of staff, Harmondsworth)

“This was a positive event which brought many faiths/nationalities together.” (Member of staff, Haslar)

[Do you think centre staff is more understanding of detainees’ cultures and situations as a result of the music making?] “Yes, they can hear music and dance from our culture.” (Detainee)

2.2.3 Enjoyment

"The detainees were over the moon". (Member of staff, IRC Haslar)

Feedback from detainees in interviews includes:

"Everything was brilliant."

"I had fun."

"[the music] is one of the best features of this place. Very much attention is paid to it."

"It makes me happy and it makes me smile."

A big factor in the enjoyment was the sense detainees had that they were learning new skills, as well as taking part in an enjoyable activity, and being productive rather than bored or just passing the time, as shows from recorded interviews with detainees.

"I expected nothing but got more. Got loads of talent in here. Want them (MfC) back to build on the talent they found."

"Being a musician passes the time – not waiting time, but being productive."

Staff also commented on the impact on individuals:

[the lead vocalist in a MfC recording project] "is usually very quiet. He has had the greatest week of his time in detention." (Member of IRC staff)

This member of staff of later reported:

"He was quiet before you guys came in doing the project, now he won't stop singing!"

The detainee himself said:

"I am very proud of it. The best thing for me is putting the headphones on and singing. I didn't know it was so easy to make a song. I've had these ideas for ages, but never done this before. It was really good to get advice and help from H and Alex [facilitators]. Music has been very important to me since I was very young." (Detainee)

It was clear from observing sessions that participants were enjoying themselves, either by participating actively or by watching and listening. Everyone interviewed said activities were good, and from the interview data collected all said they had enjoyed the activity they attended.

There was only one recorded incident of a detainee expressing negativity about the music activity:

"One detainee was very negative about us [MfC and AMC] being there. He said that we could not expect him to sing and dance when they were having such a hard time."

2.3 Channels of communication

To which extent has the community exchange work created channels of communication between detainees, places of detention, local communities and the wider public?

The community exchange programme involves music activities taking place in the communities outside the IRCs, linking them with activities inside the IRC. The two community exchange projects evaluated in this report are:

- MfC working with IRC Dover and Age Concern in Dover
- Drum Runners working with IRC Haslar and the Nimrod Community Centre in Gosport

This section of the report looks at the various channels of communication that are created as a result of the community exchange work, including links between:

- Detainees, places of detention and music organisations (2.3.1)
- Detainees, places of detention and local communities (2.3.2)
- Detainees, places of detention and the wider public (2.3.3)

2.3.1 Detainees, places of detention and music organisations

Detainees said that the activities improve relationships between detainees, and that the best thing about the projects for them is to work in groups with other people:

“A lot of experience and to get along with different people from all walks of life.”
(Detainee)

[The best thing is] “That we all get together and help out each other.” (Detainee)

“It was a great project and a good idea. We need more projects. It brings everybody together.” (Detainee)

“H [music facilitator] played different rhythms from different cultures and allocated instruments so that when they moved group, instruments together a group/racial mix was achieved. By the end of the session this had the positive effect of breaking down barriers, and changed dynamics of the overall group. At the end of the session, detainees that had previously kept to their own cultural group high fived each other and were talking together.” (Artist log)

In Yarl’s Wood, where families are detained including children and young people, some of the activities managed to break down barriers between different age groups:

“Staff commented that this was an amazing workshop session. As the track unfolded you could see a real sense of achievement from the group and the fact that this age range were working together on something was a big leap forward as staff said that they do not normally work together in this way. This has obviously broken down some barriers for the group and enabled them to feel confident to express themselves and combine ideas to make something special.” (Artist log for youth group session in Yarl’s Wood)

MID’s work involves bringing artists into IRC’s. Detainees appreciate the opportunity to meet the musicians, particularly when they share a cultural identity with them, and/or the

sessions are culturally relevant to them. This was reflected in some of the detainees' feedback, although many also welcomed the opportunities to engage in and explore cultures which were not their own. Mostly appreciated was the opportunity to work with professional musicians and experienced music facilitators. This aspect is also highly valued by IRC staff and detainees.

"I enjoyed the way they [Music for Change] interacted with people. The guys really enjoyed it." (Member of staff, IRC Harmondsworth)

[Did the project make you feel better?] "Yes, because I get to learn new things, you know music; they (MfC) know music." (Detainee)

There is evidence that the activities continue to improve relationships between staff and detainees:

"This is really different from what I have done in the past. It's good to collaborate with the detainees. It gives me a chance to see them differently and some of them are really talented." (Member of IRC staff)

"Doing things with them [detainees] makes them respect you more." (Member of IRC staff)

"[A Detention Guard Officer] was a shining example for everyone. He joined in by singing, playing the guitar and had strong people skills in listening objectively to what the detainees had to say." (Music facilitator)

[Do the activities improve relationships between detainees and centre staff?] "Yes, because we get to know more about each other, staff as well. I noticed this from staff who now know that I love singing, so am happy." (Detainee)

"One thing I like is that people can come and see IRC staff joining in. It's really important for people who have just arrived from the airport to see this kind of thing. It makes them realise that authority is different here, and not anything like so scary as where they come from." (Member of staff, IRC Yarl's Wood)

It remains a challenge to engage significant numbers of staff, as the participation figures show (most of the sessions were attended by only 1 to 3 members of staff, often from the education department). If uniformed staff attend, they often need to focus on security and do not always feel they can participate actively, as they need to keep a certain distance from detainees in order to maintain their position as a figure of authority.

"Education staff always try to participate if they have time. It is not so easy for officers who are on duty, since they have to remain alert to security issues at all times." (Member of staff, IRC Dover)

However they very much appreciate the added value of the sessions:

"It's nice for us to see them enjoying themselves (...) because the job isn't just about security." (Member of staff, IRC Haslar)

2.3.2 Detainees, places of detention and local communities

It has generally been more difficult to engage detainees in the community exchange projects. In comparison with activities that were celebrations or activities based on a taster session or "jamming" model, the numbers of participants were significantly lower and it was difficult to achieve continuity with detainees dropping in and out of sessions,

people not returning to the activities spread out over more than one session, and new people coming along who didn't necessarily know what the activity was about.

However, because the facilitators were working with smaller groups, a more creative approach could be adopted and there was more emphasis on teaching specific skills, and individual expression.

The exchange projects have all focussed on creating recordings, songs or visual art work that could be exchanged between the IRC and the community outside. As a result, they were more focussed on an end result (a song, recording or visual art work that could be shared). It was clear from some of our observations and interviews that detainees did not always understand or appreciate the ideas behind this – due to language barriers and the intangibility of some of the processes involved. For some, it simply wasn't what they were interested in doing, or other pressures of organising their case work would take over:

“Participation and willingness to ‘opt-in’ greatly decreased when the group was encouraged to sing and create a song.” (Member of IRC staff, Haslar)

“Detainees were not particularly keen to be made to contribute to the session. Want to ‘lose themselves’ in the music. This resulted in no-one returning for the afternoon session.” (Member of IRC staff, Haslar)

“One thing about the community exchange element was that it was quite dominating – there was a task to do, and this needed to be managed. I felt that Lucky handled it well, but had to keep ploughing on with generating a song and this took a lot of energy. He managed to get people to join in at the end, and in the second session this took off and really worked. It required skilful facilitation, though.” (Observation report)

Another facilitator reported it took “sheer persistence” on the facilitators' part to get recordings done, due to difficulties with continuity in participation. One observation report referred to difficulties one delivery organisation experienced when introducing the community exchange idea to detainees. She noted a lack of understanding amongst the majority of the detainees present and a lack of interaction, caused by an over-reliance on the facilitators' part on verbal language to explain the concept, and the use of complex words which the majority of detainees did not appear to understand. Time pressure exacerbated this as the session started late (due internal communication breakdown within the IRC – not due to negligence on the music delivery organisation or MID's part) and the facilitators had to rush through part of the session to get the work done.

It is clearly a challenge for experienced facilitators and even more so for relatively inexperienced facilitators, particularly those who are not used to working with people whose first language is not English. In addition, circumstances within the IRCs can introduce a chaotic element into sessions which can hamper efforts to undertake “product-led” work – i.e. participants constantly coming and going, delayed start of sessions due to administrative errors/lack of communication between IRC staff, and rooms not being set up in a way that is helpful to the running of a structured session.

However, for some participants these projects were extremely beneficial. Several of the community exchange sessions observed were of a high standard, with a high musician-detainee ratio and expert skills and knowledge being shared for the benefit of participants. Several participants in Dover said that they had been involved in music professionally, outside the IRC, and that this project was creatively challenging for them and therefore a positive experience. The artist's log from a session at Yarl's Wood explains the in-depth processes that were part of the community exchange sessions:

“They [detainees] rehearsed the songs and rhythms to make a really good recording. We did many takes of the songs and people wanted to listen to them back and they self-evaluated their work and then made adjustments to their songs. There were many

moments when the group added debatable comments and we explored the meanings and expressions that everyone was portraying. The room was a roller coaster of fun and inner reflection as the songs made people feel happy yet they also reflected on the meanings in a deep sense.” (Music facilitator)

As the groups never actually got to meet as part of the project, the concept of communication remained relatively abstract to many of the community exchange participants, particularly younger children and the older Age Concern members who were interviewed, but there was a sense amongst facilitators that a link was being created between the detainees and the community groups:

“A very emotional moment when one lad of about 6 years of age was crying when he heard the songs and lyrics from the detainees, when questioned he said that he felt scared as the music made him feel sad. I spoke to the young boy and told him that sometimes people say/sing how they feel so that they can feel that they have shared something and can then feel free from the problem for a while. We spoke to the group and also highlighted that through sadness people often sing to raise their spirits and this was evident on one of the detainees’ recordings and can often be seen in African and Irish musical traditions. I feel that the words and discoveries made within this project have brought people from both communities together on a spiritual level. The group re-recorded the “Home” track and sang the detainee’s lyrics instead of their own version. The children said that the detainees’ recordings were really good and they enjoyed listening to the tracks. This was a great reflection of the sharing that the detainees and Bedford group have achieved.” (Artist log for Yarl’s Wood exchange project)

“I believe that there has been a genuine and emphatic response from the Rowner community to make further links with their neighbours [the IRC] and they are eager to send a copy of the performance via video DVD to the detainees to show what they have done. They seem to be proud that they have made a link with IRC Haslar and have seen the educational benefits that have enabled young people to respect other cultures and to be thoughtful of the detainees’ environment. I believe that the vision of IRC Haslar is no longer just a vision of a brick wall but an appreciation that IRC Haslar is a home temporarily for detainees and the experience of the performance has torn down the mental wall and a neighbourhood has begun to understand the similarities and differences that they both share.” (Artist log for Haslar and Gosport exchange project)

The community exchange element was further challenged by some of the community groups, particularly the youth groups, continually changing – not dissimilar to the situation within IRCs as one music facilitator put it:

“The group this evening saw a few new faces and we still managed to get through the core content. Though we were a little frustrated by the ever changing faces throughout the project we realise that this is an essential pattern of the community and has similarities with the turn over at IRC Haslar.”

Some of the young people who participated in the Gosport community exchange project were not clear on the purpose of the project and the link with the IRC. This can be contributed to the fact that some of them were very young, and many of them had missed previous sessions, so had only just joined the group. It emphasises the challenges of working with fast-changing participation groups and the need to revisit the reasons for the project in each session.

“I know about the IRC. I did learn something about it but I can’t remember now.”
(Young person participating in the community exchange project in Gosport)

“I like learning different languages and about people from different countries.” (Young person participating in the community exchange project in Gosport)

Visual arts elements helped to create a more tangible, visual link:

“They [the detainees] really engaged with the music making and the flags. I think the flags have been a great way to explain and take part in the exchange with Rowner – the fact that they could see the hands from the community centre people (of all ages) and add theirs and feel that they had made a connection to the outside world.” (Artist log)

Several adult members of the Bedford community group had previously visited Yarl’s Wood so there was some prior knowledge and experience amongst this group of the immigration removal centre. This was further enhanced by one of the artists’ impressions recorded in their log:

“The depth of understanding of the issues surrounding detainees has been remarkable and a lot of soul searching has unearthed some very poignant lyrics.” (Artist log)

Some detainees said it had not made them feel less isolated:

“No, you still feel isolated.” (Detainee)

Some IRC staff were unconvinced about the benefits of the community exchange elements to detainees:

[Do you think the community exchange programme made a link between the detainees and the local community?] *“Not the ones we have had so far. What it does do which is very positive is raise awareness in the community as well as dispel myths.”*

[Do you think the exchange aspect has helped detainees?] *“No not necessarily, because most of the time the detainees did not see the outcome partly because by the time the project would be complete the detainees would have moved on. I am unsure what a joint CD production brings to them. I think, my thoughts, that the community benefits and I expects that if perceptions are changed detainees as a whole benefit but individual detainees I am not sure.”*

Others did say it gave them a link with the outside which had reduced their isolation as they felt it had increased awareness of their situation amongst members of the community:

“It helped them to know that their story would be taken outside the confines of the centre.” (Member of staff, IRC Dover)

One detainee said:

“It [the community exchange programme in Dover] was very successful. They understand what goes on here. We were part of the community so we understand them.” (Detainee)

It was difficult to ascertain whether the project changed community participants’ opinions about migration and asylum. The Age Concern participants in Dover were a little unclear about the purpose of the IRCs and the reasons why people were detained. Two people said their memories were poor and they just couldn’t remember. All participants were very interested in the detainees’ recorded stories, because they found links with their own personal histories, or because they found it educational:

“It’s very interesting to listen to other people’s views. We’ve all got our stories. It’s a form of education. We don’t know what the background is of all these people.” (Age Concern participant)

They definitely felt very sympathetic towards the detainees. One elderly man danced to a rap song recorded by detainees when it was played to the group, and four ladies were tapping their feet. The detainees used several lines from recorded stories by the older people at the Age Concern day centre, including:

"I must be someone special, because God don't make no junk." (Age Concern participant who had learning difficulties and was bullied as a young man)

This line became the theme of the song created in Dover IRC. Other lines included were:

"You can't get too close." (From Age Concern participant who had served in the second World War and lost many friends who died in the fighting)

This line became: *"You get too close, be prepared to cry."*

2.3.3 Detainees, places of detention and the wider public

The evidence available so far suggests that the impact of the work on the wider public, beyond local communities, is still very limited. There was little press coverage available through MID's office, though there may have been more local coverage which was collected. The project in Gosport did engage with several local decision-makers through a community based event:

"Through the medium of music, dance and visuals both performers (x20) and audience (x30) were enveloped in the cultural exchange of words, rhythms and artwork which started as input from detainees at IRC Haslar. This first contact in a remote way saw a theme that touched the hearts of both communities as they both explored their own changes in their respective environments. Parental support and community support was very high with the Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport attending, alongside x 6 Police Officers/PCSOs and the Echo Newspaper. At the end of the performance the children went back on the drums closely followed by the Mayor and the Police who also enjoyed their own mini-performance." (Artist log)

3. Conclusion

What types of music interventions MID has been delivering are most effective in facilitating self-expression? (Supporting MID strategic aim 1)

Skilful facilitation

The most successful music intervention is an activity which is guided by participants' interests and needs on the day. As the IRC is such a changeable environment, the best laid plans may need to be set aside on the day because what the facilitator was expecting to find is simply not there. You may end up with a small group, or even one participant in some cases, or a very large group. You may have a space which is not ideal for a music activity, or be asked to be quiet, when you had planned a drumming session. The most important elements therefore are flexibility and a wide range of facilitation techniques in the facilitators' "toolbox" to respond to detainees' interests and needs on the day of delivery. There needs to be a level of planning, but also a willingness and ability to change plans at the last minute if you know your plan simply won't work. There needs to be an ability to communicate with people whose first language is not English. Facilitators need to have experience of working in this type of environment with a multi-cultural client group, or they need to be supported by someone who is until they have the confidence and skills to work in this environment.

Elements of effective practice

As the activities engage different groups, from children to single men and women of all ages, from 40 different nationalities (in year 2), it is not possible to say exactly what the most effective intervention would be, as it will vary per group. Some groups enjoy experiencing music from their own culture; others enjoy engaging in music from other cultures. One size does not fit all. Some detainees got a lot out of participating in the community exchange programmes and recording sessions, but attendance overall for these was low. Participants who did not want to take part in the community exchange work indicated they wanted to join in a less structured activity, or they simply did not fully grasp the concept.

There are some elements to the activities that seemed to work well that were picked out by detainees and IRC staff. These are set out below:

- **Cultural relevance** – activities that incorporate a range of music styles and enable participants to bring their own cultural background into the activity. MID has been successful in providing a range of activities which also include modern music culture such as hip hop or rap, so there is something for everyone.
- **Incorporating a range of interaction levels** - i.e. some participants may only sit and listen, others can participate in different ways, through singing, music, dancing, visual arts etc. Detainees also enjoy a professional performance element (i.e. musicians and dancers demonstrating their skills as part of an activity as well as working together with detainees).
- **Activities that allow for detainee input into the direction of the session and are not too restricted by a focus on an end product.** Although with a small number of participants the focus on song writing and recording music has worked well, at other times it has been difficult to engage detainees in these processes.
- **Celebration** – activities for instance to celebrate Chinese New Year have been very well attended by a wide range of nationalities.

Have MID activities to date improved detainees' quality of life through independently delivered music activities? (Supporting MID strategic aim 2)

Yes. Almost all direct feedback from detainees and IRC staff confirms that detainees' quality of life (men, women and children) is improved in the following ways:

- activities allow them to forget about their problems
- activities reduce stress levels
- detainees enjoy the time they spend with MID artists
- the work is educational
- the activities improve relationships between detainees
- the activities improve better relationships between detainees and staff
- musicians coming in from the outside reduce detainees' sense of isolation
- activities allow detainees to talk about their problems
- activities allow detainees to "let off steam" in an appropriate way
- activities are culturally relevant and help the IRCs to create a culturally diverse environment suitable for the multi-cultural environment

To which extent has the community exchange work created channels of communication between detainees, places of detention, local communities and the wider public? (Supporting MID strategic aim 3)

To some extent. Practical issues around creating real links between community participants and detainees have prevented groups actually meeting. The concept of the community exchange has been difficult to communicate to detainees and the usually transient nature of the IRC community and some of the groups outside has made it challenging to have continuity during these projects. The projects have however succeeded in raising awareness amongst participating community groups about detainees and IRCs, which has been valuable. Channels of communication with the wider public have been very limited.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Year 1 recommendations revisited

To embed music making activities in IRCs, raise awareness of the value of MID's work, and improve communication and relationships between detainees and IRC staff

Year 1:

To reach out to more IRC staff, including uniformed staff (staff training within IRCs will be offered by MID in year 2 and 3 of the programme – pilot sessions have already taken place) and encourage them to take an active part in the programme.

To advocate staff involvement with senior managers within the participating IRCs.

To identify more internal publicity opportunities amongst IRC staff.

End of year 2:

Further IRC staff training has not yet materialised and practical issues which are out of MID's control, surrounding the engagement of staff in sessions, continue. The IRCs are very positive about the work but they are often unable to allocate more than one member of staff to a session. However, IRC staff often seem to pop in and observe a session for a few minutes, and show their appreciation and encouragement.

MID has had some success by activities being positively reported on in internal newsletters, and MID staff have visited a high number of sessions and have met and spoken to IRC staff at many different levels.

All IRC staff who participated in the evaluation were very supportive and willing to contribute their time and efforts to make the programme as successful as possible:

“The scheme is not an ‘off the shelf’ product. It requires buy-in by the host centre and a level of participation. So long as the host is willing to contribute to its success (which we were) it could not be improved.” (IRC Campsfield)

They all said the main benefits for the IRCs were:

- The culturally diverse aspect to MID's work – “breaking down barriers between cultures”
- Providing a purposeful, high quality and educational activity
- Providing an opportunity for detainees to relax/relieve boredom/mix with other detainees and staff
- Bringing people in from the outside (the music facilitators)
- Complementing classroom learning (for children in Yarl's Wood)
- Improving relationship between members of staff and detainees

Suggestions IRC staff made to embed the work into IRC programmes and raise awareness amongst a wider range of staff included:

- Post-event photo displays within the centres – perhaps these could be accompanied by MID logos/insignia etc.
- Inviting other staff members to Education Managers meetings
- Taster sessions for staff

To raise awareness amongst detainees of the nature and the value of the activities on offer

Year 1:

Quite a few detainees who attended sessions did not really know what to expect, and many participants do not stay for the duration of sessions. This is partly due to other pressures on them, but it may be helpful to develop marketing and outreach methods to attract and retain participants. Drum Runners (formerly TAPS) have started to develop various ways of doing this, which seem to be working well – best practice is being shared amongst partners at the practice forums and by artists from different delivery organisations working together.

At end of year 2:

At the practice forums, this issue was discussed. Posters seem ineffective due to language barriers and imagery used doesn't really convey what the sessions are about. This issue which could be solved with a more pro-active approach by IRC staff prior to sessions, by talking to detainees and explain the activities to them. At Haslar, Drum Runners were able to record a musical tannoy message with detainees which was played over the tannoy system and brought more people into a later session on the same day. Drum Runners have also gone onto the wings to talk to people, demonstrate instruments and encourage them to come to sessions.

Feedback from IRC staff confirms that they are trying to do more to engage detainees and that they feel it is their responsibility to improve attendance.

To build capacity to deliver the programme

Year 1:

MID currently relies mainly on MfC and Drum Runners to deliver projects. As the programme develops and is spread over a larger geographical area, further project delivery partners will be needed.

At end of year 2:

Music providers now include the Asian Music Circuit who have a range of Asian musicians, workshop facilitators and dancers who have contributed to the MID programme.

Oxford Concert Party delivered a project in Campsfield House.

New artists are working together with experienced artists from different organisations to enable skill-sharing.

To broaden the reach of the community exchange programme

Year 1:

During the first year, the community exchange programme mainly worked with children in primary schools, and with one youth club. A public event in Dover also engaged parents and raised awareness amongst audience members who attended. Opportunities to raise awareness amongst a wider range of members of the public should be developed as part of the community exchange work.

At end of year 2:

During year 2, the community exchange programme was broadened to include a church choir in Bedford, an Age Concern day centre in Dover and a youth club in Gosport. Unfortunately, despite various attempts by MID staff to arrange for community groups to physically meet detainees, this was not practically possible. Public events were part of

some of the community exchange work and the methodology of sharing recordings was part of each programme.

4.2 Year 2 recommendations

Review the community exchange programmes

The exchanges seem to have benefits in terms of raising awareness within the communities, but there are doubts as to whether they really link detainees to the outside and reduce their isolation. The aims and objectives of the community exchange work may need to be revisited, and whether the fact they have become very product-led programmes is a desirable way of working (there are advantages and disadvantages as outlined in section 2.3). It may also be prudent for further skills-sharing to take place around the delivery of community exchange work, and to assess whether these programmes have sufficient resources allocated to them in order for MID to achieve the desired publicity and communication with the wider community.

Sharing best practice

MID is now in the process of producing on-line guidance for artists. Discussion at the Practice Forums indicated artists would welcome further training and professional development opportunities. Some of the observation reports and feedback from staff and IRCs indicate that further training in the facilitation skills required to support the complex nature of the client group and the IRC setting would be welcomed, and is likely to improve the quality of the overall programme.

Evaluation

Gathering direct feedback from detainees has been much improved in year 2, thanks to the active participation of artists in the documentation of the programme, and increased resources for independent evaluators to visit and observe sessions. Feedback from music facilitators was however mainly provided by a small dedicated group of artists, and tactics to engage more facilitators in the process have been discussed at the practice forum. The documentation processes are again being reviewed after consulting with the delivery organisations at the practice forum and will be re-designed to inform the final report at the end of year 3. IRC staff have also been very willing to provide feedback.