



**Saint Pancras
Community
Association**



Reimagining the SPCA Recording and Rehearsal Studio



ADVISORS
Sarah Stanlick
Esther Boucher-Yip

TEAM
Elwyn Akers
Flynn Duniho
Adam Kalayjian
Isabella St. Angelo

SPONSOR
Nigel Spencer,
St Pancras Community
Association



WPI

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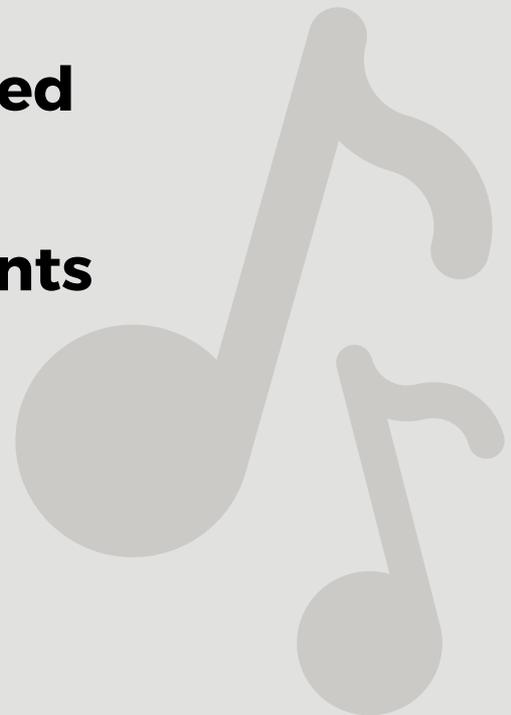
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the underutilized recording studio at the St. Pancras Community Association (SPCA) in Camden, London, and aims to unlock its potential as a community resource. The study involved engaging with SPCA members, local recording studios, and non-profit organizations to evaluate existing community programs and explore opportunities for community engagement and partnership.

Initial interviews with SPCA employees highlighted two main objectives: generating revenue and increasing adolescent engagement. Subsequent discussions with a non-profit organization revealed potential programming options, including podcasting, individual usage, and music and recording education. Further discussions with a music studio manager and a local music teacher provided insights into necessary



Fig 1. Artist's Rendition of the Current Studio

equipment and management practices, notably the importance of an audio engineer for operational security and promotional activities. Based on these findings, the study proposes a comprehensive plan to revitalize the recording studio to serve the broader needs of the Camden community and support the SPCA's goals. Through strategic programming and management, we suggest a path forward for transforming the SPCA recording studio into a vibrant hub of creative and educational activity.

INTRODUCTION

The St Pancras Community Association, or SPCA, actively enhances the lives of local community members, aiming to provide a welcoming space where anyone can receive support, relieve stress, or connect with their peers. In 2015, the SPCA built a recording studio inside the community center that has since been underutilized. Because most recording studios in London target professional use, the SPCA has the potential to use their studio to accommodate those who may not have the funds or technical knowledge needed to access other studios. Although the SPCA runs several community programs, there are currently no programs utilizing the full potential of the studio space. Additionally, the studio currently lacks some of the equipment and instruments needed for a functional and versatile recording space. To investigate the potential of the SPCA recording studio, we conducted in-depth interviews with local professionals to understand how existing organizations run their studios. We also spoke with other local community centers and organizations to explore options for mutually beneficial relationships between the wider community and the SPCA recording studio.

We based our deliverables around these interviews, ultimately aiming to enhance the SPCA's outreach and spread audio content creation throughout the local community.

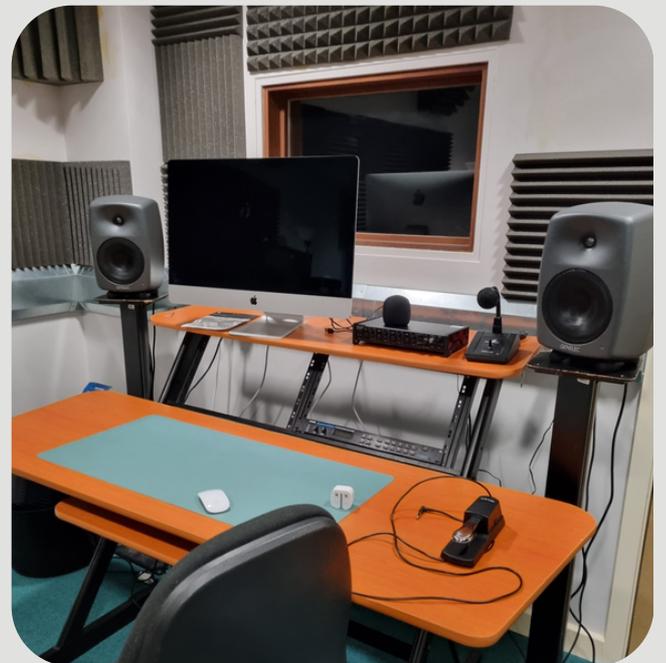


Fig 2. The Recording Studio

BACKGROUND

Introduction

To understand the value of developing a recording studio at the Saint Pancras Community Association in London, we first examined the past and present role of community centers in Britain. Then, we explored how a community can benefit from the creation and usage of audio and music content. We investigated these benefits in terms of community connectedness and well-being, as well as in response to particular hardships facing the community. We also explored ways in which accessibility to recording studios is stifled by equipment and property costs, in addition to recent examples of non-profit organizations providing recording studio access to underprivileged communities. Understanding the history of community centers, the significance of audio creation in a community setting, and its lack of accessibility was crucial for grounding our assessment of the SPCA recording studio.



Fig 3. The SPCA Building (spca.org.uk, 2021)

BACKGROUND

Community centers face a wide range of challenges as they support large communities

Because of their role and responsibility in society, community centers encounter a wide range of challenges. As the population grows, the gap between needs and supply for the community increases. Often neither the quantity nor quality of services at the disposal of families is enough. Some families and individuals never seek any services, some receive insufficient support, and others go to services for their needs and are turned away. This is where community centers often must take the role of the provider. The child and family sectors struggle under the effect of a competitive market that fails to provide optimal services without government intervention.

Economic theory suggests that public good nature alone does not provide enough funding for support services such as child care, youth development programs, and skills development programs. Therefore, government intervention or nonprofits are often needed for support (Izmir et al., 2009). However, the government tends to focus on the major voting group - the median-to-high income group.

This puts an exceeding amount of pressure on community centers as their role grows from a supplemental service to a major provider for both minority groups and the general public. Furthermore, they often serve as the intermediate between the individual and the political structures. Although they face great challenges, community centers and other nonprofits are an integral part of civil society and democratic functioning.



BACKGROUND

The SPCA enhances the local community through various programs and services

The SPCA aims to facilitate positive growth in the Camden community through a variety of programs and services. Registered as a charity since 1999, it is accessible to all Camden residents but specifically targets those in the St Pancras and Somers Town ward who are most in need.

The SPCA serves both individuals and families, specializing in providing activities for young children and seniors. Their facility offers spaces including meeting rooms, a main hall, a cafeteria, sports pitches, a garden, a kitchen, and a music studio. Although these spaces are used for various community initiatives provided by the SPCA, they can also be rented out by an individual or a business. To promote engagement within the community, there are several programs and activities run by the SPCA that are offered for free or at a low price.

For instance, the center runs a low-cost daycare/nursery for families that may be struggling with childcare. Another popular program is “Golden Years” which caters to those aged 60+ in Camden. Membership for this is only £10 for the year, and there are different activities offered weekly. Each of these initiatives and more give the SPCA a fostering role in the Camden community, especially for those facing hardship.

The recording studio at the SPCA was intended to be rented out, equipped with basic speakers, instruments, and microphones. In the past few years, the SPCA has considered partnering with various music organizations to manage and support the recording studio. However, because the SPCA would have had to cede significant ownership of the recording studio in return for a small percentage of the revenue, these partnerships were never put into motion.

BACKGROUND

Community adversities increase the demand for content creation

Like many communities around the world, Camden residents are subject to various adversities that are often out of their control. Community-wide hardship resulting from current events opens a demand for audio content production, such as podcasts, to document personal experiences. For example, Camden is very welcoming to refugees, working to provide housing, food, and health care for them (refugeelawinitiative, 2022).

However, refugees are not as well supported in the greater UK region. The two major groups of refugees originate from Ukraine and Afghanistan. Both have struggled with getting support from the government, with some families having to wait days or even weeks to start receiving care. There are also strict requirements for being classified as a refugee, which can lead to complications and slowdowns in the already complex process of getting the support they need (refugeelawinitiative, 2022).

Additionally, there exists a notable bias concerning the origins of the refugees, which can further influence the process. In an online study, it was discovered that an average of 71% of people agreed that helping refugees was needed.

This view decreased to 70% when asked specifically about Ukrainian refugees, and dropped significantly to 50% when asked about Afghan refugees (UCL, 2022). Even for this small portion of the community, many stories and perspectives can be recorded and shared through spoken-word content.

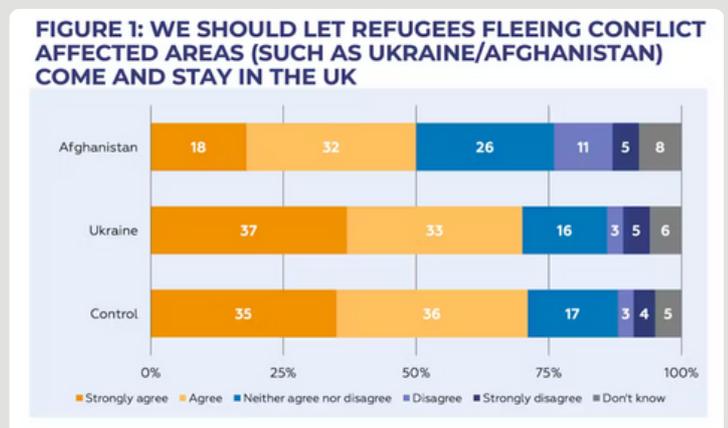


Fig 4. Survey Responses For Refugees (UCL, 2022)

BACKGROUND

Music and audio content support community well-being

The arts can serve as a powerful tool for fostering communities and building solidarity among individuals. NPR's StoryCorps contains stories from individuals all across the United States. Each podcast episode follows a different person, each telling their story. These stories provide glimpses into the lives of people from different backgrounds and cultures, portraying both the differences and similarities humanity shares (StoryCorps, n.d.).

Music and artistic expression serve as an outlet for personal expression. The City of Asylum, a sanctuary for exiled writers in Pittsburgh, fosters community and social equity by providing music and art programs for all. The sanctuary allows for free creative personal expression which can positively impact mental health. For the past decade, mental health concerns among young adolescents have been on the rise.

Organized music therapy can be a creative way to help counteract these issues. Although the extent of impact ranges, research has shown that musical activities can help relieve the weight of mental health issues by acting as a temporary calming agent. Improvisational music therapy often explores themes of grief and conflict in their programs, to promote emotional expression in a unique way (Clements-Cortés & Yu, 2021).

Musical Mind, a group run in London for adults struggling with mental health, is another example of successful music therapy. For its members, Musical Minds is an integral part of their mental health support. While using music therapy techniques, members can explore creative self-expression, allowing them to relieve stress and enhance community bonding (Stige, 2016). Although similar in socio-economic and multicultural status, Camden lacks comparable music programs that target mental well-being.

BACKGROUND

London lacks accessible recording studios

London has a deep history with music recording and is known to be a musically creative area, with around 72 studios in operation today. London's most famous studio is arguably Abbey Road Studios as it has been the musical home of many world-renowned artists including The Beatles. Abbey Road is a prime example of London's many professional and historical recording studios. Although these studios offer great opportunities for professional artists, they fail to be accessible to everyone who may want to use them for personal applications. Most recording studios charge an hourly rate for use, averaging from £30 to £100. More often than not, a studio user would need to rent the space for longer than one hour to record a full song, podcast, or other audio content. On average, it can take between 8-12 hours of studio usage to produce a complete song (How Long Does It Take a Band to Record a Song in a Studio? - River Studios, n.d.).

This means that creating content in recording studios can quickly become very costly, which strongly deters any non-professional community members from utilizing the space. Beginner and novice studio users face the challenge of needing expert technical knowledge, which can be difficult for studios to provide at a low cost.

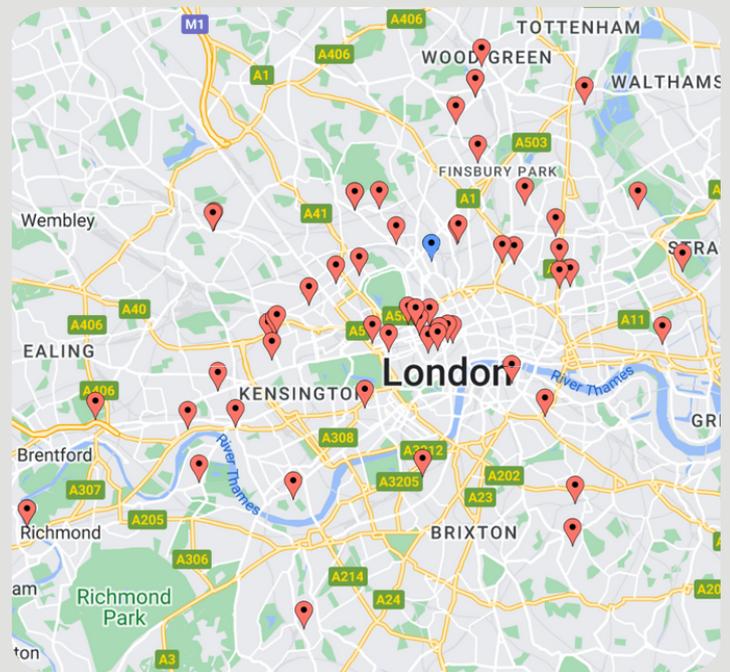


Fig 5. London Recording Studios. Blue pin is SPCA

BACKGROUND

Non-profit recording studio initiatives provide accessibility and educational benefits to the local community

Music studios, traditionally expensive due to equipment and property costs, have seen increased accessibility through non-profit initiatives. For example, the MEMa studio in Chicago offers audio and film equipment to underprivileged communities via an equipment truck, showcasing career opportunities and fostering interest in music and film (The MEMa Studio, n.d.). Similarly, in London, Progression Sessions collaborates with Evolutionary Arts Hackney to provide free studio space support at Studio 36. This includes on-site engineers, software, and equipment for audio production. These efforts aim to lower the financial barriers for young, underprivileged individuals, highlighting the role of music education in personal expression and development (Studio 36, n.d.). By offering recording studio access, these organizations empower local communities with insights into music and audio production careers, enhance connections with music and the arts, and advance music and arts education. Nonetheless, Progression Sessions' reach is limited, indicating a gap in similar opportunities for other communities.



Fig 6. Studio 36 (progressionsessions.org, 2023)

BACKGROUND

Conclusion

Community centers such as the SPCA are in a unique position to foster creativity, communication, and self-expression in their communities. Enhancing the SPCA recording studio is a great way to benefit individuals in the community and increase revenue through commercial endeavors. With the improved business model of the recording studio, the SPCA will have many more opportunities to create fulfilling and engaging programs for the community. This aligns well with the SPCA's mission to provide high-quality programs and services that contribute to the well-being and closeness of the Camden community.

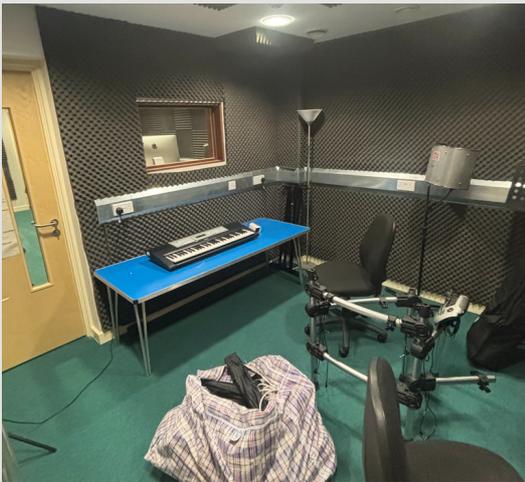


Fig 7.

The SPCA Recording Studio

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

We conducted several in-depth interviews with organizations that could potentially partner with the SPCA's recording studio and industry professionals. When interviewing industry professionals, we gathered information about the operations of recording studios and the typical uses of a studio within the community. We also gained insight and advice on how we can best support the local community through the recording studio. Before producing a comprehensive plan for the SPCA studio, it was essential to collect information from these various demographics to guide our project direction and deliverables. Throughout the project, two questions guided our research:

01

How does a shared music space contribute to individual well-being and expressiveness, community cohesiveness, and the ability to express and converse about community issues?

What features, equipment, and expertise in music studios optimize versatility and accessibility does the SPCA need to promote community use?

02

METHODOLOGY

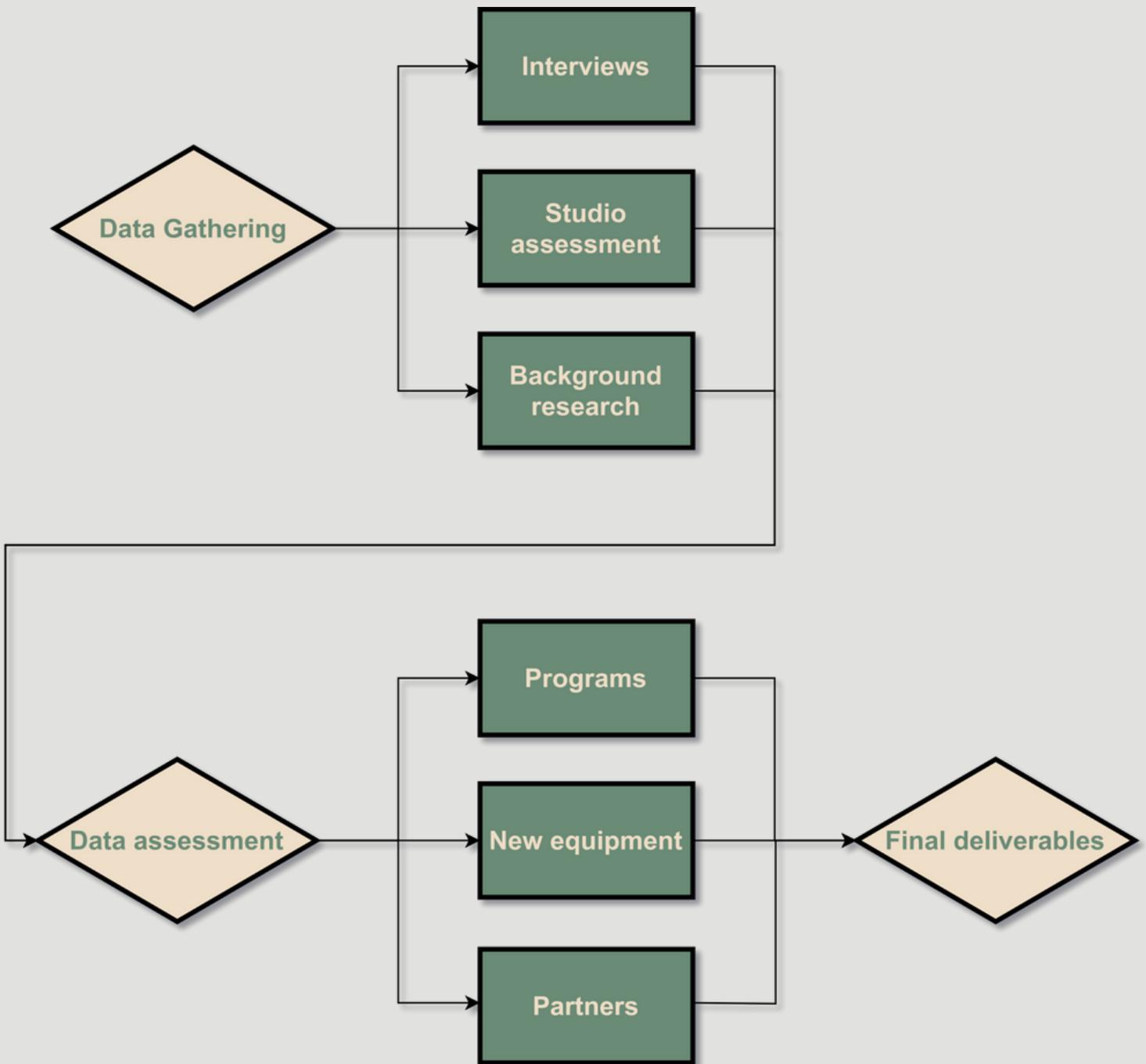


Fig 8. Our methodology flowchart

METHODOLOGY

Understanding the Current State of the Recording Studio

It was essential to first assess the current state of the studio in order to understand what the studio currently has versus what it may need. We created an inventory list of all equipment in the studio and organized the space so that the equipment was easily accessible. The inventory list can be found in 4.2 of the appendix. We included two name columns for the sake of clarity, one for the generic name and one for the model name and number if applicable (Figure 9).

We designed the list to be both clear to those with less knowledge of equipment and useful to people who may be more familiar with the specific models of equipment. We also noted whether the equipment was damaged and tested most of the equipment to ensure all equipment is working.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Item	Model	Quantity	Room	Notes	
2	Keyboard	Yamaha PSR E203		1 Recording		
3	Keyboard stand	N/A		4 Recording and Storage		
4	Microphone shield	SE Electronics Reflexion Filter		1 Recording		
5	Pop filter	N/A		5 Recording and Storage		
6	Music stand	N/A		3 Multiple		
7	Electronic drum kit	Carlsbro CSD-200		1 Recording		
8	Acoustic guitar	Ashton CG44AM		2 Recording		
9	Ring light	EOTO Light 18N		1 Recording		
10	Speaker	Laney Monitor (unknown model)		1 Recording		
11	Lamp	N/A		2 Recording		
12	Microphone	Generic condenser mic		2 Recording		
13	Piano	Rollan Go piano 88		1 Recording		
14	Cymbol Stand and Cymbol	N/A		1 Storage		
15	Condenser Mic	Majority Rs Pro		1 Storage		
16	Foldable Music Stand	N/A		2 Storage		bent, might not be usable
17	Microphone	AKG P220		3 Storage		Includes shock mount and cable

Fig 9. Inventory spreadsheet

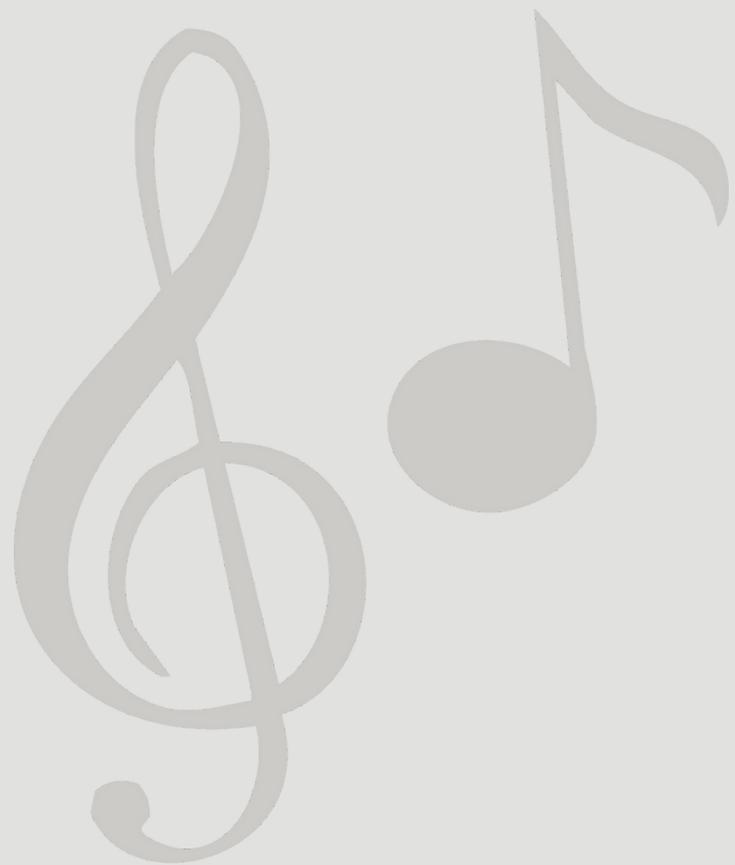
METHODOLOGY

Local Venues and Organizations are Essential to Data Collection

To frame our work around the desired outcomes of the community itself, we collected data from representatives of various venues and organizations in the Camden area. We conducted interviews with local recording studios, community groups, and music experts, and reached out to local venues using a list given to us by our sponsor liaison. Through this list, we were able to contact many different companies that could potentially partner with the SPCA, or simply provide valuable information on the functionality of recording studios. Additionally, we received several personal contacts through the SPCA for community groups and individuals. Through a fellow IQP group. We connected with the Somali Youth Development Resource Center or SYDRC to explore the possibility of partnering to create a youth program involving the studio. Ultimately, we were able to conduct interviews with Care4Calais, an independent local artist, a studio manager from Roundhouse, and a local music technology teacher. We compiled a formal write-up on the insights gained from each interview to organize and further analyze our work.



Fig 10. Care4Calais (care4calais.org, 2022)



METHODOLOGY

Music Studio Employees Let Us Understand Recording Studio Requirements

We interviewed a studio manager at Roundhouse to better understand how the SPCA recording studio should be run. We first asked a few basic questions like how long he'd been involved with the studio and what his role was in the studio. We then asked what services the organization offered, whether they catered more to professional or amateur use, and what kind of activities the studio was used for. We also asked about whether they run any programs, be they educational or community-based, out of the studio in addition to renting it out. We then transitioned into questions about the space itself and gathered information on what equipment they had, as well as if they provided a selection of instruments for customer use. Additionally, we asked about the software provided on the recording studio computers, and what the most important aspects of creating an accessible and versatile studio were. To collect quantitative data, we inquired about the average size of groups using the studio, the average duration of each session, how many sessions one group typically came in for, and prices for renting the studio.

Finally, we asked if they had any specific advice on successfully running a recording studio to catch any insights that we may have missed. To analyze this data, we recorded the interview and created a written analysis, to refer back to in our later discussions.



Fig 11. The Roundhouse (Sones, 2010)

METHODOLOGY

Music Educators Inform Possible Recording Studio Programs at the SPCA

We connected with a local music technology teacher to understand the most important aspects of developing educational and explorative music and audio programs. We asked questions to gather information on his background in education, as well as his connections with other local music programs. We asked questions about the limitations of music education for youth in the area, and what a successful program utilizing the SPCA studio might look like. We utilized coding from our semi-structured interviews to identify and rank key aspects of program development and accessibility from music educator feedback. Additionally, we aimed to understand students' varied levels of interest in music and any changes due to exposure to music education programs. Instead of surveying students, we asked additional questions to music educators to understand their views on developing student interest in music education. Additionally, we interviewed a founder of Progression Sessions, a charity focused on music education programs.

We posed similar questions about music education and focused our inquiry on how the Progression Sessions studios are utilized for music education, career development, and other youth activities.



Fig 12. Progression Sessions
(progressionsessions.org, 2023)

METHODOLOGY

Underrepresented Groups Can Show Interest in Community Expression

Underrepresented groups, including refugees and minorities, helped us understand key aspects of community bonding and communication through shared spaces and activities of the prospective usage of the recording studio. In the past, the SPCA partnered with Care4Calais, a group that works to support refugees from Afghanistan, in order to host fundraisers and run events. They helped refugees through legal processes and provided basic supplies such as shoes and warm coats to refugees, as well as helping refugees through legal processes. Through the SPCA's contact, we were able to talk to a volunteer who is in charge of the Camden and London efforts from Care4Calais. We aimed to identify interest in community music and recording opportunities including recording and sharing stories through structured interviews. We tried to identify if certain minority groups needed a space to safely represent their culture and determine if a recording studio space could benefit them.

We also aimed to understand the role of community centers in interacting with and benefiting underrepresented communities like refugees, as there may be interesting opportunities to benefit these groups through targeted SPCA programs. Finally, we utilized coding and structured interview questions to determine interest in programs and understand the situation of various underrepresented groups across multiple interviews. To find participants for this category of interview, we utilized the existing SPCA connections to community organizations as possible networks to other local community organizations.



Fig 13. Care4Calais Donation Event (care4calais.org, 2023)

METHODOLOGY

Obstacles

Our research methods faced a few significant obstacles. We reached out to several different recording studios, community associations, and audio equipment manufacturers, but many did not respond. This was especially frustrating early on in the process. Thankfully, we received a few responses that turned out to be incredibly helpful connections.

One of the biggest challenges that the SPCA faced with the recording studio was that they lacked the funding necessary to staff the recording studio or buy more equipment for it. Because of this, the studio must be self-sufficient for it to be used for any significant period. This meant that the space not only had to be usable and enticing for the programming but also for those who were renting out the space. In addition to garnering use of the studio, the revenue generated had to be enough to cover repairs and any other costs that the recording studio might incur.

Ethical Considerations

There were a few components of our methods that needed ethical consideration. Because this project worked with refugees, a vulnerable subset of the London population, we had to consider the effects of our research. Refugees are often unfairly judged and treated. To avoid unnecessary conflict, we deemed it more efficient to talk to those involved in helping out the refugee communities instead of speaking directly to refugees themselves.



Fig 14. Care4Calais Site Work
(care4calais.org, 2023)

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

We utilized a qualitative framework that sought out participants who could offer rich, detailed insights, favoring the depth of information over broad statistical representation. Each interviewee provided a unique perspective through which we can gain a fuller understanding of the community's cultural landscape. In Figure 16, we provide an overview of the key individuals interviewed throughout our study.

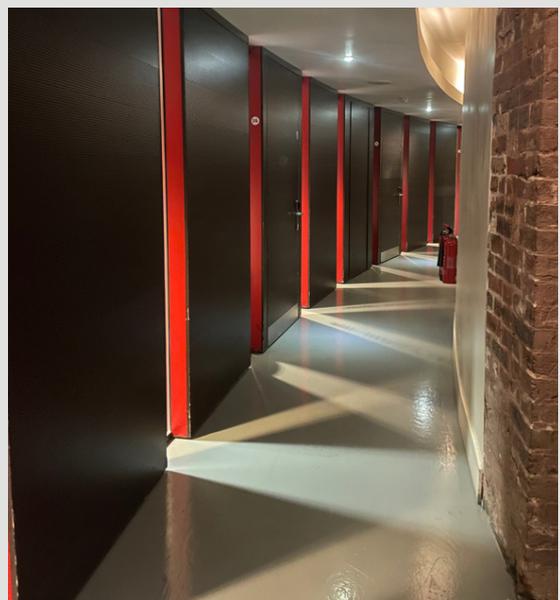


Fig 15.

Team Tour of Roundhouse

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

INTERVIEW MAP

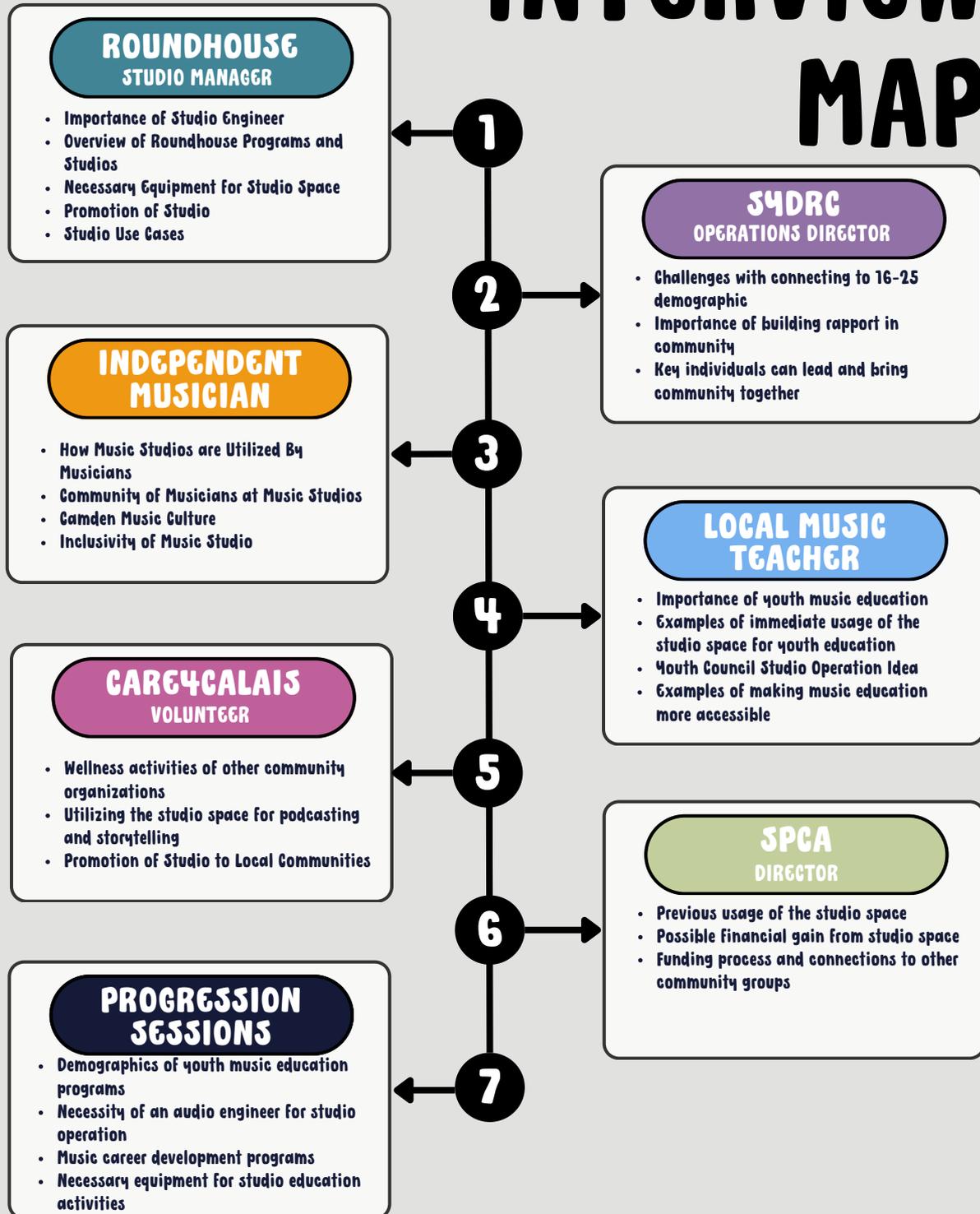


Fig 16. Overview of Interviews

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Partnerships with organizations and professionals create sustainable programs that enhance community engagement and well-being

First, building strong connections between program professionals and participants is crucial for increasing community engagement. According to the SYDRC operations director, young adults have low participation and return rates in community center programs. As described by the director, they are “transactional.” When joining a program or using a space, they tend to only stay for that particular program rather than becoming a regular member. However, there are some ways to entice continuous participation. According to the studio manager from Roundhouse, a close relationship between the audio engineer and studio guests promotes further attendance and participation. Often, if artists had a good experience with their audio engineer while using a studio, they will return to the recording studio longer. Similarly, according to a founder at Progression Sessions, music teachers create connections with the community, promoting the space to a greater demographic. Music teachers are “probably some of the best placed people nearby to bring in young people.” After music teachers create those connections,

the knowledge of the space “grow[s] by word of mouth.” As claimed by the SYDRC director, the key to engaging with groups is by creating close personal relationships within the group and allowing knowledge of the program to spread naturally. Professionals with musical and technical skills can build connections with program participants, which contribute to further advertisement for the space, and eventually higher levels of community engagement.

“The school music teachers, or just the school teachers, are probably some of the best placed people nearby to start to bring young people in who are suitable. And then from there, it tends to grow by word of mouth.”

-Progression Sessions

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Partnerships with organizations and professionals create sustainable programs that enhance community engagement and well-being

Specific and tailored programs efficiently increase community well-being. At Roundhouse, there is a program that offers an interactive sound and video experience for young people with disabilities. Although these programs center around art, they also provide significant mental health support for disabled people who statistically have higher levels of mental distress (Cree, 2020). By modifying the program to support this demographic's specific needs, Roundhouse is designing a more engaging and beneficial program for this group. Additionally, for the members who use their recording and DJing space, Roundhouse employees will do check-ins with members who show signs of mental distress and illness. Roundhouse's Creative Studios Membership program is for artists aged 13 to 25. With an age demographic prone to higher levels of mental distress, including a program that cares for well-being is beneficial to the success of the studio and its members (Jurewicz, 2015). Similarly, Progression Sessions offers a program that allows young people to voice their views on gentrification and changing cultural landscapes through song.



Fig 17. Roundhouse Spaces (roundhouse.org.uk, 2023)

These programs allow young people to express themselves through art and voice their opinions, supporting their mental well-being. As described by their director, SYDRC creates programs to support the specific challenges of their community. For instance, because adolescents in the community struggle with employability, the SYDRC created a two-month program designed to support young adult career development. By tailoring this program to young adults' specific needs and trends, the SYDRC gives adolescents greater support. From our interviews, it is clear that a successful community organization engages its target demographic through specific, tailored programs that support well-being.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Partnerships with organizations and professionals create sustainable programs that enhance community engagement and well-being

Partnerships with organizations create sustainable programs. For example, Progression Sessions partners with Evolutionary Arts Hackney, or EarthH to run their programming. In this partnership, Progression Sessions freely uses EarthH's studios, and in return, Progression Sessions runs outreach programs that EarthH needs to obtain specific funding. A partnership has the potential to support several programs for several years, extending the capabilities of a single organization. Since they first began this partnership in 2022, Progression Sessions has been able to support various programs, connecting with local vocational schools including New Regents College. The programs with New Regents College focus on supporting young people who are excluded from mainstream schooling.

With this program, New Regents College gave Progression Sessions access to a whole community of students, building a network of potential members. For smaller organizations, partnerships can be a tool for reaching new communities and designing successful programs.

“[Our relationship with EarthH] is very reciprocal”

- Progression Sessions



Fig 18. Progression Sessions (progressionsessions.org, 2023)

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Implementing a Streamlined Recording Studio Plan Enhances Community Access and Engagement

Creating a technical plan of operation for a recording studio enables smooth usage of a recording studio space and makes it accessible for various community programs. One important aspect of an operational plan is the music and recording equipment required for the studio to function. We discovered that a select set of high-quality equipment and software enhances a studio's maintainability and ease of use. Initially, the Roundhouse studio manager contended that a small studio designed for community use should possess a straightforward array of high-quality equipment. This approach ensures that the equipment does not require frequent replacement and keeps the knowledge barrier low. Moreover, it guarantees that the equipment is user-friendly and ultimately utilized by community members. Roundhouse describes an ideal small studio setup for general use as a computer and interface audio system that can handle 4 microphones or instruments, a simple set of microphones for instrument and vocal recording, headphones, and studio monitors.

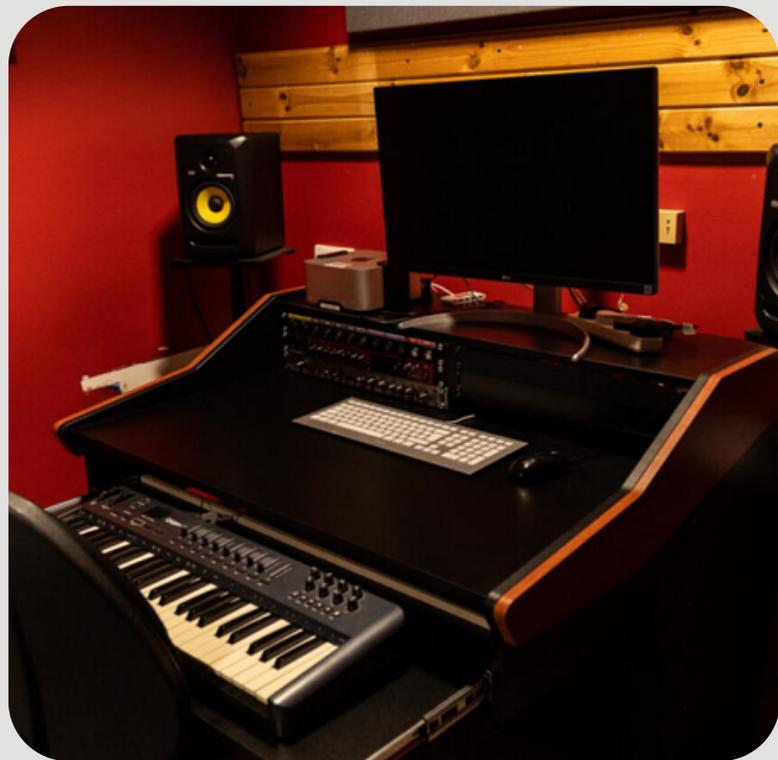


Fig 19. Roundhouse Project Rooms
(roundhouse.org.uk, 2023)

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Implementing a Streamlined Recording Studio Plan Enhances Community Access and Engagement

This allows many genres of music to be created within the studio space and reduces the risk of damage by user error. Additionally, a founder of Progression Sessions expressed that equipment can be focused on a general type of music production, explaining that their studio is mainly set up for vocal recording since that is what the majority of their members want to use the space for. Because Progression Sessions studios are focused on computer-centric production and vocal recording, the studios have a limited set of equipment. Given that both individuals have applied these insights to a variety of programs and studios at their respective organizations, these insights on studio equipment can be applied to other prospective studio spaces. Therefore, a studio aimed to support music production and podcasting programs by youth musicians and other members of the community can effectively function with just a simple set of equipment and software.

“[Our studios] are set up more for vocal recording more than anything else, because that’s generally what is useful for lots of the styles of music that young people want to make.”

- Progression Sessions

- Microphones for Vocal and Instrument Recording
- Speakers
- Headphones
- Audio Interface
- Piano Keyboard
- Computer
- Music Production Software

Fig 20. A Simple, Streamlined Equipment List

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Implementing a Streamlined Recording Studio Plan Enhances Community Access and Engagement

Another important aspect of a music studio's technical plan of operation is the staff needed for the space. A skilled professional or student is vital to a recording studio, enhancing equipment longevity, reducing the knowledge barrier for use, and boosting collaboration and community. The Roundhouse studio manager explained that their organization always has at least one audio engineer on duty to help out anyone in the studio spaces. This makes the space more welcome to beginners since the audio engineer can help with both mixing and mastering, as well as any kind of hardware that the studios have. They also mentioned that equipment is kept in working condition since the audio engineer can ensure the equipment isn't misused or mishandled. On top of their regular duties managing the studios themselves, engineers routinely complete additional maintenance tasks at Roundhouse, fixing broken audio equipment such as wires and electronics. Progression Sessions also describes the essential nature of a studio engineer role in a recording studio, citing similar concerns like equipment management, security concern reporting, and allowing the studio to be utilized

by a wide range of age demographics. Given the multifaceted benefits and critical needs highlighted, a studio targeting a variety of community use cases must have an on-site studio engineer. Although an engineer is necessary for recording studios, it is evident that student musicians can fulfill the duties of a professional engineer to boost studio utilization at a low cost. Speaking with an independent music teacher in the Camden area, we learned that older music students can run a recording studio for community use, manage equipment, report security concerns, and lower the barrier to entry. These claims were substantiated by the founder of Progression Sessions, who explained that bringing in higher-level music students to manage the space is an effective way to enable youth education programs in a recording studio as well as enable individual usage without a professional studio engineer. The music teacher also described the possible increase in peer-to-peer learning and collaboration when interacting with the volunteer students, compared to a professional engineer.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Implementing a Streamlined Recording Studio Plan Enhances Community Access and Engagement

Additionally, volunteering as a studio engineer offers music students valuable opportunities for responsibility and career development. Therefore, non-professional studio engineers like higher-level music students can enable community usage and youth education opportunities in a recording studio. The digital footprint of recording studios greatly enhances their visibility and interaction with potential users.

The Roundhouse website, shown in Figure 21, offers complete equipment inventories and studio images. Both the Roundhouse studio coordinator and an independent artist highlighted the value of making such information readily accessible online. This proves particularly beneficial for prospective users who are contemplating utilizing the studio but have yet to make a decision. It acts not only as promotional material but also as a reference for individuals to determine the most suitable studio for their needs. Therefore, incorporating an online presence is a crucial component of any studio's operational plan.

“So if someone outside that youth group wants to use the space to record and obviously they need an engineer, you could call one of [the members of the youth council] up.”

- Music Teacher

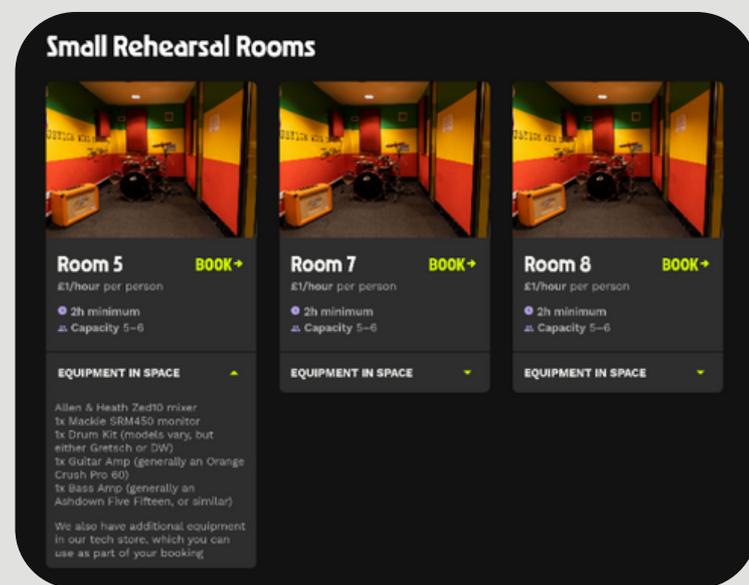


Fig 21. Roundhouse Booking Site (roundhouse.org.uk, 2023)

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

Strategic Implementation Plan for the SPCA: Short-Term and Long-Term Recommendations

We have outlined several recommendations that will successfully reimagine the recording and rehearsal studio space at the SPCA. We are excited that there are opportunities for programs to transform the studio space into an active storytelling and educational center.

Short Term

Start by utilizing the recommendations focusing on gathering of equipment, including:

- Reaching out to technical expertise we have connected with:
 - Roundhouse Studio Manager - Has a tremendous amount of experience managing and building recording studios, and knows various equipment and use cases of recording studios. They are very interested in assisting with the project and can recommend a set of simple equipment (as described in the above findings) to best utilize the studio for the recommended programs described below. They would like to see the studio in person to best recommend equipment additions to the space.
 - Independent Music Teacher - Given a background in music technology and experience with education in music studios, they could additionally recommend equipment needed for the space.
 - We recommend utilizing these connections alongside the most recent catalog of equipment, given that there are many valuable pieces of equipment already in the studio. Based on the Roundhouse studio manager's comments on the current catalog of equipment, they may be able to suggest ways to utilize the current equipment for initial programs while funding is being secured for additional pieces.

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

Short Term

- Connect with donation and grant sources with requests for equipment after focused equipment recommendations have been created.
 - Reach out to Roundhouse's past-funding network (music/studio focused): This can be an effective way to gain funding for initial purchases of equipment for the studio space. The list can be found in Other Materials.
 - Arts Council - National Lottery Project Grants: Currently focused on “Supporting Grassroots Music” and is a funding source for Progression Sessions and Roundhouse.
- Begin implementing Studio Engineer Youth Council:
 - Connect with the independent music teacher and local schools to begin forming a community of interested students for the Youth Council.
 - An updated list of equipment and pictures would benefit this outreach.
- Test studio for program usage
 - With interested Youth Council students or professional expertise above, test utilizing the equipment for the SPCA or Care4Calais podcasting program ideas. This will inform specific programming recommendations for long-term usage.

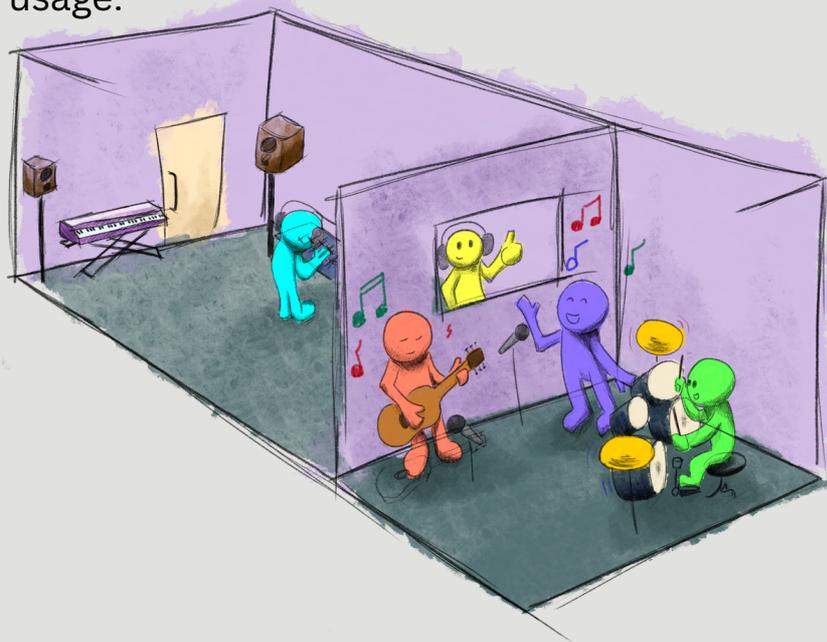


Fig 22. Artist's Rendition of the Reimagined Recording Studio

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

Long Term

- Add a page for the studio to the SPCA website
 - Add photos of the space itself
 - Add photos and information about the equipment in the recording studio
 - Display the recording studio more prominently on the website
 - Provide a way to view the usage guidelines
 - Add a short tutorial on how to use the equipment to the website

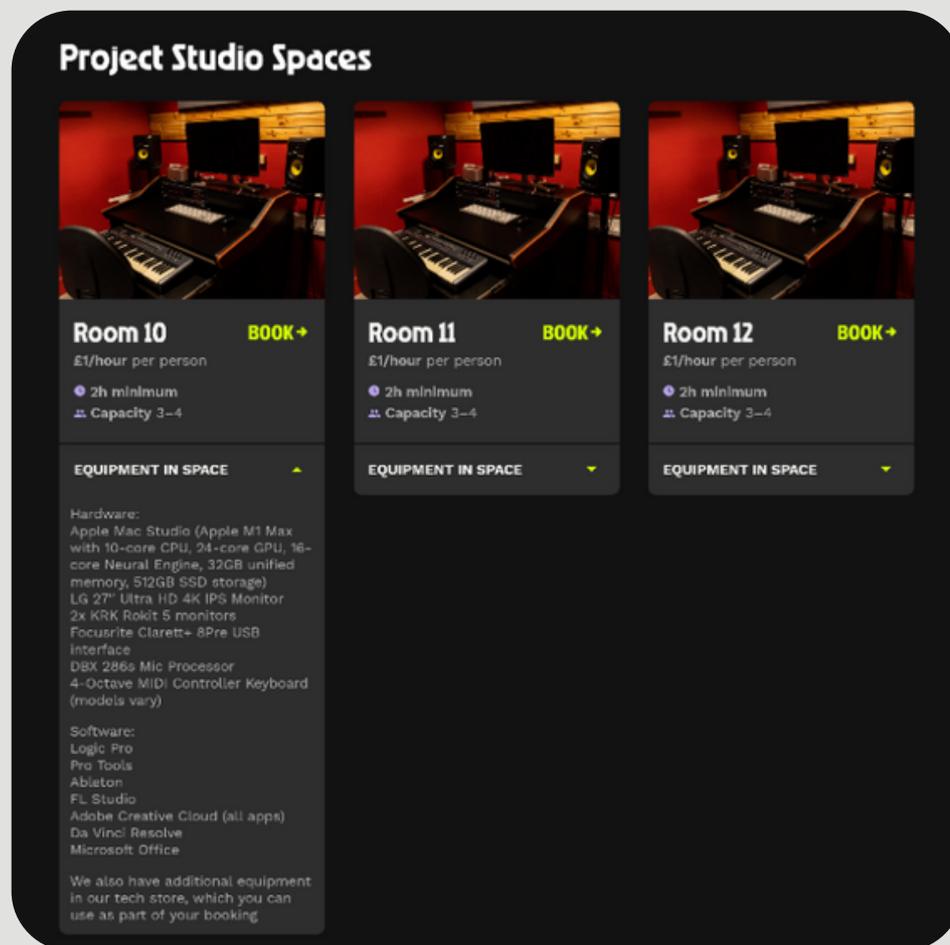


Fig 23. Roundhouse Website, Example for the SPCA Website (roundhouse.org.uk, 2023)

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

These Potential Programs will Reimagine the Recording Studio

Podcasts and Storytelling with Care4Calais

Community Partner

Care4Calais

Operational Costs

Depending on the distribution platform of the podcast, the costs of the podcast can remain low by utilizing the youth council program for equipment expertise.

Program Description

This initiative offers a powerful platform for refugees to narrate their journeys and challenges through audio podcasts, providing them with a voice to share their unique stories with a broader audience. This program not only aims to humanize the refugee experience but also educates and fosters empathy within the wider community. The podcasts will be distributed across multiple platforms including YouTube, the Care4Calais website, and possibly popular streaming services like Spotify and Apple Music, ensuring wide accessibility and engagement.

Additional Youth Program

Alongside the main podcasting initiative, a specially tailored program for children involved with Care4Calais will focus on creative storytelling. This segment will encourage young refugees to articulate their experiences and aspirations in a supportive, imaginative environment, promoting emotional healing and personal expression.

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THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

These Potential Programs will Reimagine the Recording Studio

SPCA Podcast

Community Partner

N/A (Internal Program)

Operational Costs

Similar to the Care4Calais podcast, operational costs will depend on the distribution platform.

Program Description

Designed as an internal platform for SPCA, this podcast allows employees and volunteers to highlight the association's impactful programs, share success stories, and discuss the goals driving their community efforts. This initiative not only serves to promote SPCA's mission but also enhances internal community cohesion and public awareness.

Member
Stories

Program
Advertisement

Well-being
Initiatives

Staff
Interviews

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

These Potential Programs will Reimagine the Recording Studio

Studio Technician Youth Council

Community Partner

Local Music Teacher

Comprehensive Management

Youth Council members will oversee all aspects of studio operation, including equipment maintenance, session scheduling, and ensuring a safe, creative environment for all users. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride among the participants, while also enhancing the studio's operational efficiency and community impact.

Program Description

This program enlists older music students to operate and manage the SPCA recording studio, offering them a hands-on learning experience in audio engineering, studio maintenance, and music production. Volunteers will gain practical skills and leadership experience, while also ensuring the studio remains a vibrant, accessible space for community projects.

Volunteer Engagement and Benefits

Students participating in the Youth Council will not only contribute to the studio's daily operations but will also have access to the studio for personal projects, providing a unique incentive for participation. The program addresses the need for a studio technician without the financial burden, relying on the enthusiasm and expertise of local youth under the guidance of a dedicated music technology teacher.

THE RECORDING STUDIO, REIMAGINED

Recommendations for Broadening Research to Strengthen Program Management and Community Engagement

For further research on managing audio programs and community engagement, we recommend interviewing a larger sample size. By utilizing interviews to collect data, our research scope was limited to select individuals. One challenge we faced when conducting interviews was navigating bias. Some of the individuals that we interviewed may have a personal agenda that influenced their responses. For instance, these interviewees may have wanted a certain outcome from the SPCA studio that benefits their organization, so their responses aimed to create that outcome.

Because we utilized representative sampling, we interviewed just six external individuals to gather data on their respective fields. Although they were professionals in their fields, this is a relatively small sample. With smaller sample sizes, the reliability of the data decreases. Interviewing multiple individuals in each profession would have ensured the strength and reliability of our data. Additionally, we recommend speaking to funding organizations or residents of the Camden community.

Funding agencies could define what grants the SPCA should apply for and more generally give insight into what funding organizations look for. The Camden community would give feedback on the potential programs, indicating the programs that are most useful and interesting. This input could then determine the programs that should be implemented in the SPCA.

We recommend that future research gains insight by surveying and interviewing community members interacting with implemented recording studio programs. Additionally, to mitigate the effect of bias and small sample size, we recommend interviewing more people in each scope. Collecting methods from different sources would allow for cross-verification, mitigating the impact of interviewee bias. Having a greater sample would increase the reliability of data.

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conclusion, our research underscores the significant opportunity the SPCA recording studio presents for enhancing community well-being, engagement, and music education in Camden. Through strategic partnerships, targeted programs, and improved accessibility, the studio can become a vibrant center of creative expression and cultural connectivity. Our findings offer a clear path forward to maximize the studio's impact, fostering a vibrant, inclusive community space where every voice has the chance to be heard and celebrated.



We extend our gratitude to Nigel Spencer, our sponsor liaison, for his role in formulating an engaging proposal and providing guidance and support throughout our project. Additionally, our appreciation goes to the St Pancras Community Association team for their valuable insights and enthusiasm towards our work. We are also immensely grateful to our advisors for their expert advice and encouragement throughout the project.

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