



# Learning to Listen

A Guide on How to Work with Sound and Interculturalism

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# Introduction

## Hello!

We are the students at Loughborough University, on the Drama Course. We were tasked with studying intergenerational and intercultural learning. Our project was to explore other people's ideas on interculturalism through sound and interviews. This was in tandem with the "ESHAHRAZAD" (2022) project, who are trying to bridge the gap between the younger and adult generations.

In the spirit of this, each one of us interviewed different members of the public on their experiences throughout their lives with a focus on their interactions with cultures that are different to their own.

We did this to bring together communities, cultures and strangers – to be able to highlight voices that often aren't heard in popular media.

We had a variety of participants ranging from ex members of the armed forces, elderly community members, and immigrants, who were interviewed, and we used their voices in a verbatim soundscape paired with sound effects to highlight the theme of interculturalism.

This handbook will detail every step in the process we used starting from describing what interculturalism is, the steps of finding participants, and creating a soundscape. We hope you enjoy and find it useful if you wish to partake in the project yourself.





# Human Interactions

# Finding Interviewees

To start off trying to find someone to interview, you must summarise your project in an engaging but easily digestible way. This is to interest potential participants, but also make sure that they know what the project is about and what you are doing with their recordings. You may want to write this down ahead of time so that you include everything you need to mention about the project and don't forget essential information.

This can include a summary of the event, your availability, what the project is for and the length of the initial interview. It is not recommended you include your contact details if the summary is in a public area, unless it has been specifically created for this exact purpose or left with a trusted person.

There are many ways to find suitable interviewees and participants for the project, but one of the most important things to be aware of whilst trying to find volunteers is safety. There is a certain level of danger that comes with interviewing people that you may not be familiar with and even more danger that comes with trying to find these volunteers.

The safest way is to try and find participants through a moderator. Potential pathways to look into for finding interviewees might be...

## The Council

One way you may want to find volunteers is via the council. For example, those involved in Town Hall may be able to find suitable people within the community who are interested in partaking, but are also safe to interact with. It is safe to leave your contact details with trusted people such as the members of staff in the council, as they will not be provided to everyone.

One thing to keep in mind about the people within the council is that they may be extremely busy and be unable to fit an interview in with you at just any time. They may also have seasonal events that take up a lot of time and for this reason the month around Christmas is not an ideal time. It may also take a little while for people to get in contact with you about the interview, so you need to make sure that it is organised

and completed long before any deadlines that you may have, to ensure time is made for mistakes, extra recordings and busy schedules.

## A Pub

A pub is a great way to gain participants especially if it is a pub local to you as the customers may recognise you from the local area and be willing to volunteer for the interview. You may find it useful to ask the landlord to be a mediator and to recommend to you a customer who they think would be willing to help you in your interview, this also partially eliminates getting turned down by potential interviewees. The pub environment offers you a wide range of potential participants and a safe environment to conduct the interview in.

Furthermore, individuals are more likely to engage with you in a pub as they don't need to be elsewhere and are there for leisure. However, the disadvantages of holding an interview in a pub is the noise level, this could be overcome by asking your interviewee to meet in a separate location however they may be reluctant to do so.

## On the Street

When outside on the street you have many potential interviewees to approach and ask if they could spare some time for an interview. The positive of this technique is the sample of potential interviewees will be



random as it could be anyone in the street, this also means you will have people with different experiences. However, recruiting participants may be hard as people may be busy and not have the time to spare. Therefore, if you choose to use this technique you should expect a lot of rejection. In order to overcome this, you could initially approach people in the street but afterwards arrange to meet them in a different location, such as a cafe, to conduct the interview as they will be aware of the time commitment.

## Co-workers

If you have a job with others of a suitable age for your project you may want to ask them to participate. These potential candidates are ideal as they aren't necessarily strangers which makes them safe and you may not have similar circumstances or experiences. The interview will be easily conductible in a safe environment, and you can ask a mutual

staff member to act as a moderator for you to find someone suitable and to add another layer of safety. However, these candidates may not have as many life experiences as another volunteer may have, and while they may not, they could have ones extremely similar to yours, taking away from the interacting with a variety of cultures. This may leave you with a safe but not as interesting interview.

## A Pamphlet

You may want to leave the summary on a pamphlet or poster in a public area to entice potential interviewees. This requires a separate contact detail that is only used for this project and a nicely designed informational piece of paper. This will gather a large group of diverse strangers with a variety of life experiences and allow you to choose candidates without a bias. Unfortunately, leaving pamphlets and posters around with the summary of the project isn't ideal as it allows



for less than suitable candidates that may be dangerous and there is no way to safely filter this type of person out. If you choose this method, you must also question for how long the poster must remain up, and the location of the poster.

## Societies or Clubs

If you are part of any clubs you may want to interview someone from this organisation. They're someone you may not know so well but you have an element of safety as you have interacted with them before and have a slight knowledge of who they are. Interacting with someone from a society or club allows for you to have a moderator, so this avenue is extremely safe. These clubs also have a wide variety of people meaning that you will have an interesting interview and should be able to engage with volunteers that have different life experiences.

## Organisations

You may be able to interact with organisations that are carrying out the same type of project that you are. An example currently is the E-SHAHRAZAD project, being run through Europe interviewing refugees. These organisations will have their own moderator who will be able to ensure both yourself and the volunteer is safe throughout the entirety of the process, and they will be able to recommend the best candidates for your own personal interviews.

Furthermore, as these volunteers had already signed up for another version of this project, they will already know and have experience with being interviewed and what you will potentially be talking to them about. They will be possibly more willing volunteers than some of the others you may find as they have previous experience. However, you must be aware that the interviewees and the organisation may be very busy and unable to swiftly answer your attempts to make contact. They may also be working internationally meaning that you will need to be able to conduct the interview virtually and have all the tools needed for that. In all, this route is a good one to pursue as it will grant you willing volunteers easily, safely with workable candidates.



# Interacting with Interviewees

When interviewing a participant it is really important to create the right environment, included is a checklist for this:

## Location

Location is extremely important when it comes to beginning an interview with your participant. You want to find a location which isn't too overstimulating so that you can conduct a beneficial interview. If the location is too loud and busy then the participant may not be fully invested in answering the questions and instead be distracted by their environment. They may also not be able to hear you very well and this could lead to a more staggered interview which could disrupt the natural flow that you're looking for. The ideal location set up would be within a space where the area is slightly quieter so that the microphone

can pick up the interviewee well. The area being quieter means that the interviewee will be more relaxed and fully focused on the interview rather than what's going on around them.

## Approachability

This is a key factor for conducting the interview. You want to approach your interviewee in a calm and friendly manner and to capture their interest in taking part. You don't want to be too loud or over-the-top as this could deter them. You also don't want to seem unprofessional by being overly relaxed. Instead, you should approach by greeting them with your name and explaining what you are hoping to conduct. This shouldn't be overly detailed as they may lose interest. It should be a couple sentences and explaining why you would like to interview them.



Remaining friendly and keeping a smile on your face will help here. If they choose not to be involved then respect this decision and thank them for their time.

## **Reassurance**

Once you have checked off both of the two previous steps, you are ready to begin your interview. Reassurance is significant here as this may be something very new for them. When using a microphone make sure you explain that you are going to hold it in a certain position for them to speak into. Make sure that they are comfortable with this. Also, before the interview begins let them be aware that any questions that they don't feel comfortable answering is completely okay and you will edit these out of the interview afterwards.

Throughout the interview remain friendly and keep eye-contact and a smile to reassure them that their answers are useful and positive. This reassurance may help them feel comfortable to delve even deeper into their answer. Whereas, if you don't remain engaged and continue reassuring them then they may believe their answer is wrong or unhelpful and decide to cut their answer short.

# Rapport

Building rapport with your interviewee will make them relaxed and in turn feel more comfortable opening up to you. To build rapport it's important you display your engagement and care for what they are saying. If they state a point that is useful for you, show that you

listened and ask them if they could add any more information about that. Small gestures such as nodding and expressive facial expressions will display that you find their answers beneficial and allow them to continue conversing. As well, rapport throughout the interview such as making friendly comments between questions and answers is going to continue the relaxed environment and create a great interview.

# Communication

Communication is the final element to interacting well with your interviewee. Communicating effectively involves clarity of speaking. Making sure you don't speak too fast as this may be overwhelming for the interviewee who is trying to understand your questions. Instead speaking with a clear, calm voice and emphasising words which will steer the answer in the correct direction. If your interviewee looks confused by a question, offer to repeat it again and if confusion is still there, consider rewording the question in a more simple way. It would be a good idea to have these re-worded questions prepared in case this does arise.

With all of these elements you are bound to interact with your interviewee in the most professional and beneficial way that will gain you a successful and interesting interview!



# Interview Preparation

One may think that after the difficult tasks of finding an interviewee and understanding the basics of interaction with them are complete, that they are now ready to continue directly onto the interview. However, this is not the case because there must be sufficient preparation for the interview itself, which I will outline in this section, to ensure that the interview can run smoothly and fulfil its intended outcome.

Firstly, there must be an understanding of what you want the final outcome of the interview to be, what kind of content are you after; Would you like a light-hearted feeling to your soundscape? Or a serious and calculated feeling? How in depth would you want the soundscape to go? Do you want the soundscape to be thematically locked and to always refer back to a theme/topic? Or would you want a soundscape that travels through space and time depicting the interviewers' rapid thoughts?

Only you can answer this. Based on what you want the final project to look like, you must work backwards to ensure that your foundations facilitate the result, therefore you must prepare for your interview.



There are a few ways to prepare for your interview which I will explain, and you can decide which works best for your soundscape as to what the result would be. You should ensure to plan the wording of your questions, primarily to prompt the expected response, and secondly to ensure that the responses you receive to each question, can be used in isolation and the context understood, even in the absence of the question. This is because in the final soundscape you will remove your own voice and questions, and be left with the responses, so you should try as much as you possibly can to allow these answers to make sense once isolated from the question itself.

A reliable and simplistic way to do this is to utilize sentence starters. For example, if you wanted to ask a question about how someone's parents influenced their understanding of interculturalism, they may reply "they influenced me a lot in my childhood", which, though a fair answer, doesn't make much sense without the question as listeners to the final soundscape will not know who "they" is. A better option would be to use a sentence starter which you will feed to the interviewee during the question and ask them to repeat it as an opening to their answer; an example for this context would be the sentence starter "I think my parents influenced me \_\_\_\_\_", meaning that whatever they answer, it will still work in absence of the question.

You should also be prepared to be very attentive during the interview, as the more attentive you are to the details of the answers the interviewee gives, the more you can adapt to dig deeper into certain

topics that may interest you for your soundscape. For example, if the interviewee mentions a small detail in passing that they feel is irrelevant to the theme of interculturalism, you can perhaps dig deeper into that aspect to challenge them.

This mindset of adaptation should be prepared for beforehand to allow yourself to seamlessly adapt and move the conversation into the direction you desire, without causing too much of a distraction or complication for the interviewee.

Having a prepared plan for your interview is essential for where you want it to go, which means you can still adapt and explore different avenues, as long as you fall back into your pre-set model. If you are not keen on a specific topic and don't want to force yourself to a certain structure, then here is a good alternative. Perhaps before your interview you can write a list of keywords that you can continually refer back to. These should be words that you want to feed into your interview as much as you can to maintain the existence of the theme while being able to talk about different aspects of said theme.

For example, your interviewee may begin to ramble about sports or food, however within your questions about whatever the topic is you can feed in words such as "interculturalism", "inclusion", "society" or "tradition". This would allow you to steer the conversation in a direction you desire.

# Ethics of Interviewing



When interviewing somebody, there are a lot of factors to consider to ensure it is ethical.

## Consent

It is very important that you receive consent from the interviewee. This consent is in relation to first them being recorded and second having the recording shown to other people. There are many ways to receive consent from somebody. In a situation such as this one, verbal consent is an easier option, and you may even include it in the beginning of the recording just so you have it on file. This can then be edited out for the final product, or even kept in should you choose to.

There is also the option to receive physical evidence of consent, whereby the interviewee can sign a document you create to encapsulate that they are aware of everything they are agreeing to. The means of receiving consent so that you and your interviewee are happy is something you should discuss with them before the interview.

## Inform Them of Your Intentions

This comes alongside the consent. It is a good idea to give them a summary of why you are interviewing them and what is going to come out of it. You don't necessarily need to give them insight to the roots of the task itself and what you are trying to gain from the interview, but it is important to give them context as to why this interview is taking place and what's going to come from it.

It's also worth speaking to them about the soundscapes that will be placed on top of their speech, making sure they are comfortable with their personal story being edited and added to.

## Make Sure They're Comfortable

It is vital to be aware of their comfort throughout the whole process. If at any point they seem hesitant, reluctant to continue or even vocalise their discomfort, you must decide whether it is efficient to continue. Do not force them to say anything they don't want to, and if they say something that they may regret or don't want to be publicised you need to be willing to sacrifice that from your final edit. Make sure that they are aware they are your priority as the interview is taking place.



## Give Encouragement

It is hard during a practice like this to impress upon someone that they have your full attention when you can't vocalise it. Since it is being recorded, you don't want to react aloud to what they are saying, but it is crucial that you still engage with them. This will need to be a more physical contribution, such as a head nod or a smile, just to comfort them that you are listening and that their information is relevant.

These small interactions will encourage them to continue and feel at ease that it's all going okay. It could also be worth saying 'thank you for that, I enjoyed hearing about...' before going into the next question as you will be editing it out anyways and it makes them feel better.

## Be Prepared to Be Vulnerable

As you are interviewing somebody it needs to be noted that they may potentially speak about a topic you are not prepared for. In a case like this you need to disconnect from any personal issues and be present in the moment for them. This person is opening themselves up to you and you must allow it to happen and admit your own vulnerability to them. Should you become uncomfortable, it will also provoke them to do the same as it is hard to expose your vulnerability to someone who is blocked off from you.

## Don't Ask Leading Questions

You might potentially have a path that you wish to go down for the finished product, but you shouldn't let this affect the interview. You should be open to things not exactly going your way. Stray away from questions that may be answered by 'yes' or 'no' or ones that you believe would give you an answer you want. This interview is ultimately about the interviewee and what they want to speak about, not what you get out of it at the end.







## Listen

It may sound simple, but it is extremely vital that you listen. Although you will prepare questions, it might be the case that their information doesn't fit with all you've prepared so you need to listen so that you can get them to develop what they are comfortable with saying.

By listening, you might even pick up on something you want to develop that you hadn't previously considered and that will add a lot to the final product. Listening is also a big part of making your interviewee comfortable, when you listen it makes people want to speak more as they feel like they are interesting somebody rather than just saying words aloud.

# Equipment

Having the correct equipment when conducting an interview is crucial for quality. Different types of equipment are shown below.

A microphone with a tripod or a stand (left) allows the microphone to stay in a fixed position avoiding any disruption in sound.

A clip on microphone (right) which can be clipped onto the interviewees clothing creates a more relaxed interview environment as the interviewee doesn't have a microphone in front of them. This type of microphone is beneficial if your interviewee prefers some space between you and them.



lets  
love our  
community



# Community

# Community

When we think of a community we tend to think of a group of people, but how many people would we consider that to be? Is there set expectations on what constitutes a community?

The dictionary defines a community as “a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common”. Due to this idea of commonalities between the members of a said community, communities are often close knit. Examples of a community could be your friendship group, your classmates or your local town members.

But could we class the global population as one community now? Due to the process of globalisation and its contributing factors, it is much easier to communicate globally with others. In turn this makes the world seem small and more connected. However, this may contradict our previously discussed notion that there is a similarity between all members of a community, other than us all being human beings, this suggests that it may not be possible to consider the human race as a ‘community’ due to our individualities.

If we again consider this idea of commonality between members of a community, this tends to create strong relationships between its members. This is in fact, what underpins a community, where ‘the greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.’ - Coretta Scott King (Miller and Irace, 2018). This therefore suggests that communities are integral to society, providing people with close relationships and a sense of belonging.

With this information in mind, get a piece of paper and a pen, and take some time to think about what your community is.



# Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational Learning is a practice that, as the Centre of Intergenerational Practice defines it as a learning partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality where 'intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities' (Learning Through Intergenerational Practice Generations Working Together, 2020).

This type of learning strengthens social capital and public cohesion across communities. This process works well to combat stereotypes and prejudices and can assist to address demographic changes which establishes an inclusive environment. Intergenerational learning, therefore, engages participants to develop multi-transferable skills that

help their understanding of the historical, cultural, and social context of their community. These skills, as The European Map of Intergenerational Learning explains, encourages us to 'explore and learn from a wider educational network' which comes from 'formal, non-formal and informal methods of learning' (Moderator, 2020). This inspires participants to relate skills they have learnt amongst their local community to adapting them to suit all levels (local, national and international). The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how fragile communities can be and how intergenerational learning can be used as a self-reflective and didactical process that breaks us away from isolationism. The process allows participants to support our communities through bonding a relationship of respect and trust whilst collectively sharing ideas, skills, knowledge and personal experiences.

One intergenerational learning organisation is E-SHAHRAZAD, an Erasmus plus Strategic partnership project in the field of adult education, that aims to bridge the gap between the young and elder generations through the forms of storytelling. This project will be a great opportunity to take part in a professional funded project. This encourages intergenerational learning through dissemination strategies like digital storytelling. E- SHAHRAZAD project aims to bridge the gap between the young generation and the adult generation using stories, which have been the best means of learning about different generations and eras. Inspired by the Arabic folklore, Thousand and One Nights Tales, the E-SHAHRAZAD project aims to bring young people and adults over 55 together in an intergenerational dimension, develop the ICT skills, basic reading and writing skills of adults, and to provide teenagers with knowledge and skills about the European cultural heritage, values and history. This innovative experience aims to achieve their mission of promoting intercultural understanding through communicative, technological, collaborative and social skills which constructs a safer and fairer future for every local community.

When starting on your intergenerational learning soundscape, you should draft a plan of how to start the process. Here are some questions you should consider:

**Who are your participant(s)? How many participants do you need?**

**How will you recruit older participant(s), from which generation?**

**What age groups are you programming for, what gender, what are their hobbies and past occupations (if appropriate)?**

**How and where can you communicate with your participant(s)?**

**What is our aim and outcomes? What are the priority topic(s)?**

**What are the main benefits you want to achieve? Think wider than participants: what about staff, parents, the organisation and community?**

**What barriers might you face?**

**How will you evaluate, measure and capture the true impact of the intergenerational learning and relationships built? (Remember that evaluation is something that we must plan efficiently even before the project commences).**

**How will you celebrate success and the new relationships and how may you sustain the relationships?**

**How could intergenerational learning be beneficial in your community?**

**And now with intergenerational learning in mind, how can this process engage people through interculturalism?**

# Individual Benefits of Intergenerational Learning

Increasing practical skills and knowledge

Improving technical knowledge skills and experience

Improving communication and interpersonal skills

Increasing understanding within and between generations eg. recognising generational needs and issues

Understanding and awareness of local/wider societal environs

Participation in political, social, economic and cultural life while progressing as a responsible citizen

Learning the importance of listening to and then articulating clearly from verbatim the participant's personal experience and social observations in oral form

Being able to talk freely and pleasantly with respect about an intimate topic between generations

Understanding a history and community as a living ongoing process of society

Learning to develop and document the result of an intergenerational exchange

Improving confidence

# Collective Benefits of Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational exchange encourages solidary, active citizenship, and personal development that strengthens the collective educational process of intergenerational learning

Understanding interculturalism and how the intercultural points effect our local community

Fostering an Intergenerational dialogue encouraging collaborations

Generations didactically learning from each other through understanding personal life experiences which becomes a microcosmic voice that reflects the history, culture and environment of the local community

Contributing to the development of individual competencies of an inclusive society

Recreating the links between generations through empathetic understanding and respect

Contributing to improve and challenge the local climate

Increasing digital connectivity and development

Improving the community's health and mental wellbeing

Reducing social isolation and loneliness

Challenging intergenerational inequalities, stereotypes and misconceptions which improves relations between generations,

Building a safer and active community



# Challenges of Intergenerational Learning

Social restraints through lack of access to institutions, clubs or conventions

Lack of industry knowledge and organisational capacity

Limited funding and resources for support

Lack of intergenerational Learning curriculum

Staff or elderly participants being reluctant to be involved

Having time and communication to build a rapport with your participant(s)

# Ways of Overcoming These Challenges

Ensure that you clearly explain what your aims of your soundscape project is and the wellbeing/safety measures you have in place for your participant(s)

Re-read the brief of your project and research extensively beforehand what intergenerational learning is

Explore access to venues and/or online platforms to host these recorded conversations and recognise different styles in communication between different age groups

Identify mixed abilities between groups

Address and challenge preconceived assumptions about other in a friendly manner

Hold regular contact whether through in person or digital meetings with your participant(s)

# Interculturalism

Interculturalism is the meeting point of multiple different cultures. It is defined by “the importance of a dialogue among cultures as a basis for reciprocity, which leads to a cohesive society where solidarity includes the majority as well as the minority.” (Kastoryano, 2018)

The key phrase here is “dialogue among cultures” (Kastoryano, 2018) - interculturalism is about the process of learning and teaching others about their culture and through this process understanding what each culture can learn from the other.



# Soundscape in a



# Finding Sounds

When searching for sounds it is important to think about what will compliment your interview. Your sounds don't want to be distracting and take away from the words your interviewee is stating. Instead you want sounds that will emphasise their words and messages they're aiming to portray.

During your search for sounds you will want to think about location. Often when exploring a certain environment all of the sounds correspond together to create an overall sound. Think of a town centre for example, there are expectations of noises that you know you will hear such as people chatting, dogs barking, shop alarms etc. Therefore you will want to think about the topic of your interview and find a location that you know will provide a certain set of noises.

This doesn't mean that you are only subject to one location for your interview. If there are moments of opportunity where you could stray to a completely different context to find sounds this could be an extremely impactful moment for your soundscape. This would be very interesting if your interviewee suddenly starts reminiscing on a past

memory of theirs and therefore this change of location would story-tell the listener their memory.

Location being one of the most important factors when it comes to finding sound is very much the case. But alongside this is timing. If you are hoping to capture the element of natural sounds you will have to think about when this sound is most likely to occur. For example, if you want to capture the soundscape of nature, when would be the best time to do so?



It is the small things like going early in the morning when no passer-buyers or dog walkers may be around disturbing the element of “natural” . Or say you want to grasp the hustle and bustle of a shopping centre then the best time of the day would be mid-day rather than early morning or evening because you are guaranteed for there to be a stream of people around this time.

When looking for sounds it is important to remember ‘quality over quantity’. You don’t want to record every sound you hear and not pay extra attention to what sounds will be the most useful for your soundscape. Therefore, quality should be prioritised.

## Useful Sounds

Sounds that emphasise words. E.g. If your interviewee is discussing nature then a bird tweeting or the sound of a river will help create a visual picture for the listener.

Sounds that allow the words to be heard clearly but still are noticeable and add more development.

Sounds that emphasise a flow to the soundscape and create beneficial transitions throughout.

If you find a sound you like then make sure to explore it and all of its capabilities. This experimentation will be useful when it comes to editing as you can listen to all of the options and see which sound fits best. For example, if the sound is running water then try recording your sound nearer and further away. Or you could throw a rock into the water to experience a different sound effect the water can wait. The more experimentation, the more developed your soundscape will become.

## Distracting, Non-Useful Sounds

Sounds that don’t correspond or match what your interviewee is saying. E.g. Your interviewee is discussing their friends and you use the sounds of busy traffic.

Sounds that are distracting and too loud that it will make the listener focus solely on the sound rather than what the interviewee is saying.

Sounds that create a staggered and unpleasant effect that disrupts a natural transition between the sounds.

# Authentic Soundscapes

Having an authentic soundscape means collecting a range of original and genuine sounds to accompany the subject matter of your interview. It is essential to have an authentic soundscape to complement alongside your interview as at times it can highlight important subjects and aid the overall effect of listening to an interview.

A soundscape can be defined as an “acoustic environment as perceived or experienced and/or understood by a person or people, in context” (Francesco Aletta, 2019). A soundscape does not have to follow exactly what is being spoken in an interview, for example if it was mentioned that there was an alarm clock in an interview, using the sound from an alarm clock may be perceived as too generic. It would be more beneficial to grasp the overall subject matter and find a soundscape from a specific setting according to that.

One beneficial way of doing this is to carry out a soundwalk. Soundwalks take place by, “silently walking along the route, and after the walk, questions about the soundscape characteristics of the route and its perceptual features were answered by the participants.”



(Bahali, 2016). These questions can consist of how pleasant a sound is, if that sound is appropriate to that setting and how loud the sound was. See the insert below for an example.

Therefore, if the subject matter happened to have a context of a coffee shop, a participant could go to a coffee shop and record the sounds in their surroundings. From this they could pick out specific sounds like the coffee machine and decide whether this sound would be complementary within a soundscape or not. For example, if an ambulance came past and there was a loud siren within the recording, that specific sound may not be perceived as a pleasant sound for the setting of a coffee shop and therefore the participant can choose to cut that sound. After each sound is analysed in this way it leaves you with an overall authentic soundscape to complement the subject matter of your interview.

When constructing a soundscape it is very easy to take the sound of what the interviewee is speaking about like the alarm clock example used earlier. Although this approach is very illustrative of a topic, it does not necessarily tell the listener who the person you are interviewing is. To help convey that individual's story it may be helpful to think about their daily surroundings. Where do they go on a daily basis and from that you can return to these surroundings and collect authentic sounds.

This will provide a unique soundscape that is tailored to that individual's personality and story. This gives the listener a greater insight into the interviewee's life, an experience they would not receive by just listening to an individual's story.

**Questionnaire used for the participants of Group B of the soundwalk (Method B of the ISO/TS 12913-2:2018).**

Category	Question	Scale/Response Type
Overall quality	How loud is here?	Not at all (1); Slightly (2); Moderately (3); Very (4); Extremely (5)
	How unpleasant is here?	Not at all (1); Slightly (2); Moderately (3); Very (4); Extremely (5)
	How appropriate is the sound to the surrounding?	Not at all (1); Slightly (2); Moderately (3); Very (4); Extremely (5)
	How often would you like to visit this place again?	Never (1); Rarely (2); Sometimes (3); Often (4); Very often (5)
Sound sources	Please list sound sources you noticed in descending order starting with the most noticeable sound source	[open answer, limited to 8 items]
Comments	What is going through your mind?	[open answer]

When pursuing this process, it can be difficult to understand what an authentic soundscape is, what should it contain; how should it sound, and how do you start it?

The most critical step in the creation of any soundscape is to establish its purpose. This involves identifying the intended audience base, as well as the scope and design framework of its construction. Always re-read and check the brief for your project, (which you can see in the Introduction section of this text); this enables you to identify the soundscape's intention and purpose.

The other dilemma participants often have is about questions - what sort of questions should they ask in the interview? How many should they have? Again, there is no definitive answer to this as the spontaneity of the conversation does dictate the sort of questions you ask. However, there is nothing wrong with having a few prepared questions in reserve. These questions should be founded on or around the topic matter of your interview. This does not mean all questions for every participant should be different but rather the interrogatives should create a different recording due to the participant's intercultural subject matter. By adapting a standard question, it allows you to suit the question around (or match the question to) the participant's context. Trigger questions with an open-ended style should enable the adult interviewee to expand on their own explanation. Some examples may include...

**Over your lifetime, what makes [local town, club or place of interest] a special part of your experiences in your life?**

**How come [topic matter] became significant to you? (etc.)  
What age groups are you programming for, what gender, what are their hobbies and past occupations (if appropriate)?**

These types of generic questions should help make the adult participant more comfortable with their surroundings/location and have a greater confidence in you as an interviewer to listen to their stories, opinions and experiences rather than interrupt them. This technique helps to develop authentic soundscape as the interview is more natural and based on instinctive responses.

Authenticity depends on the quality of sound that matters. The sound effects complement and develop the scene of the soundscape. These ambient noises should help create a transitional dimension to the soundscape's 'potential space', which enhances meaning. However, sometimes you may not have the quality of the recording to create an effective and authentic backdrop. Obviously, the aim is to source sounds by recording a variety of live noises yet using SFX royalty free sites are useful as they are pre-recorded authentic sounds. An example of this is BBC sound effects. These professional sites allow you to convey a meaningful effect through its better quality that helps to become part of the construction of your authentic soundscape.



Overall, by taking care to research and gather the sounds necessary for the construction of the soundscape. A soundscape should, as Cathy Turner claims, contain a form of geopathology which explores the ‘politics of context, place and space... bring[ing] into focus questions of allegiance, identity and belonging’ which reflects the ‘potential space’ (the topic matter) constructing a soundscape authentic. This highlights that the soundscape becomes a representation of a creative activity that enables an ‘extension of ‘potential space’, an engagement in ‘transitional process” such as sound and audio, from a form of theatrical staging to a new and challenging type of oral performance (Turner, 2004). Therefore, as Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage states, you gradually realise ‘how sounds impact the world around you...’ and how original authentic sounds instead of lull the listener into the setting, through the ambiance that highlights the content and challenges of the interview rather than constructs it. Now is ‘the time to act to make the world sound the way you want it to’ through authenticity the verbatim of communities can be heard (May 24 and Comments, 2017).



# Editing Software

In order to create a soundscape you will need a form of audio editing software. These come in a variety of forms and have varying features, such as:



All of these factors may alter which audio software best fits your project. For our projects we used WeVideo, an online video and audio editor that you pay a subscription for.

However, there are many incredible free options as well - such as Audacity, a downloadable editing software that's very simple to use.

Nearly all audio editing software will come with a user guide or a manual to help you understand and learn the features of the software. Alongside these the most common pieces of software will have multiple online tutorials on video sharing platforms like YouTube that can help you get to grips with the software.

From our personal experience, we also found that a very useful tool in learning to use software you're unfamiliar with is to just attempt to edit an audio recording and learn the software through your own exploration. For example, learning how to fade in a sound effect can be far easier to learn by applying the fade effect yourself rather than by watching a tutorial on it.

In the end, there are enough different software with different features that the best one to choose is the one you find easiest to use. Allowing yourself to find an easy to understand and useful piece of audio editing software allows you to focus less time on attempting to understand the intricate programs available and more time to create your soundscape.

# Positive and Negative Sounds

Sounds are essential in a soundscape, but so is the intention behind the sound and how the author wants it to affect the listener. Simple things can change the connotations behind these sounds, such as the them being easily identifiable or the sounds working together all make the soundscape a more positive experience. There is no simple answer to what a positive and negative sound is, as it all depends on the individual listener's preferences but there are a few overlaps to make common positive sounds.

Some ways to get a more positive sounding soundscape, according to studies, is that "a positive soundscape would include natural sounds... human voices and human presence... or background traffic." (Davies, 2013, p.13-14). Furthermore, it was identified that "a soundscape providing information to the listener was considered positive" (Davies,

2013, p.12), meaning something that helps the listener to explore the artificially created landscape is ideal. These types of sounds can be found by just listening to different rooms and seeing what sounds help to create the environment.

"Natural environments help induce positive emotional states and sustained attention" (Autex Content Team, 2020). From this we can establish that natural sounds, such as birdsong, running water from streams or a light breeze are positive sounds, and they have a positive effect on the listener. However, they may not be appropriate and fitting for the section of soundscape you are working on. To avoid this problem but still have a comforting soundscape filled with positive sounds then it would be ideal to include easily identifiable sounds that are akin to white noise like distant, gentle chatter.

Negative sounds are more difficult to place, as they vary from listener to listener. One may enjoy the sound of heavy rain against the window whereas another may find the sound makes them anxious. Some common negative sounds though are more urban ones, like construction work, high pitched ringing or squeaky sounds. Another element of sounds that make them negative are ones that are “loud, unpredictable or persistent.” (Davies, 2013, p.12) Bringing in sounds softly or making sure that they fit with the soundscape can help you to avoid this issue.

Positive and negative sounds within a soundscape are hard to identify as they mainly depend on the listener and their emotions whilst listening. Natural, expected sounds, and some which blend together well are more positive, whereas urban and unpredictable ones are negative. However, whether you want to use the sounds with these connotations in the soundscape are dependent on the intention behind the soundscape and your intended effect on the listener. If you want to reflect an uncomfortable situation or represent one that unsettles the listener then you may want to rely on sounds that are more negative.



# Diegetic and Non-Diegetic Sounds

It is important to be able to know the difference between diegetic and non-diegetic sounds when applying them as a soundscape to the content. It is also important to note that these sounds are mainly relevant when discussing film or other on-screen creations.

“The word "diegesis" comes from the Greek and literally means narration.” (Heckmann, 2019)

Once you are aware of the difference between the two, it is necessary to understand how to alternate between them. This can be quite tricky. Understanding non-diegetic and diegetic sounds is easier to do when they are implemented in something visual, like a film. This is because it is easier to distinguish the two, knowing what sounds seem like they should be there and what shouldn't based on what you can see on the screen. In this case, it could be that a diegetic sound is

## Diegetic Sounds

These are sounds that are relevant to the context of which they are placed into and feel natural in pushing the story along.

## Non-Diegetic Sounds

These are sounds that do not seem to have originated from the content. This is sound that is usually added post production, e.g. musical score, narration or voice over.



of an alarm clock going off as someone is visibly waking up to it. A non-diegetic sound could be the instrumental score of a ballad placed in a scene where a break up is happening to set the tone as being sad. These sounds are often defined as what the characters on screen can and can't hear.

In an artistic creation such as a recording like this, it becomes quite confusing. Since all sounds are added on top of the original recording it could be seen that all sounds are essentially non-diegetic as they aren't captured in the moment of the speech, this is why it is crucial to understand the difference.

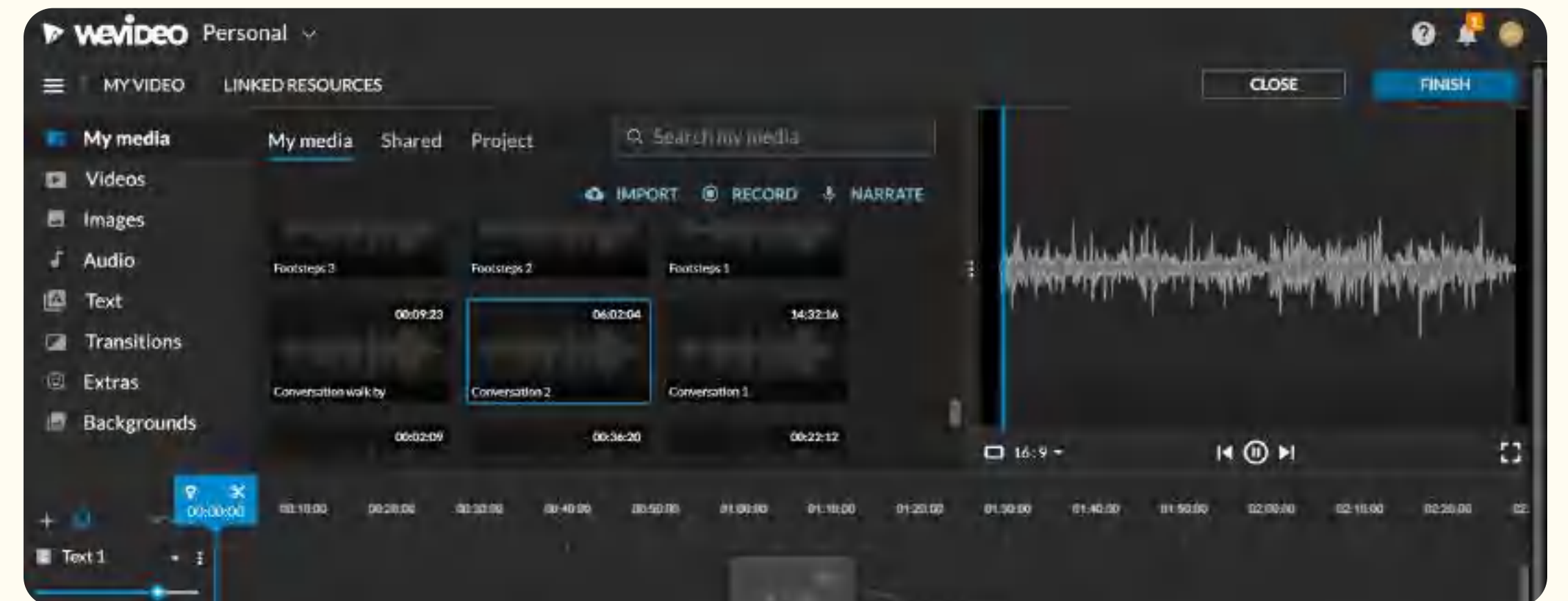
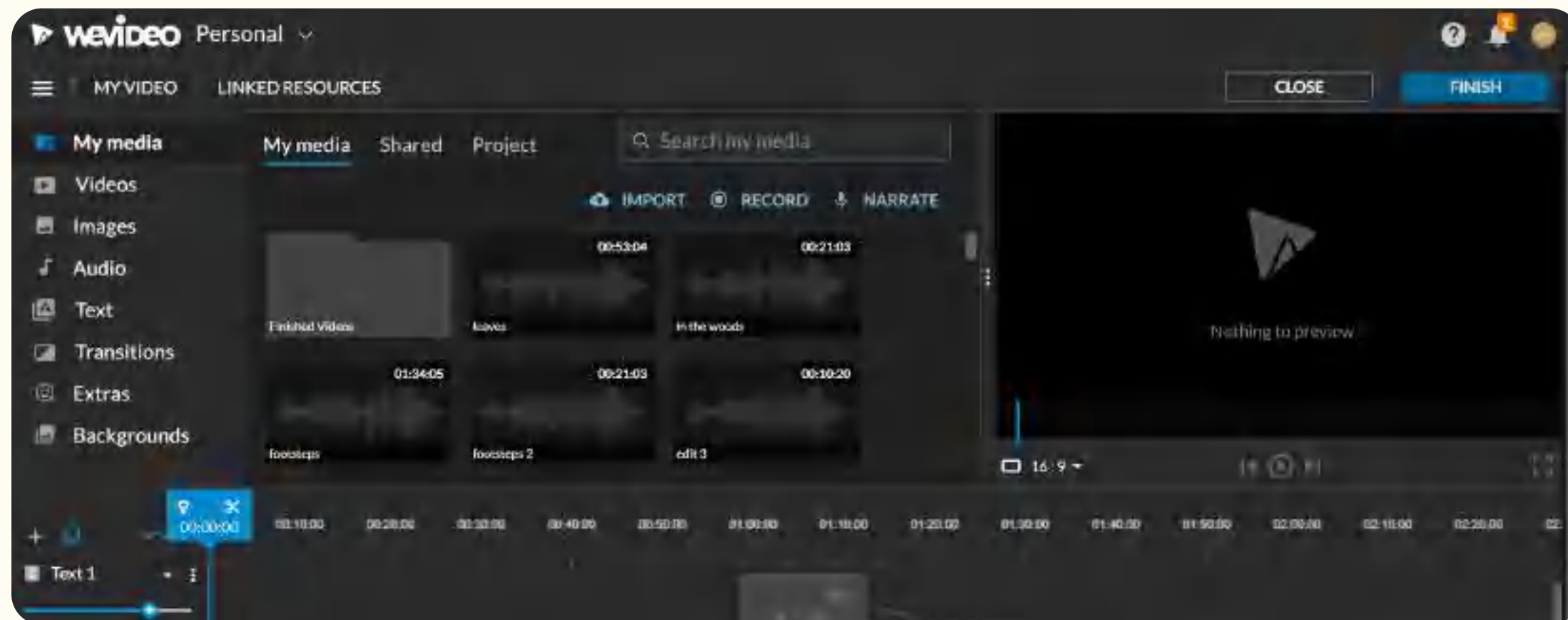
It could even be suggested from an external listener that the narration from the interviewee is in fact the non-diegetic sound under the diegetic sound, emphasising the story that's being communicated by naturalistic sounds.

The soundscape is ultimately there to push the story along and make it easy to follow. As it is a performance that someone will be hearing, the addition of external sounds is something not to be taken lightly.

By implementing diegetic sounds that are relevant to the context and feel like they naturally fall into place it essentially means that should the words be taken out, someone could still have a vague understanding of what's going on. In addition to this, it doesn't have to be realistic the whole way through. You can sense the mood of the story that is being told and add in a sound to match the tone rather than the context. This is familiar to what they do in movies, using a sound that is stereotypically associated with a specific feeling to emphasise the meaning in the content.

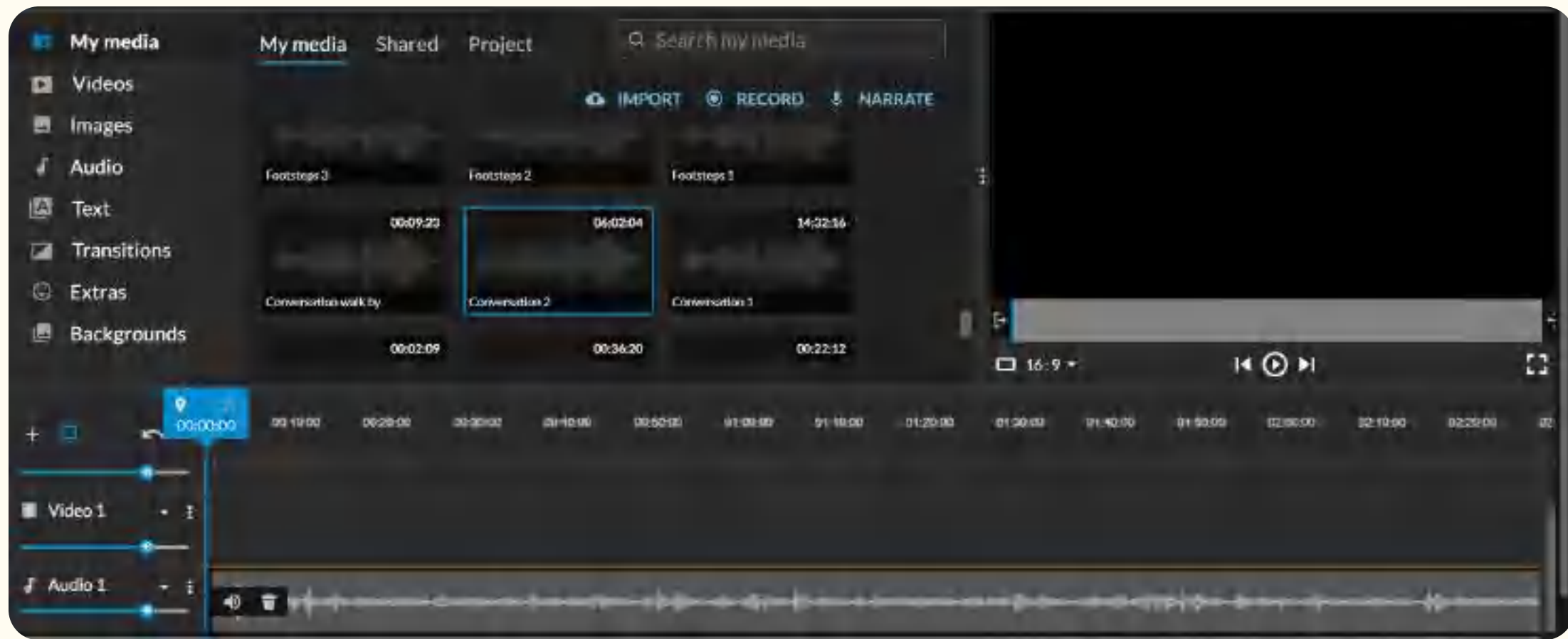
# Editing Soundscapes

Once you have gathered the software you require to edit your soundcape, you can begin to put it together. The steps below give a step by step guide on how to put a soundscape together. We will be demonstrating how to edit a soundscape on WEVIDEO, but any software that allows you to edit sound should work fine.



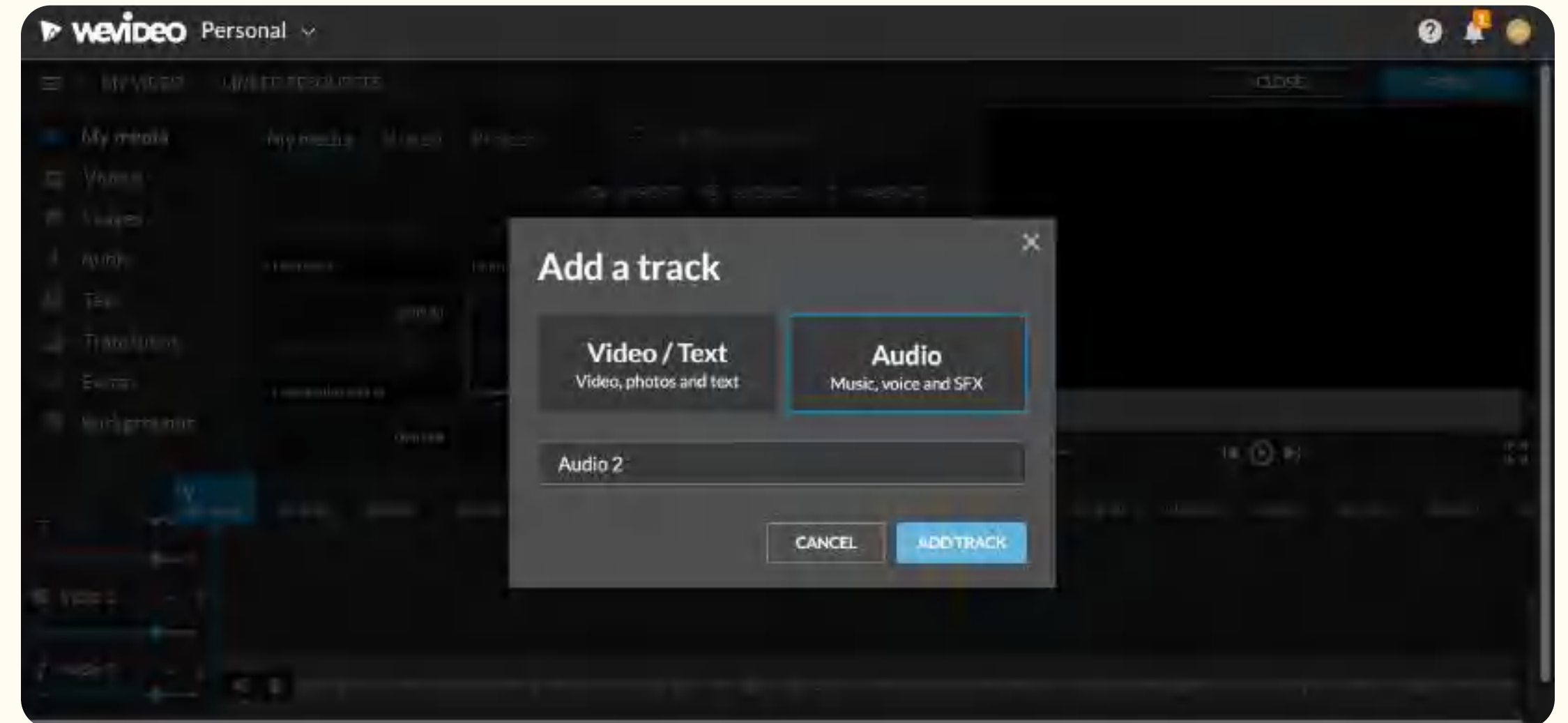
**1** Open up a new project on your editing software. It might be useful to upload all of your recordings to your library at once.

**2** Select the first recording you would like to add (this should be the conversation with your participant).

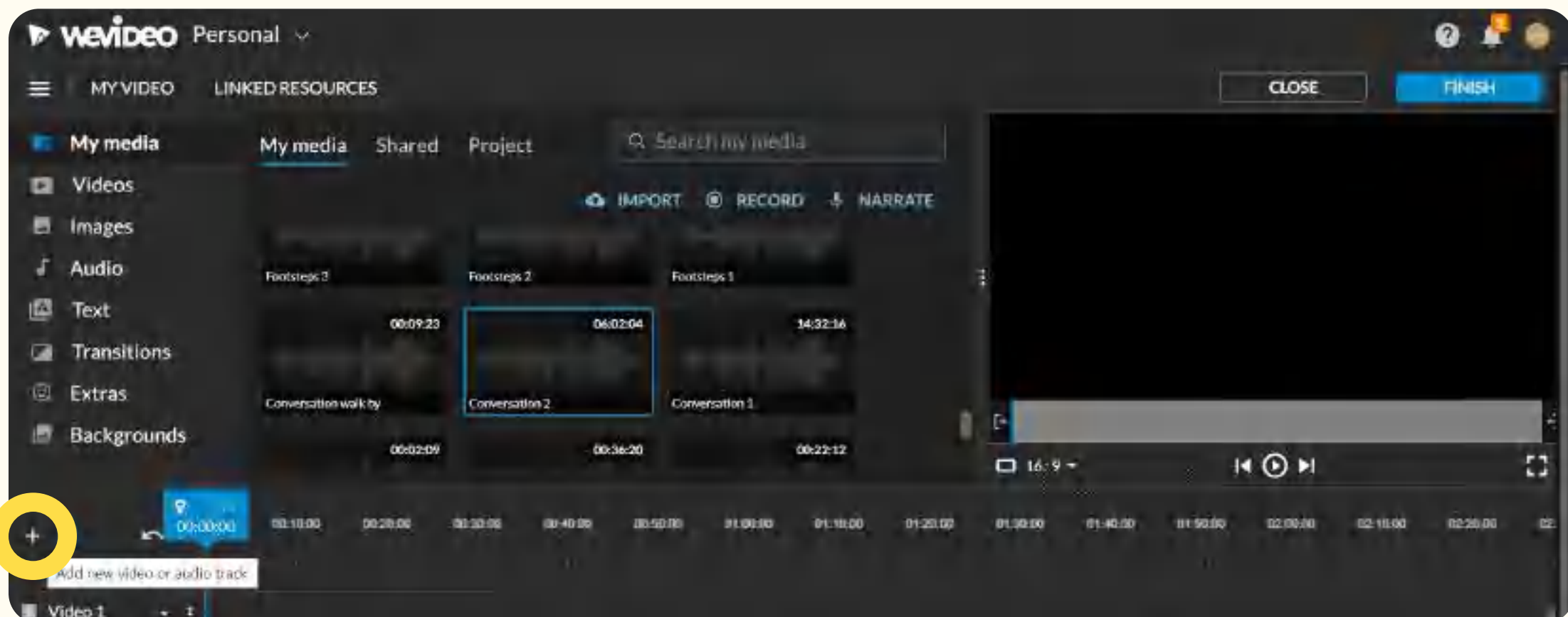


**3** You will then be able to drag it down onto the audio track as seen above. Do ensure you add the recordings to the audio track and not the video track. This will make it easier for you to save once you are finished.

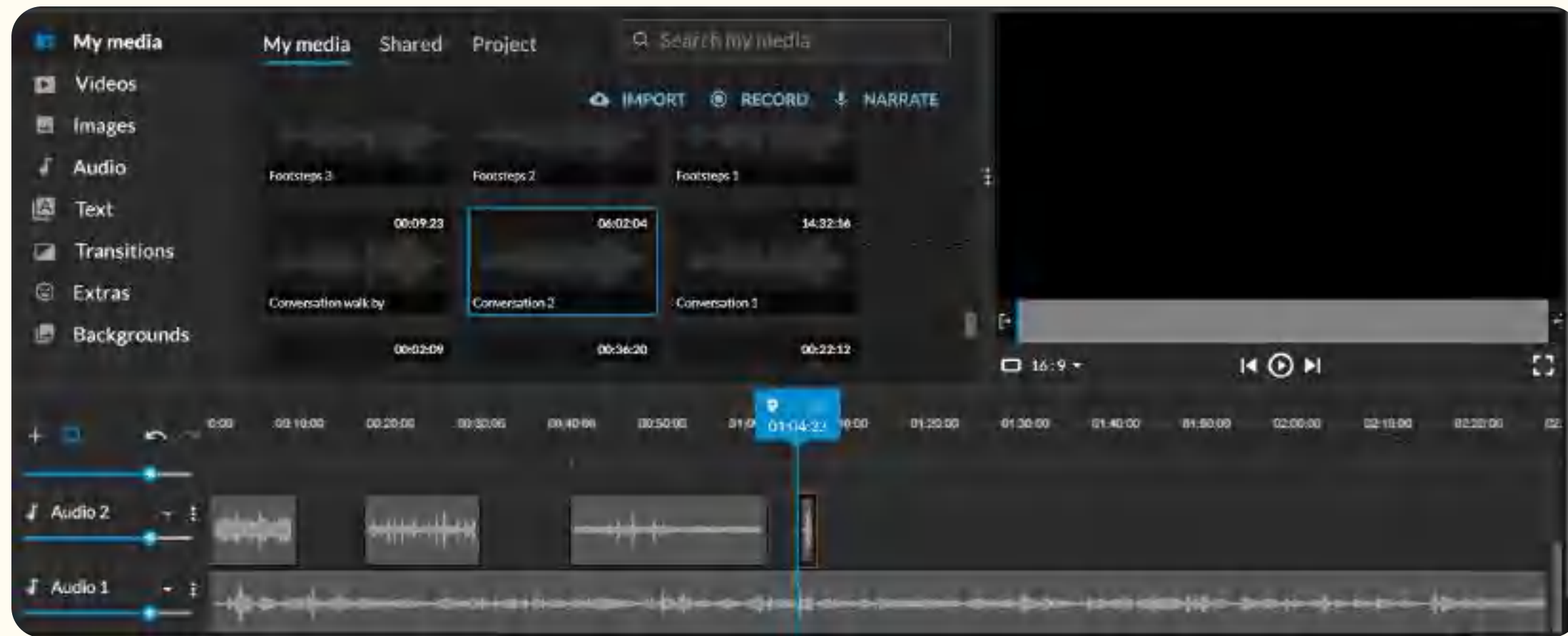
**4** At the left side of your screen, you should have a plus button. Go ahead and click on it.



**5** You should then have an option like this pop up, which will allow you to add another audio track.







- 6 From there you can add your sound effects to your soundscape. You can space these out if you would like moments of just the interview recordings. Or place them closer together.

There are also several tools you can use on editing softwares to help make your soundscape sound better, flow better and be more interesting for your listener. The list below will show what these useful tools are and hints on how to use them.

## Cropping

This can allow you to shorten sound recordings or to remove silences at the start and/or end of sounds, which can help your soundscape to flow better.

## Volume

This can be effective to make sounds more or less impactful. This can also help to create a sense of distance or movement in your soundscape.

## Fading In/Out

This can also help to create a sense of distance and help the soundscape move through its scenes.

## Example Soundscapes

Please scan this QR code or [click here](#) to access a few example soundscapes created by our group.



# Conclusion

Overall, the process of creating a soundscape allowed for people to be listened to, especially those who are underrepresented. It was interesting to be able to explore, learn and appreciate different cultures by simply listening to people's stories. The process of combining stories and sounds allowed the stories to ooze with vibrancy and fascination. Below are some things we have learnt through the process of creating a soundscape:

**“Sounds can bring the visual to life without ever being able to see it!”**

**“I have learnt about what my hometown was like before I was born. It was nice to hear what the community was like to someone who has spent many more years there than I have.”**

**“The project has given me a sense of empathy, belonging and greater understanding of how my participants voice's are a personal account of,**

**not only their independent lives, but also a reflection of a tapestry of a living community. The project has developed me to become an all-rounded student and citizen of our local environment.”**

**“I have learnt that sound allows your imagination to explore. One sound can tell many stories!”**



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