



**SPOTLIGHT ON OUR
MEMBERS' EQUITY,
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
WORK**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MEWEM is a multi-national mentoring programme promoting the development of managerial skills and tackling gender inequality for women, trans and non-binary young professionals in the music industry. MEWEM EUROPA project partners include IMPALA members' **FELIN** (France), **VUT** (Germany), **RAW Music** (Indiero, Romania).

- This year marked the 5th edition of **MEWEM Germany** and was followed by a new round of applications for mentees in May 2023.
- MEWEM France released its call for mentees in October 2023.
- As part of the national initiative, MEWEM Germany held an info session at C/O Pop festival in Cologne while MEWEM-project manager Beate Dietrich was a speaker on the panel titled "Turnaround in female empowerment: Are we already there?". German mentees and mentors also met for a group meeting with workshops at Reeperbahn Festival 2023.



Laureen Kornemann,
Public Relations Officer,
VUT

“Surveys and studies show what an effective tool mentoring is for the empowerment of young women in particular. We are very happy to be able to run our mentoring programme in its fifth edition this year and thus to be able to contribute to a more diverse music industry. This year, we had over 100 applications for our 10 mentee spots, which of course made us happy, but also shows the need that the young talent in the industry has.”

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH



from left to right: Magda Cholynt (Artist in Bloom, PL), Arun Castro (Roadie Medic, UK), Rosana Corbacho (M.I. Therapy, ES), Sarah Joy (ATC Live, UK) and Tisa Freljh (University psychiatric clinic Ljubljana, SI)



MENT festival and conference in Ljubljana organised a panel in collaboration with IMPALA entitled **“Mental Health: We’re all in this together”**. The aim was to raise awareness on improving the working conditions for management and employees in music companies. It addressed the main questions people have but which too often remain unasked, as well as exploring the latest research. The main theme explored was *what can be done to mitigate and prevent risk in such a passionate and demanding work environment?*

In April, IMPALA’s Outstanding Contribution Award was dedicated to the late Tony Duckworth during MENT festival and conference to recognise his remarkable career in music and his dedication to network development in the Central and Eastern European region for independent music companies. Read IMPALA’s statement [here](#).



!K7 MUSIC & ERNST-REUTER-SCHULE

For a second consecutive year, IMPALA member !K7 Music - joined by Ableton - successfully completed their social project in partnership with Ernst-Reuter-Schule (ERS) located in Wedding, Berlin.



Horst Weidenmueller
CEO & Owner
!K7 Music

“ We are very proud to be part of this music education programme. The school and surrounding area has some of the highest rates of inequality in the city, providing us with the opportunity to give back to our local community by enabling the students the entry to music production tools, resources and knowledge which they usually, and often culturally, do not have the privileged access to.”



30 students
12 - 14
years old

Objective:
Provide students with the experience of the entire process from writing and producing to releasing and promoting their own music



MERLIN ENGAGE

In October 2023, Merlin, the independent's digital music licensing partner, announced the successful completion of its inaugural **Merlin Engage mentorship program**.

Launched this past spring and crafted specifically for Merlin members, Merlin Engage pairs executive-level mentors with talented mentees to help shape the next generation of female leaders in the independent music space.

The structure of Merlin Engage was calibrated to embrace the unique needs and perspectives of female leaders from independent music. It helped participants to develop into better leaders within their own companies as well as future leaders within the industry.

Read the full statement [here](#).



IN THE SPOTLIGHT WITH ASSOCIATIONS

In the Spotlight highlights the inspiring efforts of our members - both associations and companies - who are driving diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI) within the independent music sector. This section showcases standout initiatives and partnerships that promote underrepresented communities and foster a more inclusive industry. From grassroots projects to larger industry-wide collaborations, these examples reflect the ongoing commitment across our network (*amongst national trade associations, direct member companies and IMPALA Friends*) to create a fairer and more equitable music ecosystem.

AIM UK ACTIONS



AIM remains committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (EDI) within the UK music industry. Through strategic partnerships and initiatives, AIM helps ensure the independent music community continues to foster a more equitable and inclusive environment. These efforts focus on creating meaningful change and opportunities for underrepresented groups. Key projects and collaborations include:



- **Amplify Apprenticeship Scheme**: Partnership with Amazon Music and Women In Ctrl to provide opportunities for underrepresented talent.
- **Power-Up Initiative**: Organised by PRS Foundation and supported by AIM to uplift Black musicians and professionals.
- **The Five Ps & Ten-Point Plan**: Key initiatives by UK Music and the Diversity Taskforce, with AIM actively involved in driving diversity and inclusion.
- **UK Music Diversity Workforce Survey**: AIM contributes to this annual report through UK Music's Diversity Taskforce.
- **Partnership with She.Said.So (Community Friend of AIM)** : Collaboration to unite and empower underrepresented communities in music, fostering knowledge-sharing and networking.
- **Seat at the Table Report**: Collaboration with Women In Ctrl to address gender disparities in the music industry.
- **Women in Music Awards**: In association with AIM and UK Music, celebrating achievements of women in the music industry.



AIM IRELAND IN THE SPOTLIGHT



There's been a big step forward taken for Irish indie association, AIM Ireland, with their involvement on IMPALA's EDI taskforce impacting activity.

In 2023, AIM Ireland contributed to an essential piece of research which resulted in the 2024 report Open Up: addressing the barriers facing Black and Black-Irish artists' access to funding and opportunities.

AIM Ireland acted as a judge for the Black & Irish Awards music categories 2023 – with Female Artist of the Year going to independent artist (and IMPALA 100 Artists To Watch artist) Aby Coulibaly who supported Coldplay in summer 2024 at their 4 sold out Dublin shows - and Male Artist of the Year going to independent artist Fortune Igiebor.



AIM Ireland have supported and amplified the local activity of the Dublin chapter of SheSaidSo, with the teams working closely together to ensure independent Irish music professionals have access to all that's happening in the space.

In The Round Series

A dynamic roundtable format, 'In The Round' aims to spotlight and amplify the voices of Irish music industry professionals with a dedicated focus on diversity and inclusion. The event takes place without an audience to encourage an open & conversational dialogue. Highlights from the event are then shared with members, for the purpose of advocacy, community building and education.

"In The Round" has attracted national press, and the two reports from the first two sessions can be found here.

In addition, AIM Ireland programmed and hosted a panel at Ireland Music Week, titled "Meet The Changemakers" – where current and former winners discussed their work and the importance of the promotion and recognition of these efforts by IMPALA.

2024 line up:



- March: celebrating International Womens Day - "Empowering Women In Music"
- June: celebrating Pride - "Amplifying LGBTQIA+ voices in Ireland's Independent Music Sector".

In October AIM Ireland celebrated Black History Month with a roundtable hosted in partnership with IMPALA Changemaker Award 2024 recipients Black & Irish focusing on Black or Black Irish music professionals working independently in Ireland. Black & Irish founder Leon Diop was recently appointed as Head of EDI to the Arts Council.



Irish Music Week:
Ben Wynter (AIM)
Gill Dooley (AIM Ireland)
Leon Diop (Black & Irish)

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FOCUS ON PMI, INDIESUISSE AND STOMP



TAKE A MUSIC BREAK!

Not an usual masterclass for the Music Industry.

In 2023, PMI Italia launched Take a Music Break powered by Merlin and IMPALA, an innovative event designed to spark meaningful dialogue between music industry insiders and young enthusiasts. Unlike traditional masterclasses, it fostered a casual, barrier-free environment, encouraging genuine, unfiltered discussions. This intimate setting provided aspiring professionals with invaluable learning experiences and insights into the industry.

Participation is by invitation, with guests encouraged to bring an industry-interested friend. Pre-event registration ensured topics matched participants' interests, making discussions relevant and engaging for aspiring music professionals.



BOLOGNA, ITALY - April 2024



ROMA, ITALY - May 2024



The journey of the IndieSuisse Album of the Year Awards and what we learned:

Since its inaugural edition in 2014, the IndieSuisse Album of the Year Awards has sought to encourage diversity. Initially, a quota system was considered, whereby bands eligible for nomination had to have key representatives in leading positions. However, this approach excluded deserving acts, so the selection process was revised. Instead, by enhancing the backend and expanding the jury to include diverse backgrounds, the awards now focus on musical talent without restrictions. This has led to winners from diverse backgrounds, maintaining high standards of artistry.



Learn more about the [IndieSuisse Album of the Year Awards](#), including the hall of fame and latest jury.



Stomp are pleased to share key updates on the progress of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives in The Netherlands:

- **NVPI People & Culture Committee:** Since last year, the local IFPI branch, NVPI, has established a People & Culture committee focused on women empowerment, with representation from independent labels.
- **Taskforce GO:** NVPI also launched Taskforce GO, aimed at addressing transgressive behavior, which has since been nominated for an industry award.
- **STOMP Development Team:** STOMP introduced this team to improve diversity within the independent music sector.
- **Conference Panels:** STOMP has been active in leading panels at urban conference **New Skool Rules** and is likely to participate in the upcoming black culture conference, Soundscape.



FELIN, VUT & INDIERO COLLABORATE ON MEWEM EUROPA



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As a pioneer in France and currently in its 7th year, MEWEM France launched its latest call for applications in October 2024, reaffirming its commitment to promoting visibility and diversity in the industry.

For VUT, its MEWEM mentoring programme is already entering its sixth round this year. The aim of the programme is to help ensure that more women, trans and non-binary people help shape the music industry in the long term – including in management positions and as founders – and to make them visible. Since 2015, VUT brings together experienced industry experts from all areas of the music industry (e.g. label, publishing, distribution, live, promotion, self-marketing artists) with young talent in order to provide them with long-term support in their professional and personal development.



The programme has now been certified by the German Mentoring Association (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Mentoring/DGM), which gives MEWEM a seal of quality. The society has developed a certification process to ensure the high-quality of mentoring programmes. The certificate is awarded by the DGM's scientific advisory board, which has put the programme through its paces.



Laureen Kornemann,
Public Relations &
Diversity Officer, VUT

"We are delighted that, following the conclusion of the successful MEWEM edition in 2023, we can start the sixth round of MEWEM this year without a major break. A total of 120 applications were received for the ten mentee places in the programme this year. This huge response also proves that a programme like MEWEM is indispensable."

NEW INITIATIVES



IMPALA has a humanitarian scheme. This includes putting in place an arrangement with broad reach aid organisation(s) as part of our corporate social responsibility (in the same way as we compensate for our carbon emissions through Murmur). Contributing to the work of aid organisations dealing with multiple crisis situations in the world is part of helping our sector develop capacity in a sustainable and responsible way.

We will update members on our partners in due course. Members can also get in touch if they are interested in speaking out in a balanced way.

FUNDRAISING



Epitaph Records' recent label showcase at the Molotow Club, which featured performances by Sam Akpro, RAT BOY, and Late Night Drive Home, serves as a prime example of their commitment to social responsibility. Proceeds from the event were donated to Sea-Watch, an organisation dedicated to rescuing refugees at sea. This initiative aligns with broader industry efforts, such as IMPALA's humanitarian scheme, to support social causes.



SEND YOUR NOMINATIONS



IMPALA's PR committee is running an initiative to recognise the diversity of leaders in the independent music sector through a special edition of IMPALA's outstanding contribution award.

We will have multiple winners who contribute to this year's **International Women's' Day** theme 'Inspire Inclusion'.

Be sure to send your nominations to:
rbrown@impalamusic.org.