



Creative Fellow 

Esther “Estée Blu” Lenda Bokuma

Embodying Liberation: Exploring
holistic wellness and emergent
artist-led models of community
care for Black Musicians and
Professionals in Britain

CIRCE Final Report

Title: Embodying Liberation: Exploring holistic wellness and emergent artist-led models of community care for Black Musicians and Professionals in Britain

Name: Esther Lenda Bokuma PKA (professionally known as) Estée Blu **or** Esther “Estée Blu” Lenda Bokuma

Pronouns: She/Her

Introducing BLU WAV by Estée Blu

Context

In October 2021, the Black Lives in Music (BLiM) organisation published the results of the largest survey ever conducted concerning Black British musicians and music industry professionals in the UK. The BLiM report revealed many things including data such as:

- Three in five (63%) Black music creators have experienced direct/indirect racism in the music industry, and more (71%) have experienced racial microaggressions.
- 31% of all Black music creators believe their mental wellbeing has worsened since starting their music career, rising to 42% of Black women.
- 38% of Black music professionals earn 100% of their income from music compared to 69% of white music professionals. Black Lives in Music (2021).

These findings accurately express my own lived experience as a Black British female musician, which heavily influenced my activism and desire to collaborate with UK-based music organisations like BLiM and others, to tackle these issues through my Artist profile 'Estée Blu'.

Main argument

For my creative enterprise, I was interested in further understanding the barriers Black Artists faced. I also wanted to explore developing alternative approaches to dealing with the consequences of the aforementioned structural racism, poor mental health and large financial disparities based on ethnicity. Currently there are no widely known services that take a holistic, trauma-informed and traditional African-centred approach to the health and wellbeing of Black musicians in Britain. This is a problem because it ignores the knowledge and restorative potential these modalities can provide.

Key Insights

To kick off my project, I had a number of meaningful conversations across different mediums and locations. And over the course of my 6-month CIRCE fellowship, these conversations continued with Black music creators, Black music professionals and others from the wider creative industries. Secondly, I hosted three virtual and in-person wellbeing workshops specifically for Black British Artists and extended it further to Black creative professionals due to the feedback I received. The workshop series was entitled 'BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series'. I felt that the name best represented my artist-led community intervention, which was in collaboration with four practitioners in the holistic, spiritual, artistic and psychology sectors.

The key insights from my CIRCE project regarding the cultural and creative economies concerned:

- Unveiling the toxic culture of the music industries in Britain.
- The lack of mental health, holistic awareness and access for marginalised groups.
- Questioning what sustainability looks like for myself and other Music professionals engaged in liberation and consciousness-raising work.
- Harnessing the revolutionary power of imagination through technology and community collaboration.

Summary of findings

To briefly summarise my own take on the findings from my CIRCE project, although legitimate barriers were presented that largely contribute to the cycle of poor mental health for Black British musicians and music professionals, BLU WAV's 4-week endeavour to address and explore these issues were successful. I defined success in terms of executing this idea, facilitating and participating in the transformative sessions myself, having a broad reach and participants who signed up and engaged positively. BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series' three events: a 'Yoga for Anxiety' virtual class, a 'Music As Resistance' virtual talk and Q&A and a 'Relaxing Crystal Soundbath' that took place in-person, is living proof that:

1. We can affect change regarding the music industry's harmful culture.
2. We can increase the mental health and holistic awareness/accessibility among Black music artists and professionals.
3. Working in the music industry can be more sustainable for Music Professionals like myself who participate in liberation work.
4. It is possible to reimagine the Music Industry by utilising the power of imagination in collaboration with new technologies and the community engagement.

However this will all take time, capacity, resources, education, teamwork, financial investment, tangible support from larger music/creative industry partners and real systems of care embedded at every stage.

BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series

Definitions

Black British: a multi-ethnic group of British citizens of either African or Afro-Caribbean descent.

Holistic: concerned with the care of the entire person in all aspects of well-being, including the physical, psychological, and social and often using natural or traditional remedies.

Racial microaggressions: a comment or action that expresses prejudice against a marginalised group or person.

Racial-trauma: the mental and emotional injury caused by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination, racism, and hate crimes.

Traditional African diasporic healing practices: physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing practices stemming from African cultures.

Trauma-informed: an approach to health and care interventions which is grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development.

The background and starting point of my work

Estée Blu the Artist

I'm an independent R&B-Jazz Singer, Writer, Activist and recent Founder of BLU WAV Artist Wellbeing, from London England. I was raised by a Congolese-Belgian mother in Hendon (North-West London) and first picked up the microphone at the tender age of six, as a member of the children's Gospel Choir at my church in Kilburn. I grew up singing in church and found my signature sound weaving between R&B, Jazz and Afro-fusion influences. My value system and lyrics, champion authenticity and imagination through Rhythm and Blues. Since launching my career in 2015, I have been supported by Help Musicians, AfroPunk, COLORS, the MOBO Awards and Camden Roundhouse, as a Resident Artist.

Estée Blu the Activist

During my musical hiatus between 2020-2023, coinciding with the Covid-19 pandemic and the tragic murder of George Floyd in May 2020, activism became my key driver. I sit on various executive boards as a Trustee for music charity Sound Connections, a Director for women and gender minority CIC the F-List and I am part of the Richard Antwi Scholarship committee (University of Westminster), for emerging Black music professionals. My Artist profile and work has been featured in music industry publications such as Music Business Worldwide, Mixmag and PRS, discussing race and gender inequality, mental health and wellbeing in UK Music. In December 2022, I was nominated by Women In Music 2022 Roll Of Honour inductee Christine Osazuwa as a Music Week Rising Star, due to my activism.

Estée Blu the Healer

Mid-2021 was a particularly difficult time professionally dealing with structural racism in the Music Industry. I took some time over the following 18 months to rest, get support and reflect on my journey in music and the consequences that the industry's toxic culture has had on me and other Black British women and their mental health. In November 2022, I published an article on Mixmag detailing this, covering everything from the myth of meritocracy, the multiple layers of discrimination through combination of racism, sexism and colourism as a dark-skinned Black women in music. I discussed the industry's burnout culture, racial trauma and what accountability could look like on a governmental level. I also wrote about what success looks like for me, showing up authentically, co-creating future music ecosystems, my holistic wellness routine, spiritual health and embodying liberation. Embodying liberation has since become a key phrase for me. It is the evolution, current iteration and merging of both my artistic practice and activism.

Additionally, I chose to integrate the words "Embodying Liberation" into the wellbeing workshops for my CIRCE research project. This act is significant and gratifying personally, professionally, creatively and spiritually, as it speaks to the reparative process I have undergone and the wider role that I believe an Artist plays in society, through healing others. I am reminded of my earliest childhood memories of singing in church, connecting with my community, spirituality and traditional African diasporic healing practices through Gospel music. Meeting myself decades later from that moment, I see my position in music not just as a job, but as one of my life's purposes.

My lived experience as an Artist, Activist and Healer formed the starting point of my work with CIRCE. Within the fellowship, I intended to further understand the barriers faced by Black British Artists and develop alternative methods, materials and approaches to tackling the key disparities of structural racism, poor mental health and large financial disparities based on ethnicity. I also hoped to integrate the research findings into my artistic practice and share it with others, whilst continuing to expand my creative community and professional network.

My Creative Impact Research Centre of Europe Fellowship

My research problem

Black British music is a global success story, but this story hides the systemic challenges faced by the communities from which they emerge. Such challenges are further inflected by a period of multiple crises that has placed it under further pressure. This includes heightened fears and anxieties, and increasingly punitive measures around immigration and citizenship; the unequally distributed effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of physical and mental health, the financial impacts on creative performers; the global resonance of the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement.

As mentioned in the opening section of my report, some of the consequences of structural racism that I have identified within the music industry are:

- Worsening mental health for Black people in the music industries
- Big pay gaps between Black and White music professionals
- The wider monetary repercussions of how much Black music professionals earn in Britain

My contribution

My programme of research and community-led intervention addresses a number of crises through emergent models of collective care. I organised my project around the following three things:

1. Meaningful conversations with musicians and music industry professionals.
These took place throughout the course of my 6-month fellowship in a variety of different settings e.g. zoom calls, phone calls, emails, in-person catch-ups at music events, private messages and public posts on social media, interviews and conversations at the biggest Black British music events in Europe to-date: AfroNation music festival in Portimão Portugal and Notting Hill Carnival in London England.

2. Wellbeing workshops for Black musicians, of which I extended to Black music and creative professionals. I hosted a total of three virtual and in-person sessions in September in collaboration with four Black women practitioners in the holistic, spiritual, artistic and psychology sectors:
- Week 1: Thursday 14 September - 'Yoga For Anxiety' with Zakiya Bishton from Mindwalk Yoga (online).
 - Week 2: Thursday 21 September - 'Music As Resistance' with Guilaine Kinouani, hosted by Darcy Dixon (online).
 - Week 3: Thursday 28 September - 'Relaxing Crystal Soundbath' with Jazreena Harlow (at a yoga studio in Dalston, London).



Credit: Zakiya Bishton 'Yoga for Anxiety' virtual class with BLU WAV/ Esther Lenda Bokuma

3. My BLU WAV artistic and holistic wellbeing online platform, which was launched on 28 August 2023 via Instagram, with a presence on Tik Tok and Youtube, my website and eventbrite page (an event and ticketing host). These served as the public channels by which musicians and the wider music industry professionals could find out more about my CIRCE project and my intentions behind launching this new wellness offering. It was also a tangible way for me to:
 - Document and share some of my learnings and reflections on social media.
 - Showcase, interact with and grow my community of collaborators and supporters.
 - Explore storytelling through images, photography, graphics, videos, audio, text, captions and quotes.

The aim of my research was not simply to ameliorate the effects of unusual crisis conditions for Black Artists, and return to 'business as usual', but to recognise what such conditions reveal and explore alternative ways of embedding support and care into this marginalised community.

The creative process

1. For my CIRCE project, I had a range of meaningful conversations with predominantly Black musicians and music industry professionals, throughout my 6-month fellowship. During the conversations we spoke about the working conditions of Black Artists and music professionals, the "business as usual" culture of the music industries, the history and significance of Black British and African diasporic music and we also shared ideas about the state of mental health, awareness and what healing spaces within this community looks like or could like. This ongoing discourse was useful in helping me to have a consistent

sounding board and stay in touch with the thoughts, feelings and recommendations of my community and wider professional network.

2. In addition to the meaningful conversations, my objective was to prepare a set of events that were holistic, trauma-informed and included an element of traditional African-centred health and wellbeing. Next, I reached out to four Black women practitioners with my BLU WAV proposals. Upon their agreement to collaborate with me on 'The Embodying Liberation Series', I put together three wellbeing workshops (two virtual and one in-person) that would be publicly available to Black British Artists and creative professionals to join. I advertised these sessions over 4 weeks through my own database of music professionals via email and text messages, Instagram and paid ads, Twitter, LinkedIn and Eventbrite. Lastly, I had some UK music organisations, professionals and charities re-share my event series to their audiences and networks. This collaborative and public-facing way of working was key. I intended for my research to be a community intervention but also used music industry styles of marketing and advertising in order to reach a wider pool of Black British Artists and music professionals. Below you'll find a page from the BLU WAV brand deck proposal, the event posters, with biographies of each of the practitioners and descriptions of the event that I wrote the copy for. These events were all published online on Eventbrite.

BLU WAV PRESENTS: THE EMBODYING LIBERATION SERIES

'The Embodying Liberation Series' is a community intervention that consists of a series of holistic and artistic wellbeing workshops designed for Black British Musicians in September 2023, under Estée Blu's brand new platform BLU WAV.

This series is funded by the [Creative Impact Research Centre Europe](#) (CIRCE), and is apart of [Estée's CIRCE Fellowship](#) and ongoing research into the mental health, wellbeing and working conditions of Black Artists in Britain.



Week 1: Yoga For Anxiety
with [Mindwalk Yoga](#)
7-8.15PM (ONLINE)



Week 2: Music As Resistance Bookclub with [Guilaine Kinouani](#), Author of 'Living While Black: The Essential Guide to Overcoming Racial Trauma', hosted by [Darcy Dixon](#)
7-8.15PM (ONLINE)



Week 3: Relaxing Crystal Sound Bath
with [Jazreena Harlow](#)
7-8.30PM (IRL EAST LONDON
LOCATION)

Credit: Zakiya Bishton, Guilaine Kinouani and Jazreena Harlow / Shakira Palmer and Esther Lenda Bokuma

BLU WAV PRESENTS: The Embodying Liberation Series with Mindwalk Yoga

BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series with Mindwalk Yoga

'Yoga For Anxiety' Virtual Class
Thursday 14 September 2023
7pm - 8.15pm (ONLINE)



Zakiya Bishton, Founder of Mindwalk Yoga

Credit: Zakiya Bishton / Shakira Palmer and Esther Lenda Bokuma

Gift yourself the time to focus on your inner peace and strategies to tackle anxiety with BLU WAV x Mindwalk Yoga at our first online event.

About this event

BLU WAV Presents: 'The Embodying Liberation Series'

Launched in late-August 2023, BLU WAV is a brand new platform by Artist Estée Blu that focusses on artistic and holistic wellbeing for musicians.

'The Embodying Liberation Series' is a community intervention that consists of a series of holistic and artistic wellbeing workshops designed for Black British Musicians, in September 2023.

Join BLU WAV and Mindwalk Yoga on our first collaborative online yoga class focussing on 'Yoga For Anxiety'. This virtual session led by Zakiya Bishton, is designed to help you alleviate stress and anxiety in a relaxed and informal setting. Whether you're a beginner or experienced yogi, this event is suitable for all levels.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to prioritize your well-being and find solace in the practice of yoga. We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Thu Sep 14 2023

Time: 19:00:00 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)

While BLU WAV is open to all Artists, we also host exclusive workshops for Black Artists. Currently 31% of all Black music creators believe their mental wellbeing has worsened since starting their music career, rising to 42% of Black women (Black Lives in Music, 2021). So these particular sessions have been created to explore models of collective care for this underserved community.

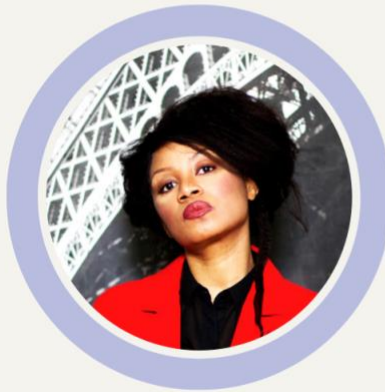
*Find out more about BLU WAV and 'The Embodying Liberation Series' at
www.esteeblu.com/bluwav*

Follow us @bluwav.universe on Instagram, YouTube & Tik Tok

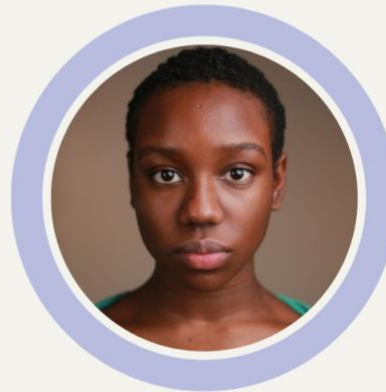
BLU WAV PRESENTS: The Embodying Liberation Series with Guilaine Kinouani

BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series with
Guilaine Kinouani, hosted by Darcy Dixon

'Music As Resistance' Virtual Talk and Q&A
Thursday 21 September 2023
7pm - 8.15pm (ONLINE)



Guilaine Kinouani,
Psychologist, Author
and Founder of Race Reflections
social enterprise



Darcy Dixon,
Actor, Singer, Movement Artist, Resident
Creative at City University of London and
Researcher on Aesthetics

Credit: Guilaine Kinouani and Darcy Dixon / Shakira Palmer and Esther Lenda Bokuma

Join us as we discuss 'Music as Resistance' and thriving while Black with Psychologist & Author Guilaine Kinouani alongside host Darcy Dixon.

About this event

BLU WAV Presents: 'The Embodying Liberation Series'

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'The Embodying Liberation Series' is a community intervention that consists of a series of holistic and artistic wellbeing workshops designed for Black British Musicians, in September 2023.

Join BLU WAV, Guilaine Kinouani and host Darcy Dixon at our second collaborative online talk focussing on 'Music as Resistance'. In her book 'Living While Black: The essential guide to overcoming racial trauma', Guilaine outlines the long history of Black resistance, what it looks like today. Alongside Actor, Singer, City University Creative Resident and Researcher Darcy Dixon, they will both share and discuss some of the tools we can use to move beyond survival in order to thrive while Black!

This promises to be an informative session and there will be a chance for you, our audience, to ask questions at the Q&A section towards the end of talk. Don't miss out on this opportunity to empower yourself and add strategies to your self-care toolkit. We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Thu Sep 21 2023

Time: 19:00:00 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)

BLU WAV Community Note

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Find out more about BLU WAV and 'The Embodying Liberation Series' at www.esteeblu.com/bluwav

Follow us @bluwav.universe on Instagram, YouTube & Tik Tok

BLU WAV PRESENTS: The Embodying Liberation Series with Jazreena Harlow

BLU WAV Presents: The Embodying Liberation Series
with Jazreena Harlow

'Relaxing Crystal Soundbath'
Thursday 28 September 2023
7pm - 8.30pm (EAST LONDON LOCATION)



Jazreena Harlow, Sound Healer,
Human Design Reader and Life Coach

Credit: Jazreena Harlow / Shakira Palmer and Esther Lenda Bokuma

Join us for the last session of our Embodying Liberation series, a special in-person Crystal Sound Bath with Sound Healer Jazreena Harlow!

About this event

BLU WAV Presents: 'The Embodying Liberation Series'

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'The Embodying Liberation Series' is a community intervention that consists of a series of holistic and artistic wellbeing workshops designed for Black British Musicians, in September 2023.

BLU WAV is excited to welcome Sound Healer, Human Design Reader and Life Coach Jazreena Harlow to close our 'Embodying Liberation Series'. Discover how sound vibrations can reduce stress, alleviate pain and strengthen your health. We invite you to come as you are, and set your intentions towards what embodying liberation looks like for you. This is a great opportunity to perhaps try something new and add more tools to your self-care kit. We look forward to seeing you there!

Date: Thu Sep 28 2023

Time: 19:00:00 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time)

Location: East London location to be announced to ticket holders prior to the event date

Preparation Advice

**During the session, participants are invited to lie down or sit up on a yoga mat.*

**Yoga mats, blankets, bolsters, cushions, blocks and eye pillows are available to you and included with your ticket, but please feel free to bring your own for extra comfort.*

**Ensure you stay hydrated and can bring drinking water along with you.*

Precautions

**Avoid caffeine and alcohol before and after the sound bath, for at least 24 hours if possible.*

**Whilst sound therapy is a gentle, relaxing, holistic therapy, there are some precautions to consider. Always check with a GP or seek professional medical advice if you suffer with any of the following:*

- severe or clinical mental health

- epilepsy

- implants such as a cochlear or a pacemaker.

**If you are between 1-12 weeks pregnant, please seek advice from your health care provider. We advise not to attend a sound bath during this very important stage in your baby's development. Even though sound healing is very safe & gentle to listen to always seek medical advice if you feel you need it.*

**Some frequencies can be triggering for people living with epilepsy, autism*

**Signs of release are normal and welcome*

BLU WAV Community Note

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Follow us @bluwav.universe on Instagram, YouTube & Tik Tok

Methodology and ethical considerations

My research methodology was informed by participatory action research (PAR) principles, which emphasises co-creation of both process and outcomes with key partners. I really enjoyed using this approach as it allowed me to co-create with the four lead practitioners, participants and my music industry peers at every step within the process. In terms of ethical considerations, having an evolving list of community guidelines and a feedback loop that I encouraged both practitioners and participants to contribute to, was integral to the legacy of this community intervention. Personal data,

photography, film and audio recordings of my project were also considered and everyone had the option to opt-in or opt-out.

Analysis and main insights

Managing creativity

Throughout this fellowship, I had many opportunities to use creativity, harness the revolutionary power of imagination and raise awareness about mental health and holistic wellbeing amongst Black Musicians and Music professionals. I also got to experiment with new technologies via online platforms and virtually collaborate with the BLU WAV community.

A lot of my creative ideas, practice and general moral compass are guided by my own intuition. I am at a stage in my life and career where I trust myself, my knowledge and my life experiences. So I ask myself the questions: what feels right in my body? And what could be the greater impact of my actions? This ultimately guides my process and inspires my next steps.

By its nature, my research project challenged the damaging hustle and “business as usual” culture of the Music Industries by inviting its most exploited and marginalised group into a series of moments for self and communal repair.

Primarily, I learnt the importance of having a good workflow, environment and various sounding boards. This was great to generate ideas, actions and further meaningful conversations.

Secondly, I discovered that the ability to clearly communicate the vision, value and feel of my workshops in particular, to be a vital component. It not only helped me to stay on track and feel conviction in this concept of embodying liberation, but it also informed Black Music professionals and the wider industry about what I was doing and how they could get involved.

Self-care

In 'Living While Black: The essential guide to overcoming racial trauma', Kinouani (2021) closes the book with a chapter encouraging readers to develop their own radical self-care plans. She reminds us that the origins of self-care are indeed radical and were developed by Black feminist scholars during the civil rights movement. In the opening paragraph of this section, she cites one of Audre Lorde's most famous quotes: 'Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.'

Throughout this fellowship I was further reminded of the necessity of my own radical self-care plan. And paying particular attention to how those self-nurturing needs intensified as my workload increased and when dealing with real life stressors and events that have their high and low moments.

I also thought about the self-care of the participants engaging in my workshop, given their working conditions, what space they had to create and/or sacrifices they had to make in order to show up, commit and participate in a BLU WAV session.

In the planning of my workshops, I reviewed my original offering of six sessions and questioned the potential danger of providing quantity over quality. I considered that with the right collaborators and investing more time in strengthening those relationships, things may be far more impactful with a shorter timeline. Additionally there were also opportunities to reflect post-workshops through recorded audio, film, photography, social media and further conversations with industry peers.

Cultural production and output

In terms of what I learnt about cultural production and output, the workshop event series was a mixture of project management, brand development, social media marketing, events production (virtual and in-person), copyright and intellectual property management and influencing. I underestimated the amount of work and hours it took to set up three public facing events and essentially build a new brand in real-time.

I launched BLU WAV publicly on 28 August 2023 and the last wellbeing workshop took place on 28 September 2023. Therefore the timeline of brand visibility was

approximately 1 month-long. I had support from a Social Media manager who assisted me on setting up the social channels, creating the visual identity for BLU WAV and they additionally acted as a sounding board for other ideas. I appreciated this second pair of eyes and their positive contributions as a founding team member. I was also able to work with a Photographer and a Sound engineer to document the last Crystal Soundbath event with Sound Healer Jazreena Harlow.

Ultimately, I am incredibly proud of what was produced and our collective output, which currently lives on the BLU WAV Instagram account. Other channels such as Tik Tok, YouTube and my website will be also updated throughout October and November 2023 to showcase the series and the findings of my CIRCE project. This demonstrates the value of a strong team and building mutually beneficial partnerships. Although it is a very small and nascent platform, the BLU WAV Presents: 'The Embodying Liberation Series' social media posts reached over 7,500 accounts on Instagram and had 565 Eventbrite page views alone, which speaks to the power of creativity, collaboration and new technologies as well as my own professional network in the UK Music Industry.

Further reflections

However, despite encouraging figures of BLU WAV's growing brand awareness online. The number of event sign ups and participation told another sobering but very important story. Please find the main data of the BLU WAV Presents: 'The Embodying Liberation Series' below:

- Reach on Instagram: 7,766
- Page views on Eventbrite from: 565
- Other channels of promotion included: my professional database of over 85 music industry professionals and companies that I reached out to via email and text, my Twitter page and reshares from the guest practitioners, peers and organisations such as BLiM, the Black Music Coalition, the Museum of Homelessness and Enough Records.
- Total sign ups on Eventbrite: 21
- Number of participants across the series: 15

- Event ticket costs: The initial £5 ticket fee for the two online workshops and £10 for the in-person one, were all waived for the participants through discount codes and personal invitations.

As I tracked the number of sign ups in-real time, I immediately spoke to a music industry peer and later followed up with another. Both are trusted names that have established trailblazing legacies with over 20 years of experience working in music and more directly with Black Musicians and professionals. So I wanted to get their thoughts on the imbalance between the reach, reshares and active participation in my wellbeing workshops. They both acknowledged that my CIRCE project was groundbreaking, ahead of the curve and a very new concept within the current culture of the British music business. They also pointed out the following thoughts:

- The toxic culture of the Music Industries in Britain, has made it so that music professionals are accustomed to poor treatment in the workplace. Hence, when it comes to Black music professionals who are statistically worse off due to structural racism, there is a consensus that this is how this sector is “supposed” to be. They suggested that there was a preliminary step to address, which involved the following questions; how do we ignite an ideology of self-respect amongst Black music professionals to challenge the status quo? And additionally get them to understand the value of doing the restorative holistic work that BLU WAV offers?
- The second conversation I had echoed the former’s sentiments and highlighted the general lack of mental health and holistic awareness and access for Black music professionals in Britain. They distinguished the big difference between someone “liking” and sharing my event series on social, to actually turning up and joining it. They also questioned whether those who saw the advertisements identified themselves as having a need.

These were valuable exchanges that helped me to learn and consider what extra education and processes I would need to create, in order to address the complexities involved in what I have described as liberation and consciousness-raising work. Another

thing that I will bear in mind is the accessibility of my wellbeing events, virtual or in-person, recorded playback options (if suitable), the frequency e.g. weekly, fortnightly or monthly and also the price point. I sincerely believe that BLU WAV is a platform for positive change and the feedback that I have received across the music industry confirms this. I really look forward to continuing to evolve it in 2024 by developing further materials and services e.g. a methodology or training manual; a written report; a set of indicators or a consultancy, which can feed back into my own/others', creative practice.

BLU WAV by Estée Blu and the Creative Impact Research Centre Europe

The insights from my Creative Impact Research Centre Europe project builds on existing research across the music business, health, technology, diversity, intersectionality and social transformation in arts and culture. My contribution to CIRCE showcases a community intervention that also addresses a number of crises through emergent artist-led models of collective care.

My study also signals the importance of grassroots and experimental approaches to address crises. And investing in projects that are specifically tailored to support marginalised sections of the creative community.

Carrying out this CIRCE project from conception to delivery, has been a life-changing and affirming opportunity for me at the stage of my career. Centering my research and mantras around Embodying Liberation, has been empowering as I also re-explore holistic wellness and new models of community care for Black British Musicians and Professionals in practice. To close my report, I ponder on what conclusions can be drawn for the future of the cultural and creative economies in Europe? My answer is that despite the personal, collective and structural difficulties, the arts, culture, music and the communities that sustain them, can provide us with imagination, experimental frameworks, models and avenues to address multiple crises. However, they need to be

adequately supported and their self-care also needs to be prioritised. Through a mixture of short term and long-term solutions and through empowering and collaborating with cultural workers, I strongly believe that the cultural and creative economies can be sustained. And so there is indeed hope for the future.

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