



unesco

UNESCO-Aschberg programme

Unlocking
creative
futures
for all



What is artistic freedom ?



The definition of artistic freedom extends well beyond notions of freedom of expression to encompass a number of rights and freedoms protected under international law, including:

- ▶ The right to have artistic work supported, distributed, remunerated
- ▶ The right to freedom of movement
- ▶ The right to freedom of association
- ▶ The protection of social and economic rights
- ▶ The right to participate in cultural life
- ▶ The right to create without censorship

The advancement of **artistic freedom** freedom is essential to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions. In addition to inspiring and entertaining, artistic expression is an essential **driver of innovation and change**. Artists do not only produce work that appeals to the senses, their creations can also highlight issues, challenge norms and encourage conversations driving development processes. Without freedom and the social and economic conditions necessary to foster artistic expressions, it is not only artists that are deprived of their means to survive, it is society as a whole that is missing out on opportunities to learn and to imagine alternative futures.

As per UNESCO's 2022 Global Report *Re|Shaping Policies for Creativity – Addressing culture as a global public good*, threats to artistic freedom remain a global challenge, especially where artistic expressions contest or critique ideologies, religious beliefs and social and cultural norms. Additionally, inconsistencies in the legal recognition of the professional status of artists and a lack of recourse to adequate socio-economic protection further exacerbate the precarity that artists face.



What is the UNESCO-Aschberg programme ?

The UNESCO-Aschberg programme supports the implementation of UNESCO's two international instruments addressing the status of the artist: the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist. Through its annual call for projects, the UNESCO-Aschberg programme provides concrete technical and financial assistance to government institutions and civil society organisations to revise or design regulatory and policy frameworks that strengthen artistic freedom, including the social and economic rights of the artist as well as preferential treatment measures for the balanced flow of cultural goods and services and the mobility of artists.

In 2021, responding to recommendations put forward by the UNESCO-initiated ResiliArt movement organized worldwide, the UNESCO-Aschberg programme for artists and cultural professionals has been recalibrated to meet the most urgent challenges facing artists and cultural professionals, whose precarious status has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Recent achievements

Since 2021, the UNESCO-Aschberg programme has been providing technical support to accompany **Peru's** Ministry of Culture in the revision of a national law on the status of the artist that will strengthen the social protection of artists and encourage the formalisation of artistic and cultural work. In **Namibia**, work is underway to strengthen the capacities of both government and civil society to report on, monitor and collect data on artistic freedom which forms an important basis for the improvement of measures and policies that safeguard artistic freedom in the long run.

Following its **annual call for projects** that took place in September 2021, the UNESCO-Aschberg programme has mobilised over US \$600,000 in funding that supports the status of the artist and promotes artistic freedom in the 12 selected UNESCO Member States with priority given to Africa and Small Island Developing States: **Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Gambia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Palestine, Peru, Romania, Seychelles, Tunisia and Uganda**. This assistance is supporting the strengthening of national legislation and policies, capacity building, monitoring efforts and advocacy initiatives that cover a wide range of issues related to the fundamental rights of artists such as decent work, social security, unemployment benefits, freedom of artistic expression, copyright protection and raising awareness among the general public on the importance of enhancing the status of the artist.





UNESCO-Aschberg Programme
for Artists and Cultural Professionals

Partnerships

The **UNESCO-Aschberg programme** is currently supported by the generous voluntary contribution of the Kingdom of Norway. It has also launched collaborations with partner institutions working on artists at risk (PEN America's Artists at Risk Connection (ARC), Artists at Risk NGO, etc.) as well as sister UN entities such as the International Labour Organization committed to promote decent work for workers in the culture sector.



Photo: © Alvan Nee / Unsplash.com • Design: Corinne Hayworth

Learn more about this programme:

www.unesco.org/creativity

Contact us to request assistance
or explore partnership:

Aschberg@unesco.org



unesco

Diversity of
Cultural Expressions

Supported by



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Scan the QR code to learn more
about the work of UNESCO
in support of artists and
cultural professionals worldwide

