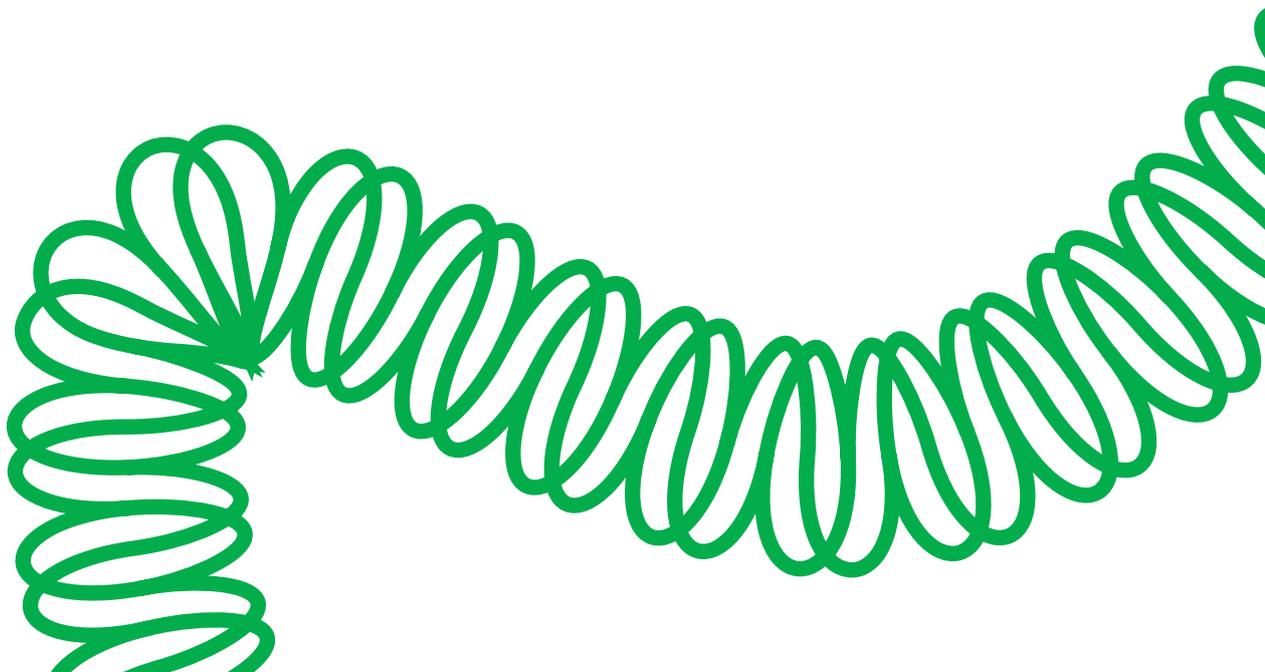


CENTRE FOR
CULTURAL VALUE

**Policy review:
Social security for
cultural practitioners**

Version 1
October 2020



About the Centre for Cultural Value

The Centre for Cultural Value is building a shared understanding of the differences that arts, culture, heritage and screen make to people's lives and to society. We want cultural policy and practice to be shaped by rigorous research and evaluation of what works and what needs to change. To achieve this, we are working in collaboration with partners across the UK to:

- Make existing research more relevant and accessible so its insights can be understood and applied more widely.
- Support the cultural sector and funders to be rigorous in their approaches to evaluation and to foster a culture of reflection and learning.
- Foster an evidence-based approach to cultural policy development.

Our approach is primarily pragmatic: we want empirical research to drive decisions about cultural funding, policy, management, engagement and evaluation.

Based at the University of Leeds, the Centre's core partners are The Audience Agency and the Universities of Liverpool, Sheffield, York and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. The Centre is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation), Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England.

About our policy reviews

Our policy reviews are based on a rapid assessment of published literature (both peer-reviewed and non-academic) to present a 'snapshot' of cultural policy across a number of core themes that have been developed through consultation with stakeholders. The reviews present an overview of key policies and findings, highlighting what we know for certain, where there is emerging evidence and where further research is needed. We use the evidence gained through the review process to make conclusions about the current state of the evidence, and what policy implications this has going forwards.

Other formats of this document are available on request. If you require an alternative format, please contact: ccv@leeds.ac.uk

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Highlights

The UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist calls on member states to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by their choice to work in the cultural sector.

Today, **cultural practitioners remain subject to low and unstable incomes and are therefore at risk of poverty.**

Nation states typically mitigate against this risk through **generic social security measures** for the self-employed, **targeted social security measures for artists**, or a mixture of the two.

Targeted measures appeared to result in greater and more equitable coverage.

Countries with established social security schemes targeting artists were able to deploy these during the COVID-19 pandemic, appearing to rely less on extraordinary relief funding.

We recommend detailed investigation into the effectiveness of different social security measures for all self-employed and freelance cultural practitioners.

We also recommend that **policymakers implement compulsory schemes, fix contributions and offer minimum guaranteed welfare payments** wherever possible.

We recommend **further research into the implications of Universal Basic Income on social protections for artists.**



Executive summary

COVID-19 has already had a profound impact on artists and cultural practitioners. This review focusses on the policy measures that may better support cultural practitioners both in times of crisis and of relative stability.

The necessity of supporting cultural practitioners is enshrined in the UNESCO Recommendations concerning the Status of the Artist (1980). As the Recommendations, and subsequent UNESCO reports underline, **cultural practitioners play a vital role in the democratic, social and economic life of every nation. States have a responsibility to create the conditions in which cultural practitioners can fulfil this role fully and without disadvantage.** Subsequent national and supranational reports on the ‘status of the artist’ show a continuing need for measures that effectively protect practitioners from the risks associated with their profession: **exposure to structural income instability and low earnings, which increase the risk of poverty** as a result of illness, periods of unemployment, parental leave, old age and long-term care responsibilities. COVID-19 has exacerbated these risks, causing rising levels of unemployment across the cultural sector, and a significant loss of income for even those cultural practitioners who remain in employment.

Many nations were able to respond the effects of the pandemic on cultural practitioners’ (and other workers’) income through social security, or social security-like measures.

Income support schemes were launched or extended within the first few months of the pandemic, and cultural practitioners were often directed to these as a first point of assistance. The extent to which these measures targeted workers in the cultural and creative sectors varied between nations. Several European states, including Germany, Austria and France, were able to **extend existing social security schemes that targeted cultural practitioners.** Countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom devised **new income support schemes aimed at workers in general.**

Since the research for this review was conducted, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s report *Culture shock: COVID-19 and the cultural and creative sectors* has suggested that **states need to invest in measures adapted to the specificities of the cultural and creative sector** and its sub-sectors (OECD, 2020). Meanwhile, emerging evidence suggests that **states with established, targeted social security schemes appeared to able to rely less on emergency funds than those without.**

This review examines the extent to which social security schemes in Europe and the ‘anglosphere’ target cultural practitioners, how these were deployed during the pandemic, and the key factors influencing their effectiveness. It identifies a spectrum of support that ranges from fully targeted schemes for artists to the integration of cultural practitioners into generalised schemes for the employed. It also briefly considers **Universal Basic Income (UBI)**, a form of income support that has gained increasing attention from policymakers and cultural practitioners globally.



Research into the effectiveness of these different approaches so far has been limited. This report outlines different national approaches, indicates emergent evidence and underlines the need for further research in this area. **Reports on the low number of cultural practitioners eligible for the United Kingdom’s Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and furlough scheme suggest that policy measures that are not adapted to the specificities of these workers’ conditions of employment may exclude large numbers, if not the majority, of practitioners in the cultural sector.**

On the other hand, **emergent evidence suggests that social security schemes that target cultural practitioners may achieve greater and more equitable coverage.** For example, by introducing flexible minimum income requirements, Germany’s Artists’ Social Insurance addresses the reality of practitioners’ unstable and fluctuating incomes, and thus, the OECD (2018) suggests, may be able to support a higher percentage of those whom the state deems to be artists.

The long-term effects of social security schemes in responses to the pandemic, and the effectiveness of their provision for cultural practitioners during and beyond times of crisis, is not yet clear. Thus, we suggest that **social security provision is an important area for future research into cultural policy responses to COVID-19, and into the support for cultural practitioners beyond the pandemic.**

Methodology

The findings in this document are based on a rapid review of: international cultural policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic between March and July 2020; nations’ social security schemes for artists and/or cultural practitioners since the year 2000; academic literature and reports on the ‘status of the artist’, also since 2000. We conducted desk research comparing state policy in a sample of countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom. Following Spain’s launch of a UBI-style scheme as a policy measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also consider the relationship of UBI to social security to cultural practitioners.

The full review was conducted between 1 June and 31 July 2020. The evaluations and recommendations that we provide below are based on existing policy reports and secondary literature. Rather than evaluating policies ourselves, we have synthesised existing evaluations to make recommendations for both policy and future research.

Background

This policy review presents the findings of a rapid review of national cultural policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic between March and July 2020. While examining different state responses, we identified a number of recurring themes, including the need for measures that protect cultural practitioners whose livelihoods were disrupted by the pandemic. It became clear that COVID-19 had exacerbated pre-existing risks associated with the profession: exposure to structural income instability and low earnings, increasing the risk of poverty as a result of illness, periods of unemployment, parental leave, old age and long-term care responsibilities. We therefore extended the review to compare existing national policy responses that aimed to mitigate against such risks – that is, social security policies. The full review was conducted between 1 June and 31 July 2020.



While the rapid review of COVID-19 responses had a global scope, this policy review focuses on social security schemes in countries within the European continent and the anglosphere. We identify two poles of a spectrum of approaches within these two areas – with Germany’s comprehensive, state-sponsored Artists’ Social Insurance at one end, and the absence of state-sponsored social security for artists in the United States at the other. We discuss which countries we included and why in more detail below.

As well as the COVID-19 pandemic, a key context for this review was the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980, hereafter referred to as the UNESCO Recommendation). The UNESCO Recommendation outlines both the risks associated with artistic work and the benefits that such work brings to society. The document recommends measures to both mitigate against the risks and compensate the benefits.¹ The aim of this review is to compare a variety of approaches to social security for artists, and to recommend further research to be conducted in the United Kingdom. This is with a view to gathering the knowledge necessary to recommend policies that will fortify the cultural industries, artists and other cultural practitioners against future crises, and to secure long-term sustainability and prosperity for the sector through effective implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation.

What is the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist?

The UNESCO Recommendation is a key UNESCO governance document, and nation states’ implementation of it continues to be monitored by the Organisation today. The core contributions of the UNESCO Recommendation lie in its definition of the “artist” and affirmation of artists’ right to work without disadvantage. The document defines an artist as:

any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his [sic] artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he [sic] is bound by any relations of employment or association (UNESCO, 1980, p.2).

This definition recognises a fluid definition of the artist as someone not necessarily bound by employment, but one who practises art. “Art” in this context encompasses all disciplines and forms. Such a definition captures the status of the artist as one who does not always fit the legal definition of a professional in the sector: many artists are reliant on multiple sources of income for their livelihoods and are not always able to meet prescribed thresholds of income for artistic work. They do, nonetheless, engage in artistic practice and consider themselves as artists.

Yet, despite its breadth in defining the artist, the UNESCO Recommendation also implies a narrowness in its reference to the “artist” rather than the “cultural practitioner.” We also found such an absence in national social security policies and the literature on them, both of which tend to refer only to ‘artists’.

¹ Note that the UNESCO Recommendation refers only to artists and not all cultural practitioners. We discuss this below.



For example, Germany's *Künstlerkatalog*, a list of all the professions covered by the national Artists' Social Insurance scheme, includes a range of artists and designers but not curators or museum workers. In this policy review, we use the term "artist" when discussing UNESCO's Recommendation and the social security schemes that respond to it. However, the distinction between the artist and the cultural practitioner is an assumption that we seek to challenge: we relate our evaluations and recommendations to cultural practitioners where possible, and we recommend that future research into social security also broadens its definition to include all self-employed and freelance cultural practitioners.

The UNESCO Recommendation's guiding principle is artists' right to work, and to not be disadvantaged by their choice to work, in the cultural sector. The document covers a range of areas of implementation: vocation and training; social status; employment, working and living conditions (including trade union and professional representation); and participation in cultural policymaking. In particular, it affirms "the need to improve the social security, labour and tax conditions of the artist, whether employed or self-employed, taking into account the contribution to cultural development which the artist makes" (UNESCO, 1980, p.2). As such, the UNESCO Recommendation emphasises both artists' inherent right to advantageous work and the relationship between providing such work and nations' cultural development (later affirmed in the 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.) This review is based on the UNESCO Recommendation's acknowledgement of the necessity of material support and income stability for artists (and potentially other freelance cultural practitioners), and reviews different nation states' social security schemes as a means of providing these. It also discusses the potential relationship between social security and diversity.

Our approach to reviewing the evidence

We are a research centre rather than a research project. This means that our primary role is to scope and synthesise existing and emerging research in order to make recommendations for future research, policy and practice. By conducting secondary research, we can remain more objective in capturing, synthesising and analysing the strengths and challenges associated with capturing the value of culture and cultural engagement. This means we can provide recommendations based on current evidence and highlight gaps in knowledge that can be addressed by future research.²

How did we review the evidence?

All of the evaluations and recommendations that we provide in this document are based on existing policy reports and secondary literature; rather than evaluating policies ourselves, we have synthesised existing evaluations. We conducted a rapid review of nation states' policies from 2019–2020; reports from supranational and national organisations such as UNESCO, the European Commission, and national arts and cultural associations published since 2000; and grey and peer-reviewed academic literature published since 2000. We used nation states' policies to provide a snapshot of social security schemes for artists immediately before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, we used reports, and grey and academic literature to provide: context for the review, an overview of social security policies in different nation states, and, where available, evaluations of the policies.

² With any rapid review, there is a possibility that we have not identified all published journal articles in a field. If you feel we have missed a vital piece of published research that should be embedded within our policy review, please get in touch using: ccv@leeds.ac.uk



Our review encountered an absence of literature evaluating social security schemes for artists and, as such, the recommendations we make in this review are limited. Our primary recommendation is therefore that researchers and policymakers conduct further research into this area as a matter of urgency.

As noted above, we searched nation states' governmental websites to find information about their policies. Most often we drew this information from the webpages of either the Ministry of Finance and/or Culture (or equivalents) for each country. However, in some cases, we used state-sponsored informational websites for artists such as Germany's Touring Artists website and Austria's SmartATmobility website. We also searched supranational bodies' websites and the UNESCO Policy Monitoring Platform for policies and reports relevant to the topic.³ We used a systematic approach to identify relevant literature, using academic and grey literature databases as well as sources from reputable publications.

What we included

We included policies, reports and literature relevant to state social security schemes for self-employed and freelance artists. We considered social security schemes that did not specifically target artists but focused on measures targeting artists wherever possible. We reviewed policies from a sample of nation states from European and anglosphere countries which have legislation on social security for artists. These were: Austria, France, Finland, Germany and Canada. We also included the United Kingdom due to its importance to the aims of this policy review and the context of the Centre for Cultural Value's wider activity. Finally, we included literature on Universal Basic Income (UBI) following the launch of Spain's UBI-style scheme, a notable response to the COVID-19 pandemic which has attracted significant interest elsewhere.

What we didn't include

We did not consider social security schemes for artists who are employed. While we recognise the status of these artists, the focus of this review was on policy measures to support those considered to be most at risk of poverty: self-employed and freelance practitioners. With the exceptions of Spain and the United Kingdom (for the reasons discussed above), we did not include countries without specific legislation on social security of artists (such as Portugal, the United States and Australia).

We did not include nation states from Africa, Asia and South America. It is beyond doubt that these states' policies are important to a review of social security for artists. However, our initial searches revealed a scarcity of existing literature on these countries and we were mindful that the British Council and Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre are undertaking policy reviews in these regions.⁴ We recognise the need for, and strongly recommend, further research into social security schemes beyond Europe and the anglosphere.

3 See the Further Reading section at the bottom of this document for links to the websites.

4 See <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/insight-articles> and <https://www.pec.ac.uk/blog>



Which questions did we ask?

We asked the following questions to guide our analysis of the literature:

1. Which approach or combination of approaches to social security did each nation state's policies demonstrate?
2. How were the schemes funded, and who was eligible for them?
3. Which schemes were deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic and how?
4. What are the known strengths or limitations of the schemes?
5. Which aspects of social security for artists require further research?

How social security schemes for artists work

In general, social security schemes work on the principle of *insurance*: contributions are paid into a fund by the artist, the state and/or employers, and welfare payments are provided via this fund if the artist requires them. The cases for receiving welfare payments usually include long-term illness, long-term care, parental leave, and old age (pensions). Less common, but still covered, are periods of unemployment, workplace accidents and occupational diseases.

Insurance funds can be administered by state, public and private bodies, leading to a range of approaches to social security. The 2015 Full Analytic Report on the implementation of the UNESCO 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (hereafter referred to as the UNESCO Full Analytic Report) identifies four types of approach to social insurance for artists:

- 1. No coverage:** individuals must obtain private insurance.
- 2. Integration into employment status:** the artist is provided access to existing social security schemes for workers; they are not differentiated as artists. For the purposes of this review, schemes such as UBI also belong to this category.
- 3. State-sponsored, targeted schemes:** artists are covered by a specific scheme sponsored by the state. These schemes operate in parallel with (and are often modelled on) schemes for other employed or self-employed persons but makes special provisions for artists.
- 4. Non-state schemes:** artists are targeted through complementary or parallel schemes administered by collecting societies, artists' unions or other non-state organisations.

There is considerable variety within these approaches, and, in practice, some nation states use a mixture. For example, France integrates artists into its employment status, but also operates a supplementary state-sponsored scheme targeting freelance artists working on short-term contracts (the *intermittents du spectacle* scheme).

Where there is coverage, social security schemes can be funded by contributions from the state, artists and/or cultural organisations or “users” (companies that employ artists). Artists' contributions and the welfare payments they receive can either be means-tested or guaranteed. That is, the amount that artists are required to pay into the schemes can either vary depending on their earnings or be set at a fixed rate. Similarly, the payments they receive through the schemes can either be guaranteed at a fixed rate or linked to different criteria such as the amount of contributions they have paid into the scheme or their annual income.



Finally, eligibility for the schemes can either be determined by specific criteria, such as a minimum or maximum income from artistic work, or universal – uncoupled from eligibility criteria.

Findings

Social security schemes in European and anglosphere countries

We found that social security schemes for artists in Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom principally followed two of the approaches outlined in the UNESCO Full Analytic Report: integration into employment status; and state-sponsored, targeted schemes. However, as discussed in more detail below, some states employ a mixture of approaches, integrating artists into employment status but providing targeted support through supplementary schemes.

A clear difference between European and anglosphere approaches emerged. While all countries except Germany integrate artists into employment status – that is, artists are covered through general schemes for self-employed and freelance workers – the European nation states in this category also support artists through state-sponsored supplementary schemes. We did not find this to be the case in anglosphere countries, where support for social security was limited to general coverage. **Austria's** Artists' Social Insurance Fund, for example, offers grants towards social insurance payments.

The fund targets artists through flexible eligibility criteria such as a minimum income requirement that allows income averaging and five “joker years” in which applicants can earn less than the minimum but still be eligible. **France** uses the state-sponsored *intermittents du spectacle* scheme, which targets freelance artists and technicians in the audiovisual and performing arts sectors who are employed on short-term contracts. The *intermittents du spectacle* scheme functions as a means-tested basic income or wage supplement, providing income to freelance artists who are either in between temporary contracts or are currently employed on a temporary contract but earning below a minimum annual income threshold

All of the targeted European schemes so far emphasise providing additional support to all those whom the administrators of the scheme define as artists, usually on the basis of profession and days worked or income earned. The schemes primarily aim to mitigate against the additional risk of poverty experienced by artists. **Finland** also provides targeted support for artists, but the schemes combine two aims: to provide additional social security to (some) artists and to promote artistic excellence. In addition to integrating artists into the state's general social security schemes, **Finland** awards discretionary grants through its arts councils to provide working grants for artists (a basic income for up to five years) and artists' pensions on the basis of “artistic excellence”. The definition of ‘artist’ and ‘artistic excellence’ are determined by the arts councils.



| Country | Legislation | Type of social security | Name of artist-specific scheme (if applicable) | Criteria for artist-specific schemes (if applicable) |
|----------------|--|---|--|---|
| Austria | Law on Social Security for Artists (2001) | Mixed: integration into social security for employed with additional, targeted social insurance for artists | Artists' Social Insurance Fund | Application-based. 'Artist' defined by Section 2 (1) of the Federal Act on the Artists' Social Insurance Fund. Based on income from artistic activities (maximum threshold and flexible minimum threshold). |
| Canada | Status of the Artist Act (1995) | Integration into social security for employed | N/A | N/A |
| Finland | Act on the Pensions of Artists and Some Particular Groups of Short-Time Workers (1995) | Mixed: integration into universal social security with limited social security grants for artists | Artists' Working Grants Artists' Pensions | Application-based. 'Artist' defined and awards determined by the Arts Councils. On the basis of artistic excellence. |
| France | Social Security Scheme for Self-employed Artists (1977) | Mixed: integration into social security for employed with additional, targeted social insurance for artists and technicians in specific sectors. | <i>Intermittents du spectacle</i> | Enrolment-based. Sector-specific: artists and technicians in the audiovisual and performing arts, as defined by the Pôle emploi (national unemployment agency). Based on number of hours or days worked in a given period. |
| Germany | Artists' Social Insurance Act (1981) | Targeted: social security scheme specifically for artists | Artists' Social Insurance | Enrolment-based, with some options to appeal or opt-out. Status as 'artist' determined by the Artists' Social Insurance Fund, according to the list of professions their Kunstlerkatalog . Based on income from artistic activities (flexible minimum threshold). |
| Spain | N/A | Integration into UBI scheme | N/A | N/A |
| UK | N/A | Integration into social security for employed | N/A | N/A |

Table 1: Schematic of different states' social security schemes for artists: relevant legislation, type of social security scheme(s) and eligibility criteria.

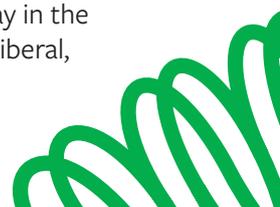
Canada and the **United Kingdom** provide artists with access to general schemes for freelance and self-employed workers but do not target them through supplementary public schemes to the extent that the European countries reviewed do. For example, in the United Kingdom artists are integrated into the National Insurance scheme and may have access to Universal Credit. The targeted support they receive may take the form of grants and bursaries awarded by the devolved arts councils; these tend to be awards for creative projects, rather than social security grants such as artists' pensions. While this is closer to **Finland's** model, such grants are designed wholly to support artistic entrepreneurship, rather than reduce artists' poverty.⁵ In short, state-sponsored funding schemes for artists in the anglosphere emphasise support for specific creative projects, aiming to facilitate entrepreneurship rather than provide targeted social security.

In both the **United Kingdom** and **Canada**, artists may receive targeted social security through private or non-state insurance schemes such as the Writers' Union of Canada's insurance plan for writers. Rather than being unique to anglosphere countries, however, the existence of non-state support schemes is typical across all the nations we reviewed. In each country, artists may receive insurance or social security contributions through collecting societies, unions, and private companies. In the European countries, such support operates *in addition to* state-sponsored targeted schemes, while in anglosphere countries it tends to be *one of the only means of targeted social security that artists may receive*.

Another difference between European and anglosphere approaches to social security lies in the way that their social security schemes tend to be funded.⁶ While European countries usually fund a significant portion of social security through the state and contributions from cultural organisations, in anglosphere countries artists are often required to fund more if not all of their own social insurance. In both **Canada** and the **United Kingdom**, self-employed and freelance workers pay what would elsewhere be both the employer's and employee's contributions. In the United Kingdom this is Class 2 and Class 4 National Insurance. This contrasts with, for example, the **German** model, in which the artist pays a 50% contribution while "users" (organisations that employ artistic services) pay 30% and the state pays the remaining 20%. Users' contributions are coordinated and collected by the state. The users' and state's contributions are considered to compensate for the contribution that employers would pay if the artist were working on a long-term contract. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reported that, as well as addressing artists' typically low incomes, the German approach reduces freelance and self-employed artists' fees, since artists do not shoulder the full burden of social insurance contributions (OECD, 2018, pp.139-140).

5 In a change of emphasis, the initial COVID-19 relief fund for individuals, announced by Arts Council England on 23 March 2020, targeted freelance artists and creative practitioners to help cover their loss of income as a result of the crisis. Arts Council England has since announced a new £500 million Culture Recovery grants as part of the UK Government's £1.57 billion fund for arts and culture, which is targeted at organisations, institutions and venues. There is a notable shift in Arts Council England's language and intent. The initial emergency funds for individuals as a direct result of COVID-19 has since closed and now individuals must apply to the re-deployment of the National Lottery Project Grants. This scheme has a longer gestation and is focused on helping "people take their first steps in getting re-engaged with culture and creativity" (Arts Council England, 2020). Although Arts Council England have stated that the fund will be assessed with the "keen sense of the challenges everyone will be facing", this still represents a shift back to the project-based entrepreneurial model.

6 As we discuss in our policy review, *Cultural Policy Responses to COVID in the UK*, the differences between the two regions can be summarised as varying understandings of the role that the state should play in the cultural sector: a more interventionist, selective model in Europe, in contrast with a more neoliberal, entrepreneurial model in the anglosphere.



Social security during the COVID-19 pandemic Spain's UBI-style scheme was launched on 15 June 2020 in response to the negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although guaranteeing a minimum income, the scheme is not strictly universal, since only those in the lowest eight per cent of earners are eligible. It also does not target cultural practitioners, although some may be eligible. The scheme is nonetheless exceptional, representing the only nationwide extraordinary social security measure of its kind to have been implemented in response to the pandemic.

While it is too early to assess how effective the scheme will be, it will be important to evaluate as part of the ongoing discussion around different policy instruments for reducing poverty among cultural practitioners as well as, possibly, supporting creative work and widening participation in the sector.

Many other countries we reviewed extended their established social security schemes during the pandemic – either schemes targeting artists or schemes for workers in general. The majority relaxed eligibility criteria for social security payments and supplemented, waived or deferred insurance contributions for artists who had lost income due to national lockdowns. **Austria, Finland, France** and **Germany** reduced minimum income or working time requirements for the schemes, or averaged artists' income to compensate for earnings lost during the pandemic. The **United Kingdom** increased the standard allowance for Universal Credit and adjusted payments for those who could not work due to the coronavirus. The British government also introduced new extraordinary general schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention (furlough) scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), while allowing those covered by such schemes also to access the Jobseeker's Allowance, provided they met the standard criteria.

Every country whose COVID-19 measures we reviewed also deployed emergency relief funding either targeting artists or for which artists and other cultural practitioners would be eligible. While the state usually provided relief funds for workers in general, relief funding specifically for artists was usually provided and/or administered by national arts organisations such as arts councils and cultural associations. Often, philanthropic groups and collecting societies also provided significant sector-specific funding. In terms of emergency relief funding, we found little difference between European and anglosphere policies. Even those countries at opposite ends of the spectrum for social security deployed similar measures: **Germany's** federal programme of grants for small business and self-employed workers was comparable in intention to the **United Kingdom's** Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, for instance.

Nations also provided grants to artists through national arts bodies, for example the €1.5 million grant funding administered by the Taite (national arts council) in **Finland**, or the €22 million relief funding administered by organisations such as the National Centre for the Plastic Arts in **France**. In a change of emphasis from its usual entrepreneurial model, arts councils in the **United Kingdom** offered initial COVID-19 relief funds for individuals, which targeted freelance artists and creative practitioners to help cover their loss of income as a result of the crisis. Such measures included Arts Council Wales' £2 million Urgent Response Fund for Individuals (Arts Council Wales, 2020), Arts Council England's £20 million Emergency Response Fund for Individuals (Arts Council England, 2020), and Creative Scotland's £2 million Bridging Bursary (Creative Scotland, 2020). However, such emergency funds have since closed and now artists must apply to the re-deployment of project grants, signalling a movement back to the project-based, entrepreneurial model.



The relationship between nation states' spending on extraordinary, emergency measures for the cultural sector during the pandemic and the comprehensiveness of their existing social security schemes is still unclear. We conducted an initial analysis of nation states' spending during the pandemic as a percentage of GDP.

When we excluded states' expenditure on established social security schemes, we estimated that the **United Kingdom** may have spent up to three times more on extraordinary measures as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in comparison with the European countries reviewed.⁷ It appeared that countries with more comprehensive social security schemes in place were able to extend these, relying less on additional emergency funding and therefore spending less on extraordinary measures. This would suggest that comprehensive social security schemes can provide the cultural sector with some measure of standard protection from crises such as pandemics, rather than such protection being dependent on extraordinary funding. Given the ongoing nature of the pandemic, the usefulness of established social security schemes in protecting the sector from crises, including this one, remains to be seen. We recommend that research into nation states' cultural policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic analyses existing social security protections, extraordinary measures, and the relative effectiveness of each.

Evaluating the schemes

While we found that all the countries reviewed had taken measures to implement the 1980 UNESCO Recommendation, suffice to say there exists no perfect social security scheme. Thus, as the UNESCO Full Analytic Report concludes, although “there have been major improvements in providing social protections to artists, in every part of the world [...] Member States should [continue to] explore the appropriate best practices from elsewhere as they consider new policies in this field” (UNESCO, 2015, p.40). Below, we summarise the strengths and limitations of key aspects of existing social security schemes, identify implications and recommend areas for further research that will allow policymakers to adopt best practice in their own schemes.

Strengths of existing schemes

It is widely acknowledged that artists are subject to structural income instability and a lack of financial compensation for their activities (UNESCO, 2015, p.34; ERICarts, 2006, p.11). The literature we reviewed demonstrated that artists typically earn less than other self-employed workers and, as such, are at greater risk of poverty. Social security schemes are therefore particularly necessary today as a means of mitigating this risk.

The OECD's report on social security protections for non-standard workers (including artists), suggests that *social security schemes that addressed the specific employment situation of artists secured higher and more equitable levels of coverage*. These measures included: automatic enrolment; requiring fixed, compulsory contributions; and flexible eligibility criteria. In three of the supranational policy reports that we reviewed, **Germany's** targeted social security scheme for artists was highlighted as a case of best practice for addressing artists' specific conditions of employment (UNESCO, 2015, p.39; UNESCO, 2010, p.23; ERICarts, 2006, p.56).

7 After an initial phase of low spending – 0.007% of GDP – the percentage of the United Kingdom's spending on extraordinary measures to support the cultural sector rose to 0.690% of GDP following the announcement of a £1.57 billion fund for culture on 5 July 2020. This compares to Germany, for example, which we estimate spent 0.286% of their GDP on similar measures. For an in-depth analysis of the United Kingdom's policy responses to COVID-19, see our *Cultural Policy Responses to COVID-19 in the UK* review (Wright, 2020).



The German scheme contains several measures that respond to artists' typically low income and unstable employment, automatically enrolling those working in short-term and/or low-earning employment, fixing contributions for new career entrants, and offering the possibility for artists to earn less than the minimum income threshold twice in 6 years and still be eligible for artists' social insurance.

The OECD (2018, p.136) estimated that **Germany's** scheme achieved adequate coverage (36 per cent in 2016). They also found that the scheme was not marked by a gender disparity in coverage: of those insured, 48% were women and 52% men in 2016 (OECD, 2018, pp.131-2). This contrasts with their evaluation of **Austria's** approach of integrating artists into social security for the self-employed: the scheme was marked by significant gender disparity in coverage, as two thirds of female freelance workers did not earn at least the minimum income required to be eligible (OECD, 2018, p.91). This disparity is likely to be compensated for by the Artists' Social Insurance Fund, although the report did not evaluate this. The OECD report is one of the few, if only, comparative evaluations that considers the effectiveness of targeted social security for artists in ensuring adequate and gender equitable coverage. Its comparison between the German targeted scheme and the Austrian generic scheme suggests that social security schemes which include measures responding to common features of artistic work, such as income instability and low earnings, may ensure greater levels of coverage. As we discuss below in relation to other approaches, including UBI, this is one aspect of an ongoing debate about how best to ensure adequate social protection for artists – either through more targeted or entirely universal support – and further research evaluating the different models is needed.

Weaknesses of existing schemes

In 2006, the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts, 2006, p.21) identified a series of challenges presented by social security schemes that follow classic employment models. These generally highlighted eligibility criteria that exclude some or many artists from social protections, such as: requiring a certain period of recognised work, which may exclude artists who tend to retire at a younger age than other workers (for example dancers); requiring a minimum level of income from artistic work, which may exclude many artists due to their structurally low incomes; requiring an artist to be actively seeking employment which is (assumed to be) available on the labour market, which the ERICarts report describes as “antinomical with the nature of artistic work” (2006, p.21). The report also notes other challenges such as: certain kinds of income (such as grants) and periods of research or training being unrecognised in the calculation of social security contributions or benefits, and unrecognised occupational diseases unique to certain kinds of artists such as musicians, dancers or visual artists (ERICarts, 2006, p.21). We found few other in-depth evaluations of social security protections for artists published since the report and therefore recommend further research in this area. However, we summarise the results of the recent evaluations that we did find below.



The UNESCO (2010, p. 20) report on **Canada's** social security provision for artists described the state's Employment Insurance scheme as 'of little value to many artists, either because they fall below [the minimum income] amount or because their income may fluctuate above and below this threshold from year to year'. In lieu of reports on the effectiveness of the **United Kingdom's** National Insurance and Universal Credit schemes in protecting artists from poverty, we find some indication of the coverage secured by generic social security measures in reports on the country's COVID-19 response. As noted in our *Cultural Policy Responses to COVID-19 in the UK* review (Wright, 2020), a failure to take into consideration artists' low and unstable incomes was an important factor that limited the effectiveness of the Self-employed Income Support and Coronavirus Job Retention (furlough) schemes. Initial surveys such as the Case for Culture North East COVID-19 Sector Survey (2020) found that only 17% of freelance cultural practitioners said they could access government support.

The Women in Film and Television UK report (2020) reported similar statistics for woman freelancers in the film and television industry, stating that 16% of contractors were furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Such findings suggest that social security schemes that seek to cover artists are less able to do so unless they include measures that address artists' specific conditions of employment. This may involve adjusting existing, generic social security schemes to make them better able to mitigate against artists' (and, we add, cultural practitioners') risk of poverty, or devising separate, targeted measures for artists and cultural practitioners. On the basis of the UNESCO, European Institute and OECD evaluations discussed above (UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, 2010; ERICarts, 2006, OECD, 2018), we suggest that policymakers interested in developing separate, targeted measures for artists look to aspects of **Germany's** Artist's Social Insurance scheme.

Opt-in insurance schemes and schemes where artists could determine their contributions (rather than contributions being at a fixed rate) also resulted in lower rates of coverage than compulsory insurance schemes. In **Austria**, opt-in schemes for the self-employed were characterised by very low coverage: 0.3% of those eligible for unemployment insurance and 7.6% for health insurance in 2015 and 2016 (OECD, 2018, p.26). Across several case studies, the OECD (2018) reported that permitting workers to choose the level of their contributions resulted in lower-than-adequate welfare, and thus a continued risk of poverty. *We therefore recommend that policymakers implement compulsory schemes, fix contributions and offer minimum guaranteed welfare payments wherever possible.*

The reports we reviewed highlighted *pensions* as an area where countries need to make significant changes. Pension schemes tend to be either linked to voluntary contributions or, when guaranteed, are subject to eligibility criteria that is likely to restrict their accessibility to artists. In **Canada** and **Germany**, for example, artists can choose the level at which they contribute to pension insurance and only contribute if they earn a certain amount per year. This resulted in artists either not contributing at all or, when they were eligible, typically contributing at the lowest level (UNESCO, 2010, p.8; OECD, 2018, p.138). The reports evaluating these schemes suggest that they result in insufficient pension coverage and an increased risk of old-age poverty (UNESCO, 2010, p.8; OECD, 2018, p.138).



Although this has not yet been investigated, a similar issue may arise in the **United Kingdom**, where the basic state pension requires workers to contribute at least 35 years of national insurance at a “qualifying” rate. Given the systemic instability of artists’ conditions of employment, we might infer that this can be hard to achieve, causing inadequate coverage. In the absence of an existing evaluation of pensions for artists in the United Kingdom, it is difficult to determine how effective the current scheme is. *We therefore recommend further research into pension coverage for artists in the United Kingdom, and globally.* In particular, we suggest that researchers and policymakers investigate if aspects of other forms of social insurance can be usefully adopted by pension schemes, for example those that the OECD has implied may result in greater coverage: flexible eligibility criteria, fixed contributions and guaranteed payments (see above).

Although **France’s** *intermittents du spectacle* scheme is often hailed as an exemplar, it has been criticised for de-incentivising employers from offering sufficient payment or long-term contracts for artists. The generosity of the scheme, essentially covering freelance cultural practitioners’ income if they work over a minimum threshold of number of days per year, has been linked to artists only working the minimum number of days required to be eligible, and employers changing hiring practices to only employ freelance artists for the minimum number of days required for them to be eligible (OECD, 2018, p.117). The scheme may therefore inhibit workers from accessing more long-term opportunities. Since it is commonly acknowledged that workers in all sectors who work on temporary contracts tend to earn less overall, and to be more exposed to social risks, we must question whether the *intermittents du spectacle* scheme is actually a help or a hindrance to cultural practitioners.

On a final note, we acknowledge the problem that existing social security schemes and the reports on them focus only on artists at the exclusion of cultural practitioners, who may be subject to similar conditions of employment and who are vital to sustaining the complex ecology of the cultural sector.

Where is further research needed? An extensive comparison of social security schemes for artists

Due to the limited number of reports and academic literature discussing social security schemes for artists, this review is only the beginning of an emerging policy conversation. Detailed evaluations of different approaches to securing income equality for artists are needed. This includes case studies of individual nation states and comparative evaluations of different nation states’ social security schemes. Moreover, much of the data regarding how many artists were categorised as self-employed or freelance workers in each country was collected through their enrolment into social security schemes. Thus, there is a possibility that the reports cited did not calculate true levels of coverage. For example, Sari Karttunen’s (2019) analysis of the Arts Barometer survey of young artists in **Finland** showed that 43% of survey respondents defined themselves as artists but did not fit into the legal definition of cultural workers – they could neither be considered self-employed nor freelance artists because they did not earn enough income from their artistic activities. If this is the case in the other countries reviewed, we might hypothesise that actual rates of coverage for social security schemes are much lower than those estimated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018).



We advise that governments collect extensive, and ideally comparable, data on self-employed and freelance artists. We also suggest comparative research into different social security schemes and their effectiveness so that countries can adopt best practices.

The effects of Universal Basic Income on cultural practitioners

UBI is a policy that provides unconditional regular payments to all citizens. According to the Basic Income Earth Network, UBI is “a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means-test or work requirement” (Basic Income Earth Network, 2020). UBI has gained significant attention from the media and policymakers in recent years, with trials being run in countries from the United States (the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration, 2017-present), to Finland (Ministry of Finance, 2017-19) to Kenya (GiveDirectly.⁸ In the **United Kingdom**, Basic Income Scotland recently published a report on the feasibility of UBI in the country, and will launch a soft pilot in August 2020 (Citizens’ Basic Income Feasibility Study Steering Group, 2020). As noted above, **Spain** launched UBI in June as a response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although UBI cannot, by definition, target cultural practitioners in particular, there is growing evidence that the measure is favoured by artists from a range of European and anglosphere countries. We found academic literature by two groups of scholars demonstrating that artists from **Finland**, as well as **Milan, London, Toronto** and **New York City** are typically in favour of UBI. We also found some examples suggestive that support for such a scheme may also be growing in the arts sector in the **United Kingdom**. For example, a-n’s (2020, p.22) COVID-19 impact survey highlighted UBI as a measure that was favoured by their members in the aftermath of the pandemic. In light of these findings, and the UNESCO Recommendation’s call to increase artists’ participation in decisions concerning their quality of life, *we recommend that researchers and policymakers investigate the extent of cultural practitioners’ support for UBI further*. Any research into cultural practitioners’ support for UBI should specify that, to be universal, the scheme must apply to all citizens.⁹

Our review found several evaluations of UBI trials and literature that advocated for some form of a basic income for all workers. For example, Guy Standing, an academic and advocate for UBI in the United Kingdom, has argued that such a scheme is necessary to secure the right to work for all people (Standing, 2013). As artists’ right to work is one of the fundamental principles of the UNESCO Recommendation, this would suggest that UBI may be a desirable means of implementing the principles that the document sets out. On the other hand, when evaluating UBI schemes in general, the OECD (2018, p.26) suggests that they may disadvantage the most vulnerable who currently received targeted support through means-tested policies. However, we could not find any literature that evaluated the trials’ effects on artists. One scholar, Greig de Peuter (2014, pp. 272-73), suggested four potential benefits that UBI could bring to artists:

8 See the Further Reading section below for where to access information about the Stockton, Finland and Give Directly trials.

9 Researchers may of course wish to investigate support for, and implications of, a basic income for cultural practitioners, but this would not technically be UBI.



1. Bridging gaps in pay for intermittent workers;
2. Offering compensation for artists' often unpaid and sometimes intangible contributions to society and the creative economy;
3. Quickly eradicating poverty, of which artists are more at risk;
4. Encouraging artists to experiment with new content, forms and models of labour organisation.

However, de Peuteur's suggestions are speculative: the benefits he identifies, and whether they are greater than those offered by other social security schemes, have yet to be studied. We suggest further research into the potential of UBI as a means of implementing the UNESCO Recommendation, and particularly into its desirability in comparison with the other approaches social security discussed in this policy review.

Social security for artists and diversity

The primary aim of social security schemes for artists is to address income inequality, to ensure that no one is significantly materially disadvantaged by their choice to work as an artist. However, the OECD's (2018, p.131-2) report on Germany's social insurance for artists suggested that targeted support can reduce income inequality along the lines of not only profession, but gender (i.e. the gender of the artist). Meanwhile, de Peuter (2014, p.273) has highlighted the relationship between social security and class inequalities in the arts. *The development of social security schemes may therefore have implications for diversity within the cultural sector.* UNESCO (2020) recommends that the Recommendation be read, and implemented, alongside their 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Creative Expressions, also suggesting a relationship between support for artists and diversity.

Diversity is a key cultural policy concern for the **United Kingdom**, as evidenced by the formation of the Creative Diversity All Party Parliamentary Group in April 2019 and discussed in our *Cultural Policy Responses to COVID-19 in the UK* review (Wright, 2020). However, aside from the examples just given, we found that relationship between social security policies for cultural practitioners and diversity was rarely addressed in policy reports or academic literature.¹⁰ *We therefore recommend further research into effectiveness of social security schemes in addressing not only income inequality of artists and cultural practitioners in general, but also in relation to protected characteristics such as: age, class, disability, gender, neurodiversity, race and ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation.* Such research would demonstrate, for example, the extent to which different social security measures may ensure or not ensure equitable coverage for diverse cultural practitioners.

The effects of social security schemes during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, while this review emerged out of research into different nation states' cultural policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is too early to tell how effectively different countries' social security schemes insulated artists against the effects of the pandemic.

¹⁰ Diversity in arts and culture is also discussed extensively in Arts Council England's reports on diversity and equality: the 2013 Equality and Diversity Within the Arts and Cultural Sector in England report, and the National Portfolio 2018-22 Equality Analysis. The former report demonstrates a clear correlation between, for example, racial diversity, and being more exposed to the risk of poverty. Yet, neither of these reports analyse the relationship between social security and fostering diversity in the arts and cultural sector.



We know that countries with more robust social security schemes for artists spent less on extraordinary measures for the cultural sector. Nonetheless, we do not know if this lower spending was a direct result of countries having effective protective measures already in place, or if it was caused by other factors. *Future research should therefore address the relationship between social security systems and the need for less extensive extraordinary measures in times of crisis.* We also suggest that research evaluates the effectiveness of the different cultural policy measures, including social security, in protecting artists from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implications for policy

- Social security policymakers should explore extending the definition of the “artist” to encompass all cultural practitioners.
- Cultural practitioners are at risk of poverty due to low and unstable incomes. Therefore, policymakers should seek measures that address cultural practitioners’ specific conditions of employment wherever possible.
- This policy review did not find a best model of social security for artists, but identified three possible approaches, and the effectiveness each of these need to be evaluated in greater depth:
 - » Covering cultural practitioners under existing social security schemes for self-employed and freelance workers
 - » Targeting cultural practitioners through separate social security schemes
 - » Covering cultural practitioners under UBI or UBI-style schemes.
- Policymakers should investigate the merits of these different approaches, or aspects of them, when considering how to implement the UNESCO Recommendation.
- This review has raised a number of challenges that policy should aim to resolve through robust research:
 - » Whether generic social security schemes for self-employed and freelance workers adequately consider the specific employment conditions of cultural practitioners.
 - » If and how targeted social security schemes for artists or cultural practitioners ensure greater and more equitable coverage.
 - » If UBI, while guaranteeing universal coverage, would result in an increase or decrease in social protections for cultural practitioners in comparison with existing social security schemes.



Recommendations for further research

- Future research into social security should broaden its definition and scope from “artist” to “cultural practitioner”.
- Researchers should conduct extensive, comparative studies that evaluate different nation states’ cultural practitioners’ social security schemes. While studies of all areas of the world are required, researchers should prioritise work on Africa, Asia and South America, which are currently lacking a research focus.
- We recommend further research into pension coverage for cultural practitioners in the United Kingdom, and globally. Researchers and policymakers should investigate if pension schemes would achieve greater coverage through: flexible eligibility criteria, fixed contributions and guaranteed payments.
- Future research should explore the potential for social security schemes to foster diversity in arts and culture, examining the full range of protected characteristics wherever possible.
- Researchers should examine the corollary effects of UBI schemes on cultural practitioners.
- Research should evaluate the effectiveness of the different cultural policy measures, including social security, in protecting cultural practitioners from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the longer term, research should also address the relationship between social security systems and crises.



Glossary

The following definitions are intended to provide a workable guide to readers who are not specialist in this area rather than being conclusive definitions of terms.

| | |
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| Anglosphere: | Australia, Canada New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. English-speaking countries characterised by common political systems and close diplomatic cooperation. Although sometimes used to indicate a political ideology, we use the term solely for the purposes of categorisation here. |
| Freelance worker (also known as contractors or sole traders): | A type of worker who typically earns income by selling their services to clients on a per-task basis, through a series of temporary contracts. Freelancers can be self-employed or temporarily employed by an agency. Although definitions may vary between national contexts, see Gov UK's 'Employment Status' guide for an overview of different employment types. |
| Peer-reviewed: | Studies which are evaluated by other experts in the field ahead of publication to ensure it is high quality. |
| Primary research: | Collecting new data through a research project rather than using data or research that has already been collected or published. |
| Secondary research: | Summarising and reviewing data or research that has already been collected or published. |
| Self-employed: | Those who are solely responsible for the business they work for. This includes management of financial risk, work schedule, clients, equipment, fees, payments and sales, and hiring others. For more information, please also see the Gov UK 'Employment Status' guide . |
| Social security: | Government welfare and insurance schemes that provide economic assistance to people in the event of long-term illness and disability, long-term care responsibilities, parental leave, old age (pensions), unemployment, workplace accidents and occupational diseases. |
| Synthesise: | Bringing together evidence from several sources to produce a summary. |
| Systematic approach: | Following a set approach to reviewing evidence which ensures appropriate evidence is identified and the quality of studies is evaluated. |
| Universal Basic Income: | An umbrella term for schemes that provide people with direct, fixed payments free of eligibility criteria or restrictions on how the payments are spent. Commonly conceptualised as a guaranteed minimum income: monthly payments to supplement or substitute wages. |

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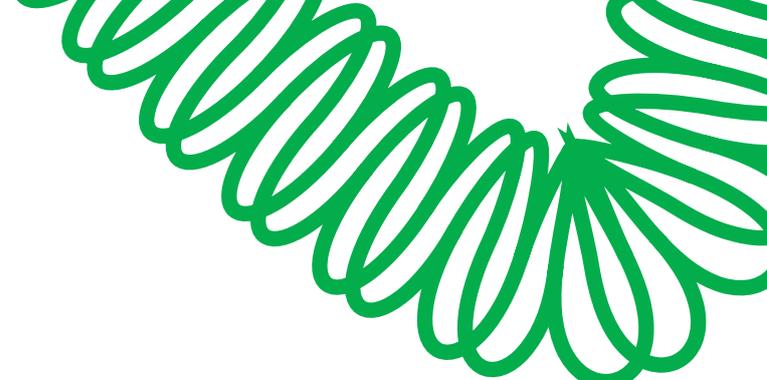
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UNESCO Policy Monitoring Platform: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/governance/periodic-reports>





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