

# Who is safeguarding the creative industries?

The international landscape calls for a Community of Practice.

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**CIISA**

The Creative Industries  
Independent Standards Authority  
Independent. Without fear or favour.

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# I. Research outline

Without doubt, there is a clear need for the global creative industries to ensure they protect and safeguard the workforce that makes this sector a key economic success for many nations.

All over the world, grassroots organisations, interest groups, companies and governmental bodies are concerned with improving working conditions in the arts and culture.

The Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA) is taking the final steps to becoming a live organisation that provides industry standards, mechanisms to report potential breaches, training on how to use the standards, and early conflict resolution for all members of the creative industries in the UK.

This report is the product of a fruitful collaboration between independent cultural policy adviser Clara Gallistl and CIISA. Our hope is that it proves beneficial to all organisations that work towards the same goal as CIISA; namely, to uphold and improve standards of behaviour across the creative industries. Our belief is that, as the creative industries are globally connected, so must be the support for those who work in the field.

## 1.1 Objectives

This report's main objective is to establish a clearer picture of the global landscape of bodies that share CIISA's ambition: upholding and improving standards of behaviour across the creative industries (including the arts, culture and heritage),<sup>1</sup> to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment, including harassment of a discriminatory nature. A secondary objective derives from the research's community-focused approach, namely, to find

out if there is an appetite for closer working relationships between similar-minded bodies. A third objective is to explore possibilities to develop a network of like-minded organisations; as the creative industries themselves cross international boundaries, so the support of the people who work in the industry should be global too.

## 1.2 Approach

The approach for this research combined principles of market research and community research. A line of questioning and key areas of interest were agreed upon between the author and CIISA, before we started reaching out to already established international contacts. Additionally, desk research looked into movements that sparked from the anchor term #MeToo and associated hashtags (#TimesUp, #NiUnaMenos) in different parts of the world.

In total, 42 interviews were conducted from 1 September to 10 December 2024. Among those were 25 organisations that consider themselves to be working to uphold and improve safe work environments in the creative industries, or at least one sector within the creative industries. Of these, 21 agreed to take up working relationships with each other in 2025.<sup>2</sup>

As the sensitivity of the topic demands, confidentiality was a key factor in conducting the interviews. In order to allow the interviewees to speak freely, it was agreed that quotes in the final report should not identify the interviewee or their organisation. Instead, the report uses numbers where direct quotes seem necessary.

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1 CIISA initially focused on film, television, music and theatre, and is looking to expand the scope in due course.

2 List in appendix.



## List of interviewees

Number	Sector	Organisation
1	screen	individual expert
2	other	advocacy organisation
3	screen	advocacy organisation
4	screen	governmental body
5	theatre	company
6	club culture	advocacy organisation
7	screen	advocacy organisation
8	civil service	governmental body
9	diversity in the arts and culture	advocacy organisation
10	civil service	public funding body
11	screen	advocacy organisation
12	anti-bullying and anti-harassment support	NGO
13	anti-bullying and anti-harassment support	NGO
14	civil service	governmental body
15	music	advocacy organisation
16	civil service	governmental body
17	crown agency	public funding body
18	independent agency	public funding body
19	screen	NGO
20	music	company
21	arts, culture, media	trade union
22	screen	advocacy organisation
23	diversity in the arts and culture	governmental body
24	cultural policy	NGO
25	screen	advocacy organisation
26	screen	advocacy organisation
27	dance	advocacy organisation
28	civil service	public funding body
29	civil service	governmental body
30	music	advocacy organisation
31	screen	trade union



32	screen	public funding body
33	cultural policy	NGO
34	skills development for creative industries	trade union
35	equality in creative industries	individual expert
36	screen	advocacy organisation
37	music	company
38	screen	public funding body
39	screen	advocacy organisation
40	European Parliament	governmental body
41	screen	advocacy organisation
42	civil service	governmental body

To better understand the international landscape, the interviews followed an explorative line of questioning. The information produced by this research can be built upon to gain statistically inferable data in the future. The key areas of interest were:

- a) information about the organisation (services, organisational model, funding scheme, political implications);
- b) relevant information about its organisational environment (legal framework, political shifts, general work culture);
- c) potential benefits of working together in the future.

### 1.3 About the author

Clara Gallistl is an independent cultural policy adviser and consults on fairness strategies in the field of the arts and culture. Their experience includes two years as a member of the office of Andrea Mayer, the Secretary of State for Arts and Culture in the federal government of Austria. In this capacity, Gallistl advised on cultural policy during the Covid-19 crises and facilitated the Fairness Process, a multi-faceted ongoing participation process that calls for

more fairness within the field of the arts and culture in Austria, and includes governmental bodies as well as advocacy groups and creative industry organisations. Results of the process are the Fairness Code, a value-driven set of standards for the arts and culture, as well as the establishment of vera\*, a “trust office” that offers socio-psychological help to anyone in the arts and culture in Austria. Gallistl’s work experience also includes interim CEO at vera\* and a non-commercial theatre in Vienna, as well as various roles in Austria’s independent performance scene.

As CIISA’s leading international research partner, Gallistl is an official associate to CIISA.

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## 2. Summary

*“The work of organisations like yours resonates deeply with our goals at IDAA, where we are equally committed to fostering fairness, inclusion and the advancement of creative professionals in Africa and beyond.”*

***Andile Sinqoto, Chairperson, Independent Directors Association Africa***

In 2017, #MeToo instigated a global movement to speak up against violence, bullying, harassment and discrimination in the creative industries. In the US, Kathleen Kennedy and Nina Shaw founded the Hollywood Commission in immediate reaction to the Harvey Weinstein scandal. A few years later, following several serious allegations relating to the creative industries, TIME'S UP UK Chair, Dame Heather Rabbatts, joined forces with legal advisers and scoped the concept for an independent standards authority for the creative industries, which subsequently became CIISA. A few years later, the Australian government announced the establishment of Creative Workplaces, an initiative to promote fair, safe and respectful workplaces for Australian artists, arts workers and arts organisations.

In recent years, various organisations across the world have been established to tackle violence, bullying, harassment and discrimination in the creative industries. Some, such as Screen Well in Australia, focus on one sector within the creative industries. Others, including D-Arts in Austria, focus on a specific topic (eg better work conditions for artists and culture workers of colour). There are global but unfunded networks such as #DocSafe and well-funded, locally restricted organisations such as Creative BC in Canada.

The objective of this research, is to explore the international landscape of organisations that share CIISA's objective to uphold and improve work conditions within the creative sector in terms of bullying, harassment and discrimination. In 42 interviews with advocacy organisations, funding bodies, creative industry companies and individual experts, no organisation that directly compares to CIISA's approach (self-regulation model, standards development, training, reporting and conflict resolution) could be found.

There was a warm response to our outreach, with 21 organisations agreeing to participate in a round-table discussion in 2025, in order to decide on a way to work together collaboratively in the future. This shows the international landscape has a clear appetite to create a network (Community of Practice) that is beneficial to everyone.



### 3. The international landscape of safeguarding<sup>3</sup> the creative industries

The topics of discussion in all interviews centred on the general culture towards harassment, bullying and discrimination (Does this problem exist and how is it talked about/dealt with?) as well as services, organisations and laws that provide help for creative industry professionals. The following overview draws from industry insights from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, and the United States.

Before discussing the legal frameworks and general workplace cultures, three insights should be highlighted:

#### 1. The different fields within the creative industries can learn a lot from each other.

Some industries, such as film, are very well connected, said government-backed organisations working in film (interviewees nos 4, 10, 32 and 39). Others, such as music, seem to consist of many small players that are not very well connected, according to independent music producers from Europe (no 15 and 20). In Austria, Belgium and Switzerland, creative

industry workers from minority groups have established ways to support each other against a discriminatory majority culture.

Public funding bodies are developing measures to increase fairness within their scope, and have a variety of experiences with different measures (eg OMNI Inclusion Data, developed by MOIN in North Germany<sup>4</sup> and Inclusion Check, developed by the Austrian Film Institute<sup>5</sup>). Some grassroots initiatives such as #DocSafe, a network for independent documentary filmmakers, bring grave industry issues to light.<sup>6</sup> Big, influential production companies still deny that there is a problem with bullying, harassment, discrimination and even violence.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps most strikingly, the Hema report on the situation of women in Kerala's film industry shows the potential in learning from each other.<sup>8</sup>

#### 2. Government backing is crucial, but dependence on public funding can be problematic.

In some parts of the world, governments structurally support the creative industry workforce. In Canada, the funding bodies can

3 In the UK, safeguarding is used to describe a specific discipline that promotes the health, wellbeing and human rights of vulnerable individuals. In this report, the term is used to describe organisations and individuals that promote the safety of a sector (namely the creative industries) in a broader sense.

4 [OMNI Inclusion Data](#).

5 [Inklusions-Check – Österreichisches Filminstitut](#).

6 Eg abuse of power, harassment, assault. Full report: [We Must Address Abuse in the Documentary Industry | International Documentary Association](#).

7 According to an interviewee from the music industry in Europe who works with a leading business and wants to remain anonymous.

8 Report describes the difficulty in setting up the report, an experience that can prove useful for industries facing similar problems. The Hema committee report slams Malayalam-language film industry – BBC News.



draw from many years' experience in developing measures to bring equity and diversity to the sector.<sup>9</sup> In Australia, the most recent national cultural policy has resulted in the establishment of a new initiative to enforce workplace safety and wellbeing across the creative sector.<sup>10</sup> Pro Helvetia in Switzerland, the public film agencies ÖFI in Austria, and MOIN and Diversity Arts Culture in Germany, are fully funded by their respective governments. As is the case with Diversity Arts Culture, a unique organisation that advocates for diversity in Berlin's arts and culture sector, we see that dependence on government funding can quickly become a threat to the foundation of an organisation, if political circumstances change and cultural policy is driven by principles of austerity.<sup>11,12</sup> This suggests that while a good relationship with government is important for organisations assisting the creative industries, a diverse and stable income stream is equally necessary.

### 3. The diversity of the international safeguarding landscape offers a hidden driver that is beneficial to all organisations that want to contribute to a Community of Practice.

Many interview partners from government bodies, grassroots organisations and small businesses shared concerns about the future. With a global rise of discriminatory belief systems (ie far, extreme and moderate right notions of a "natural order") that build on the fundamental division of groups of people along the lines of gender, ethnicity, physical and cognitive ability, and other distinguishing factors, to put people in a hierarchical order against each other, the principal values of the international declaration of human rights

are being put to the test.<sup>13</sup> The multitude of approaches, experiences and perspectives the interview partners between them provide, can be used as a hidden driver for an international Community of Practice, in that individual experiences and resources can be shared and used to strengthen each individual organisation.

Organisations such as CIISA will first look to take a high-level approach to general behaviour standards for the creative industries, before examining how these can be practically translated into sector-specific guidance to support development. Others, such as Podiumskunsten,<sup>14</sup> Pro Helvetia<sup>15</sup> and Screen Well<sup>16</sup> support organisations directly in their individual development to become better at providing safer work environments for their creative, administrative and technical staff.

### Unequivocal motivation to work together, while cultural and legal differences are apparent

The most striking result of this preliminary research, was the unequivocal motivation and interest to work together going forward. A significant driver for this motivation stems from similarity in organisational development. Some organisations (eg Creative Workplaces) are relatively new, while others (eg Hollywood Commission, Themis) are reflecting on their first couple of years and in the middle of developing strategies for their organisational future.

The gravest divergencies between the individual accounts stem from the very different cultural, social and political environments the organisations work in. A global history of exploitation of certain parts of the world by

9 [Home – Creative BC.](#)

10 [Kate Schaffner announced as Director of Creative Workplaces.](#)

11 Diversity Arts Culture's press release (German): [Stiftung für Kulturelle Weiterbildung und Kulturberatung.](#)

12 [Plan to cut Berlin arts budget will 'destroy' city's culture, directors warn | Germany | The Guardian.](#)

13 Cf Thomas Zimmer, Meet the Ideologue of the "Post-Constitutional" Right (27 November 2024) [Democracy Americana | Thomas Zimmer | Substack](#) and The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk's foreword of the UN Appeal 2024, [UN Human Rights Appeal 2024.](#)

14 [Home – Podiumkunst.net.](#)

15 [Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council.](#)

16 [Screen Well.](#)





others, diverse political histories that result in varying power dynamics, and uncountable discrepancies in subjects of cultural sensitivity have to be taken into account, when working on a global scale, as discussed with interviewees nos 23, 28 and 34.<sup>17</sup>

The unequivocal vision of a creative sector that contributes not only to the safety, but to the wellbeing of the people that produce the content we all love and appreciate in the form of film, TV, music, theatre and so much more, in combination with excitingly divergent organisational environments, leads to a fountain of potential.

Every contributing organisation developed a unique strategy to support the creative industry workforce. For example, a European skills and development organisation for the arts and culture offers in-group meetings to share experiences of discrimination. Funding bodies offer guidelines for safe producing. Advocacy groups often advise on existing legal frameworks.

### 3.1 Legal frameworks

All interview partners were asked which national and international legal framework they found important. Interview partners in Europe claimed that the equality, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination law in their region was sufficient (interviewees nos 5, 10, 19 and 32). The problem they described was rather, that general managers in the sector had little knowledge of their legal duties in terms of safety and equality. Interviewee no 25 described a lack of regulation to ensure the safety of the South African screen workforce. An interviewee from Australia (no 41) said, “In the last two or three years, there’s been more workplace-related law changing than in the 15 years before,” mentioning the increased pressure on general managers as a result.

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17 Topics that were mentioned in the interviews were the UK’s colonialisation of India, the representation of First Nation artists in the cultural landscape of Australia and Canada, the dynamics within the Black-Canadian music landscape, structural racism in European art institutions, and the lack of legal protection of creative industry workers in South Africa.



### Different strengths of legal protection, but common legal topics

The variety of legal protection for creative industry workers is interesting. Some interview partners called their sector “Wild West” (no 26) or “no man’s land” (no 4), meaning that the field has few or no regulatory frameworks. Others mentioned long-standing and new legislation<sup>18</sup> that helps their cause (no 31). After the Hema Committee report<sup>19</sup> found grave cases of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in Malayalam cinema, it will be interesting to see what legal amendments follow.

When asked about the most important legal topics, most interview partners mentioned several of the following:

- Labour law
- Equality law
- Funding law
- Creative rights
- Criminal law

The Austrian Collective for Awareness Work that specialises in training “awareness teams” for club culture events, was the only interview partner that explicitly mentioned criminal law as an important legal framework.<sup>20</sup> A reason for that might be the context of their work environment (night, party, alcohol, drugs), that is more likely to support physical assaults than sober work environments during the day.

During the interviews, it was interesting to hear different cultural reactions to regulation. Some see the clear need to regulate the cultural sector, like Ivana Pilic of D=Arts. Interviewee no 5 feels there is already too much regulation,

putting administrative duties before creative tasks. Throughout the interviews a common theme persisted, that many powerful industry leaders are reluctant to drive change. At the same time, new forms of governance are developed by those who see the need for regulation; for example codes of conduct to which applicants for public funding have to agree.<sup>21</sup> Some national industries have worked out a standard for their respective field of work to set a national industry standard.<sup>22</sup>

### No unifying standards

One interviewee (no 28) reported that they had been working on a standard for the whole of the creative industries in their country, and failed time and again to do so, due to a general resistance in their cultural landscape. The introduction of the CIISA Standards was met with great interest during the interviews. As far as this research goes, CIISA is the only organisation that has succeeded in creating a collective standards framework for all the diverse sectors within the UK creative industries.<sup>23</sup>

As pointed out by interviewee no 5, who argued for “certification”, the benefit of one unifying standard would be to take pressure off general managers, who have to invest resources into researching a variety of legal frameworks as well as diverse industry codes of conduct.

### The hierarchy of legal frameworks

The legal frameworks concerning bullying, harassment and discrimination in the creative industries follow a hierarchy from international law to individual contract. Below is a short description of the United Nation and European Union framework.

18 [New protections from sexual harassment come into force – GOV.UK](#) and [www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/prevent-harm/changes-to-whs-laws](http://www.comcare.gov.au/safe-healthy-work/prevent-harm/changes-to-whs-laws).

19 [The Hema committee report slams Malayalam-language film industry – BBC News](#).

20 [Home – AwA\\*](#).

21 As reported by interviewees nos 31 and 32.

22 As interviewee no 18 reported, “Every region has their own code of conduct.”

23 [Standards – Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority](#).



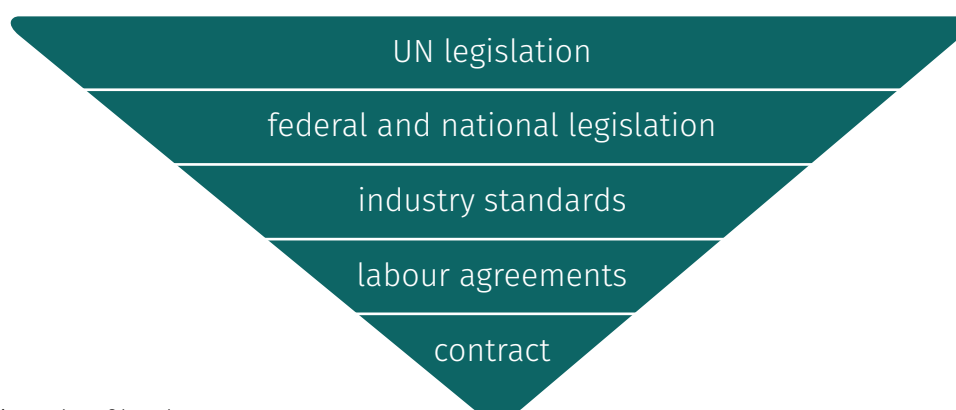


Figure 1: Hierarchy of legal structures

On an international level, bullying, harassment and discrimination are prohibited by law and regulated by the European Equality Acts<sup>24</sup> as well as the United Nations human rights treaties.<sup>25</sup> Countries of the European Union benefit from national ombuds (or equivalent national equality bodies) responsible for oversight of equalities law, that collectively work together under the Equinet<sup>26</sup> umbrella. Equinet’s goal is to support its members, ie national equality bodies of the European Union. To do so, Equinet offers a set of standards that work as indicators for the self-assessment of the members. Equinet does not monitor the standards, but advises its members on how to fulfil them.

### The United Nations’ Fair Culture Charter

The UN provides the main international framework for organisations that work to uphold and improve standards of behaviour in the creative industries. In 2024 the UN published a Fair Culture Charter<sup>27</sup> that builds on the relevant existing global international law as follows:

- 1980 UNESCO Recommendation on the Statue of the Artist;
- 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;

- the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- and other relevant international law including legislation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice by setting international labour standards.

There are considerable differences in the recognition of the UN basic human rights when it comes to their translation into everyday work-life experiences. The afore-mentioned recently published report about the Malayalam film industry points to 17 forms of exploitation experienced by women working in 30 different categories within the industry.<sup>28</sup> Many interview partners suggested a fair amount of neglect, especially of freelance members of the workforce.

To summarise the preliminary discussions, some countries were described as having “a lot” of national legislation that needs to be considered when working on behavioural standards for the creative industries. Others were described as “Wild West” by organisations that work there, meaning contracts are made up by production

24 [A framework strategy for non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all | EUR-Lex.](#)

25 [OHCHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights – English.](#)

26 [Equinet – European Network of Equality Bodies.](#)

27 [Fair Culture Initiative – Home.](#)

28 [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/hema-committee-reveals-17-forms-of-exploitation-in-malayalam-film-industry-in-kerala/articleshow/112643493.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/hema-committee-reveals-17-forms-of-exploitation-in-malayalam-film-industry-in-kerala/articleshow/112643493.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)



companies as best suits them, without any regulations having to be considered.

### 3.2 Workplace culture

The creative industries operate within very different changing and complex socio-cultural and legal landscapes. Also, they are globally connected by transnational co-productions, touring artists and productions, and the experience of a globally connected world.

#### Language, connotations and insecurities

Fundamentally, the differences in language must be addressed.<sup>29</sup> The creative industries are operating not just in many different first languages, but also in a variety of second languages. English expressions at times have different connotations for different language users.

To illustrate this aspect, this report uses the phrase “creative industries” throughout. This is because this report is centred on the UK, given this is where CIISA is based. In the UK, the arts, culture and heritage are considered part of the creative industries. However, for European English language users, “industry” feels like putting too much focus on the commercial side of what they call “arts and culture”.<sup>30</sup> German-speaking countries use the term “arts and culture”, when referring to the sectors of film, music, theatre, fine arts, museums and fashion. There are also differences that stem from the key orientation of organisations, as in commercially orientated or publicly funded. In other work cultures, those distinctions are not made.

Another interesting discussion with some interviewees, involved the terminology of anti-discrimination. The abbreviation BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) is not in common use any more, though some organisations still use it. One interview partner used the term “global majority”. Some interview partners reported insecurities in their regional fields when talking about the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion. One interview partner said that, in their work culture, they could not use the term “anti-racist organisation” as it would likely create public backlash.

To sum up, language is a topic to be considered from a strategic perspective, when looking to create a shift towards equality, safety and wellbeing in the creative industries.

#### Commonality has to take individuality into account

This fundamental difference can make finding common ground difficult, and can often lead to differences in translation: both at a language level and at a culture/behavioural level. This is just one aspect to highlight the potential importance of an international standardised approach to what best practice looks like in this field for each nation – which can allow for localised approaches to be defined under common definitions and approaches. Only thus could a commonality of approach be found.

#### Socio-cultural layers influence workplace culture

The workplace culture that allows for, or is able to prevent, cases of bullying, harassment and discrimination is a living and ever-changing

29 Interviewee no 12 described differences in the meaning of the word, confidant. While in one country, the term refers to a partisan counsellor, in a neighbouring country, the same term implies the impartiality of the role. To a person who needs to speak to someone, it has to be clear whether the confidant will confidentially be on that person’s side, or try to mediate on behalf of an organisation.

30 This remark came from interviewees no 9, 13, 28 and 34.



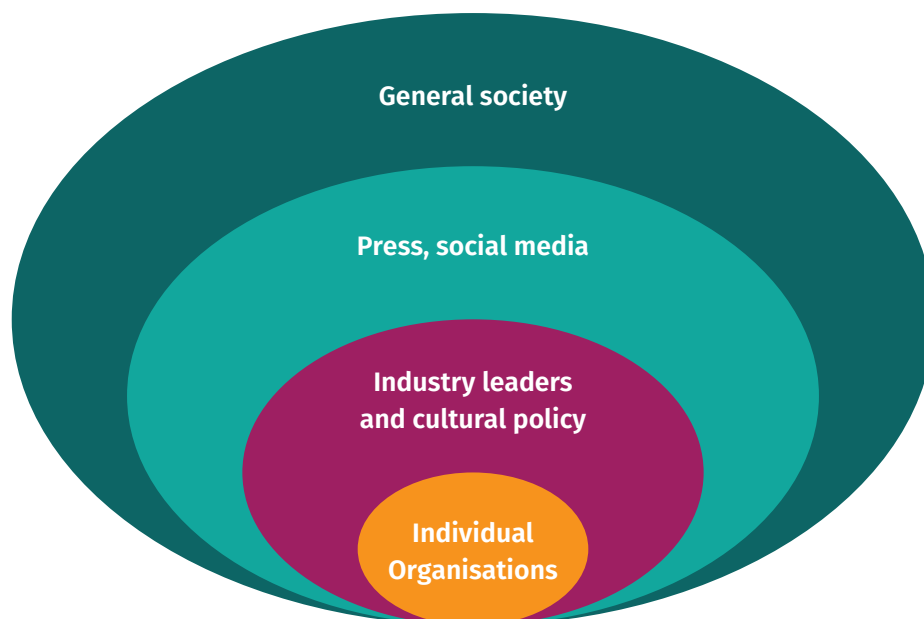


Figure: 2 Layers of fields that influence workplace culture

entity.<sup>31</sup> The preliminary and exploratory research suggests different layers contribute to the specific workplace culture that manifests itself in the occurrence and treatment of abuse.

When in 2017 the #MeToo movement put a focus on sexual harassment in the US film industry, in many other countries cases of abuse came to light and fuelled the international debate on preventing bullying, harassment and discrimination in the creative industries. In 2020 the pre-existing Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum after the murder of George Floyd, again leading to a rise in awareness of racist practices throughout the creative industries, as well as such other fields as education, security or health. The Covid-pandemic in 2021 arguably changed the world. Its impact on the creative industries was a rise in awareness of issues of safety, and brought about diverse measures to improve financial, social, physical and psychological safety. While legal frameworks, language and cultural practices differ from region to region, the global experience of #MeToo, Black Lives Matter and Covid brings the international community of creative industry practitioners together. This,

in turn, reinforces the need for a standardised approach that is flexible to accommodate differences in language and culture, but provides a singular view on what needs to be done.

#### **Funds lacking for creation of standards**

Despite the differences in language or definition, this research highlights that the same common fault lines exist across different nations. Although the need for workforce support is undisputed, many struggle with a resistance to properly fund the organisations that support the creative industry workforce.

Some interview partners described their work environment as highly competitive, unregulated (interviewee no 25) and driven by drastic power imbalances (no 11) in combination with the normalisation of alcohol abuse, putting especially young people at risk by relying on one-on-one mentorships without requiring training or certification for the mentor (no 26). One person used the word slaves, to describe the situation of below-the-line workers on film sets. Many organisations identified a lack of standards and regulations in their field of

31 As interviewee no 33 pointed out, conflict resolution is very dependent on culture in terms of objectives, process, input and output.



work, and would like a watchdog to call out inappropriate and harmful behaviour.

### Differences in legislation, terminology and practice

The complexity of the international landscape of organisations that work towards more fairness in the creative industries, stems from cultural differences that are rooted in legislation, history and contemporary cultural practices. As mentioned before, this concerns many topics such as the definition of bullying, the use of such specific terms as creative industries and anti-racist, feelings towards regulation in general, and the ability to speak about such subjects as racism or sexism in the first place.

In some countries, unions play a big part, while interview partners from other countries consider their unions weak (if they even exist). Codes of conduct are often “nice words on a page”, as described by more than one interview partner, referring to standards that were set up without knowledge of the factual social and legal infrastructure of a region or country. Some also hinted at wide gaps between written statements and actual practices. To better understand the missing gaps in support, it might be a good idea to get statements from the most vulnerable groups, such as low-paid freelance staff from abroad (eg on work visas).

### Fragile support systems

Alongside the political majorities, governments change their support of organisations that work towards equity, diversity and inclusion. In some countries, governments decided to establish new organisations to ensure the safety of the creative industry workforce. In others, funds to support such organisations have been reduced due to political changes. This fragility of support systems in some countries is reinforced by a

cultural stance against regulations generally. Some interview partners explicitly mentioned that their sector needs regulations.

### Shared experiences, aims and values

Most interview partners provide a number of preventative measures.<sup>32</sup> Funding bodies such as MOIN, the Austrian Film Institute and Creative BC regulate the industry via funding, while being cautious about following up on their respective funding laws and bylaws. Advocacy groups said the sector needed regulations, instead of codes of conduct that were not being followed up on. Some interviewees shared the view that already a lot of regulations were in place,<sup>33</sup> but many people at all levels of the creative industries lack knowledge of these regulations. CIISA is the only organisation that takes the approach of establishing independent regulation for the creative industries, and will not only provide preventative training, but also use the industry standards to inform a reporting system and early conflict resolution.

### The benefit for funding bodies

Funding bodies certainly could profit from exchanging experiences and project ideas to improve the wellbeing of their sectors. Interviewees nos 10, 17 and 18 said their role as public funding bodies was restricted. No 10 said that codes of conduct often are not more than nice words on a page, and that now, in their country, many industry organisations develop their own set of standards, creating confusion for the sector. Having one agreed-upon set of standards would be beneficial for the whole sector. No 17 uses an affidavit, that applicants for public funding must sign as part of the grant application process, but says that the affidavit itself is “pretty basic”, concluding “Ultimately, we don’t have a lot. We lack a clear process and can do little to enforce.” No 18 described the

32 Like training, consulting or guidelines on safe work environments and wellbeing.

33 Interviewees no 5, 10, 19 and 32.



difficult role of a public funding body, saying, “We have accountability but no authority” and further explained a “catch-22” situation, in that affected people needed money to use the legal system and were looking at the funding bodies to receive the funds they needed, but public funding bodies were not able to provide them.

### **Systemic problems benefit from holistic approach**

One industry insider with global experience, said that the problem with the sector is not national, but systemic in their sector. The work cultures have tolerated misconduct and abuse to an extent where inappropriate behaviour had become the norm. That is now being challenged.

All interview partners felt they would benefit from more collaboration. For some the hope is to raise the quality of their services or to share research, and consider applying for funds together. Another suggested benefit, was to better aid international cultural productions, such as a Dutch singer going on tour in Australia. Jane Mote of #DocSafe wrote about abuse in the independent documentary filmmakers’ industry.<sup>34</sup> Another interview partner (no 29) summarised an exodus of talent from the industry, saying, “People don’t want to work in the industry because it’s rotten from the inside.”

The differences in language, tone and operational detail, along with the shared experiences of industry in-fighting and political difficulties, explain the necessity of anti-harassment, anti-bullying and anti-discrimination work. Looking at the cultural differences in the respective national fields, the interview partners’ wish to connect with each other was notable throughout the research.

### **Call for an international Community of Practice**

Among all interviews, a deep wish to connect, exchange and co-operate became transparent. All organisations confirmed they would be happy to follow CIISA’s invitation to join international roundtables and a global network of practitioners. A funding body outside the UK suggested working collaboratively as an “international pool” (no 18).

“An international roundtable has the opportunity to be so impactful,” said interviewee no 30, pointing at the potential to solve problems that were felt by everyone. They went on to say that shared experiences of problems bypass regional, national or sectors differences. Similar to interviewee no 18, no 30 felt they did not know enough of what was going on outside their industry, and that the biggest win of a shared network was the shared resources: “You don’t have to invent the wheel over and over again.”

Interviewee no 41, who is setting up a new organisation to improve creative industry work environments in terms of safety and wellbeing, said the idea of an international Community of Practice to learn from each other was “fantastic”.

### **Global creative industries standards**

In most conversations, the topic of global standards for the creative industries arose. Especially interviewees nos 9, 11, 19, 25, 26 and 32, who argued for standards and regulations, with interviewee no 25 taking a firm stand for global standards (“most definitely, 100%, that should be the vision”). Interviewee no 5, who runs a theatre in Europe, claimed it would be great for organisations to be able to receive certification, hinting at a need to make it clear to organisations what is expected of them. Interviewees nos 9 and 28 mentioned that

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they worked on cross-industry standards, but found it “complicated because it takes a lot of resources to find what’s already there” (no 9). A benefit of global standards would be that the creative industry workforce would know who to reach out to, wherever they work, according to nos 12, 17 and 20. An organisation that supports people who experience bullying, harassment and discrimination, called the idea of an international standards organisation “an amazing game changer”. Interviewee no 16, who is an expert on regulation in Europe, looked into the subject and discovered a lack of standards in the arts and culture. Interviewee no 27, who works in Canada and the US, revealed they had no knowledge of standards being enforced in the dance industry in the US, arguing for “connecting the vessels” while paying respect to cultural differences.

### Conclusion

Many reports, including the Hema report and Jane Mote’s insight, show the vulnerability of the creative industry workforce. Unions, advocacy groups, governmental organisations, public funding bodies and companies provide several different services to support people in the arts and culture, in order to create safe work environments. Resources to develop this support are often scarce. This is why most interviewed organisations expressed their interest in working together in the future, and looking at potentially developing global standards.

As a next step, we see the benefit of those who have participated in this research coming together to develop a Community of Practice, to establish a sustainable and fruitful mode of co-operation.





## 4. Next steps

Most interview partners agreed upon getting together to establish a sustainable working relationship that benefits everyone. Reflecting on the individual wishes and requirements, this research proposes that CIISA and its partners explore the idea of creating an international Community of Practice to bring together like-minded organisations.

We believe that an international Community of Practice for organisations that work towards safeguarding the creative industries and providing protection against harassment, bullying and discrimination in film, TV, music, theatre, performance, fine arts, fashion, gaming (and everyone that considers themselves as part of the global arts, culture and creative industries sector) would be a powerful consolidation of like-minded organisations pooling their resources to share common approaches to meeting objectives.

### 4.1 What a Community of Practice might look like

Overall, a Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of practitioners who are actively involved in a similar field of work and share common goals. The purpose of a CoP is to facilitate a social space for practitioners to share practices, ask questions and support each other. While it's enough for a Community of Interest to share interest in a certain topic, the format of a CoP relies on active expertise among the members.

The benefit of a CoP on an individual level is to enrich individual knowledge, test ideas and receive valuable feedback; and on a community level to create a communal knowledge bank for safeguarding the creative industries, as well as acquiring social capital as a group, in that informal connections are formed that assist

the joint global objective of “upholding and improving standards of behaviour across the creative industries, to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment, including harassment of a discriminatory nature” (CIISA website). Another plus is the added motivation that comes from working alongside people who share a common vision and have agreed to support each other.

The approach of a CoP ensures a values-based framework that provides a carefully crafted social space where practitioners can trust each other, be open with one another and continuously create the social change that is much needed in our field of work. Many interview participants mentioned the importance of a place to learn and grow together, to learn from each other in a space where everyone can speak openly without any hidden agendas.

The plan is to first come together as a group in 2025. During this meeting, resources should be shared, questions raised and valuable input provided by the group. To establish a community, it will also be necessary to talk about a Code of Practice/Operational Agreement/Terms of Reference for the CoP in terms of funds, facilitation, regularity of meetings, transparency and confidentiality.



# Appendix

This appendix has short descriptions of the organisations that generously offered their expertise, experience and thoughts on the development of the field of safeguarding the arts and culture in the future, and agreed to be named in this report.

The author wishes to thank everyone on the list and so many individuals who pointed them in the right directions and helped establish the valuable connections that led to this report.

## Established contacts

The author would like to thank all interview partners, especially the following organisations that work towards safeguarding all or parts of the creative industries within their various means. Below are short descriptions of the organisations that have agreed to be part of an international roundtable to discuss the setting up of a CoP in 2025.

### Breakdown of conducted interviews

- 42 interviews
- 61 interview partners (29 one-person interviews, 13 multiple-person interviews)
- 5 industry sectors (screen: 15, music: 4, theatre/dance/club culture: 1 each)
- 20 interviews with industry-supporting organisations and individual experts (eg unions, government bodies, researchers and industry consultants)
- 7 regions (Europe: 24, Australia: 5, Canada: 4, UK: 2, Africa/India/US: 1 each)
- 3 global organisations

## List of organisations

### 1. #DocSafe

#DocSafe is a network of independent documentary filmmakers from all over the world. The 30 member organisations work as a steering committee against abuse in the documentary filmmaking industry. #DocSafe has published its roundtable minutes as a way of bringing its work forward in the future. It also published a Community Agreement on desired work conditions in the independent documentary filmmaking industry.<sup>35</sup>

### 2. ADVANCE Music

ADVANCE is Canada's Black Music Business Collective. Its goal is to unify professionals across all sectors of the Canadian music industry in order to develop an infrastructure for the betterment, upliftment and retention of Black people in the music business.

[www.advancemusic.org](http://www.advancemusic.org)

### 3. Austrian Filmmakers Association

#we\_do! is a contact and counselling centre for film and television in Austria, operated by the Austrian Filmmakers Association. #we\_do! advises and supports in cases of abuse of power, exploitation, harassment and discrimination confidentially, anonymously, flexibly and needs-orientated. Its work also includes warm-ups for film teams at the beginning of film shoots.

[www.we-do.info](http://www.we-do.info)

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<sup>35</sup> <https://documentaryfilmcouncil.co.uk/news-updates/new-docsafe-collaboration-launched>.



#### 4. AWA\* / The Awareness Institute

The Awareness Institute is an association of awareness activists from German-speaking countries, who develop and offer concepts and training on the topic of awareness. Its services include workshops, training, guidelines and contact points for people who have experienced discrimination and/or sexualised violence at club events.

[www.awareness-institut.net](http://www.awareness-institut.net)

#### 5. Black Screen Office

The Black Screen Office (Bureau de l'écran des Noirs) works independently and in collaboration with screen industry decision-makers and creators to make Canada's screen industries equitable and free of anti-Black racism. Its services include funding, research and advocacy work.

[www.bso-ben.ca](http://www.bso-ben.ca)

#### 6. CPAMO

The Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO) is a movement of Indigenous and racialised artists engaged in empowering the arts communities of Ontario, Canada. Its aim is to open opportunities for Indigenous and racialised professionals and organisations. Its services include educational programmes, reporting and model policies.

[www.cpamo.org](http://www.cpamo.org)

#### 7. Creative BC

Creative BC is an independent agency that supports British Columbia's creative industries at home and globally. The agency offers a wide range of services including funding programmes, research, reports and toolkits.

[www.creativebc.com](http://www.creativebc.com)

#### 8. Creative Workplaces

Creative Workplaces is an initiative established by Creative Australia. Its mission is to promote and enable fair, safe and respectful workplaces in the arts and culture sector. The aim is to

support the sector to understand their rights and meet their workplace obligations, by providing information, resources and referral information about pay, safety and wellbeing.

[www.creative.gov.au/creative-workplaces](http://www.creative.gov.au/creative-workplaces)

#### 9. D-Arts

D-Arts, office for diversity, is an Austrian charitable non-profit association that connects people and organisations in the Austrian creative industries that work together on discrimination-critical concepts for the creative industries. With its 80 member associations and institutions, D-Arts's aim is to develop consultation products for the creative industries in Austria, and act as a lobbyist for a more diverse cultural sector, as well as better work conditions for BIPOC in the creative industries.

[www.d-arts.at](http://www.d-arts.at)

#### 10. Diversity Arts Culture

Diversity Arts Culture is the diversity hub of Berlin's art council. Following its claim "Berlin's cultural institutions are not as diverse as the city of Berlin. Let's change that!", the Diversity Arts Culture offers design and consultation for diversity development in the cultural sector. Its services include consultations for cultural organisations, empowerment workshops for people with disabilities, and policy consultation for the Senate of Berlin.

[www.diversity-arts-culture.berlin](http://www.diversity-arts-culture.berlin)

#### 11. Hollywood Commission

Hollywood Commission is a leading organisation that works collaboratively with influential companies, unions and guilds, academies and talent agencies to end harassment, discrimination, bullying and abuse in the entertainment industry in the US. Its services include bystander intervention and inclusive sets, harassment-free workplaces training as well as research and an entertainment industry helpline.

[www.hollywoodcommission.org](http://www.hollywoodcommission.org)



**12. IDAA**

The Independent Directors Association Africa (IDAA) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing the rights and opportunities of film and television directors and DoPs in South Africa. Its services includes events, seminars, workshops, mentoring and mediation.

[www.idafrica.org](http://www.idafrica.org)

**13. MOIN**

MOIN is the Moving Images North Film Fund Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein. It supports cinema films, high-end series and innovative audiovisual formats of all genres from the first draft to production, distribution and festival presentation. Its application process uses Omni, an inclusion data platform that MOIN is developing for the screen sector in Germany.

[www.moin-filmfoerderung.de](http://www.moin-filmfoerderung.de)

**14. Mores**

Mores is a support and advice centre for transgressive behaviour for the cultural, creative and media sector. Alongside a publicly available manual, Mores advises in the field and provides confidential advice via counsellors to people in need.

[www.mores.online](http://www.mores.online)

**15. ÖFI**

The Austrian Film Institute (ÖFI) is Austria's national film funding agency. It supports cinema productions as a cultural product, as well as the Austrian film business. Its services include funding, reports, guidelines and a diversity check as part of its funding process.

[www.filminstitut.at](http://www.filminstitut.at)

**16. Podiumskunsten**

Podiumskunsten is the social fund for the performing arts. It is managed by employers' and workers' organisations in the Flemish part of Belgium. Its goal is to improve the position of at-risk groups in the form of employment premiums, workshops, training and pensions.

[www.podiumkunsten.be](http://www.podiumkunsten.be)

**17. Pro Helvetia**

Pro Helvetia is the Swiss Art Council. It promotes contemporary, professional arts and culture of national interest on behalf of the federal government. Its services include funding, residency and coaching programmes. Its official assignment includes measures to assist managers in creating respectful and inclusive work environments.

[www.prohelvetia.ch](http://www.prohelvetia.ch)

**18. Screen Careers**

Screen Careers is a nationally focused, not-for-profit organisation that works to build an employment pipeline into the screen industries for first-timers and offer life-long learning and upskilling opportunities for below-the-line crew. Its services include training, e-learning courses and B2B training solutions.

[www.screencareers.com.au](http://www.screencareers.com.au)

**19. Screen Well**

Screen Well is an organisation for mental health and wellbeing training, advocacy and insight for the Australian screen industry. It delivers mental health first aid training to screen workers, and offers workshops, research and other initiatives.

[www.screenwell.com.au](http://www.screenwell.com.au)

**20. Themis**

Themis Advice Centre for Sexual Harassment and Violence provides free and independent support to individuals in the arts and media industry, offering legal and psychological guidance to victims, witnesses and employers in Germany.

[www.themis-vertrauensstelle.de](http://www.themis-vertrauensstelle.de)

**21. Women in Cinema Collective**

WCC developed from a support group to a strong platform for women in the Malayalam film industry. It advocates for safe, non-discriminatory and professional workspaces for women in cinema. Its work includes policy consulting, outreach initiatives, mentoring and the promotion of responsible filmmaking.

[www.wccollective.org](http://www.wccollective.org)



If you have any questions or want to get in touch concerning this report, please do contact [clara.gallistl@ciisa.org.uk](mailto:clara.gallistl@ciisa.org.uk)

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