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Volume 3 Case Studies

A Comparative
Analysis of IIE
Artist Protection
Fund (United States
of America) and
PAUSE programme
(France)



On the Move is the international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 86 members from 32 countries. Since 2002, On the Move provides regular, up-to-date and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions and funding, and advocates for the value of cross-border cultural mobility. Co-funded by the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture, On the Move is implementing an ambitious multi-annual programme to build the capacities of local, regional, national, European and international stakeholders for the sustainable development of our cultural ecosystems.

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CHAPTER 3

A Comparative Analysis of IIE Artist Protection Fund (United States of America) and PAUSE programme (France)

by Dace Kiulina

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This text presents a comparative analysis of two key initiatives that have been pivotal in supporting at-risk and displaced artists: the Artist Protection Fund and the PAUSE programme. Both initiatives provide artists with safe havens to continue their work. Through collaboration with organisations, they offer not only financial support but also professional opportunities and tailored assistance to meet individual needs. This analysis aims to enhance the understanding of the operational dynamics of these initiatives and to inform the development of effective support mechanisms for forcibly displaced arts professionals.

Presentation

Based in the United States of America (USA) and operating globally, the Artist Protection Fund (APF) is an initiative of the Institute of International Education (IIE), a non-profit organisation founded in 1919 to promote international exchange. Launched in 2015, the Artist Protection Fund aims to provide lifechanging direct fellowship grants to artists facing threats to their safety and/or careers. The programme places these artists at host institutions and arts centres in safe countries, enabling them to continue their creative work and plan for their future.

The PAUSE programme was established in 2017 by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research in response to the violent conflict in Syria. Initially focused on supporting scientists and researchers, the programme was developed with the involvement of several ministries, including the French Ministry of Culture. Support for artists was integrated into the programme starting in 2021, through a

collaboration with the National Association of Higher Art Schools (ANDEA)¹ and L'Atelier des Artistes en Exil². PAUSE provides emergency support for foreign researchers, intellectuals, and artists facing threats or persecution in their home countries. Its aim is to ensure their safety, enable them to continue their professional activities in France, and offer protection and support for their families.

While APF is privately funded—primarily by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Ford Foundation—the PAUSE programme is hosted by the Collège de France and receives public funding from several French ministries: the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of the Home Affairs, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture. PAUSE also benefits from support by numerous partners in the higher education, research, and cultural sectors, as well as from civil society. At present, its funding is composed of 80% public and 20% private sources.

¹ ANDEA brings together 45 higher education art and design schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. The institutions are represented within ANDEA by more than 230 members: teachers, students, managers, deans, heads of departments, etc., as well as associated structures that share common goals. The association promotes and develops unique pedagogical and research models that nurtures experimentation and critical thinking.

² Founded in 2017, L'Atelier des Artistes en Exil [Agency of Artists in Exile] is a French organisation aimed at supporting artists in exile of all origins and disciplines according to their situation and needs. It offers administrative and legal advice, workspaces and puts artists in touch with French and European professionals, in order to give them the means to continue and practise their art, and to rebuild their lives.

Objectives

The aim of the PAUSE programme is to co-fund the stay of professional artists in exile within a cultural institution or organisation in France for a period of up to one year, which can be renewed once. As a publicly funded initiative, the programme applies specific criteria regarding eligible host institutions, which must be officially recognised and fall under the remit of relevant French ministries. They include higher education and research institutions under the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research, private higher education institutions of general interest³ or institutions under their supervision, or institutions or organisations (such as associations, art schools, cultural centres and

theatres) under the aegis of the French Ministry of Culture.

APF works globally and its aim is to offer a comprehensive residency of up to one year (with flexibility depending on individual circumstances) in collaboration with a wide range of host institutions, including academic institutions, cultural spaces, arts organisations and both small and large residency programmes around the world. Placements are primarily located in Western and Northern Europe, the Middle East (namely Lebanon and Jordan), as well as in Canada and the USA, where they are mainly hosted by universities.

Target groups

Both programmes support artists who are facing, or have recently fled from, immediate and severe threats to their lives and/or artistic practice in their home countries or countries of residence. While the APF focuses exclusively on artists, the PAUSE programme is also open to scientists and researchers. To be eligible for PAUSE, candidates must either be forced to go into exile from their home country or have arrived in France within the past three years, as those residing in France for a longer period are generally considered to be already integrated into French society. PAUSE primarily targets established professional artists, rather than students or those with limited artistic experience. Although the path to becoming a professional artist may vary across countries (e.g. not all artists have formal academic

training), the programme assesses each applicant's professional status by reviewing their CV and portfolio. These materials should clearly demonstrate a professional trajectory, including prior work such as participation in exhibitions, residencies, or other artistic events.

Artists from any country and from any artistic discipline/practice may apply to both programmes. This includes visual artists, filmmakers, writers, theatre artists, performance artists, composers, musicians, choreographers, traditional artists, and more. Applicants to the APF must be at least 21 years old, while for the PAUSE programme, candidates must not be older than retirement age (65 years old). Any threat of persecution or violence due to an artist's practice, identity, or beliefs would qualify them to apply.

³ Private higher education institutions of general interest (EESPIG) are private, non-profit higher education institutions in France that are recognised as serving the public good and are in a contractual relationship with the government. See more here (in French).

Application process

In the case of APF, artists may apply directly or a third party may submit the application materials on their behalf. Applicants have to provide a complete application package, including personal information, artist statement, personal statement (statement of threat), CV or resume, two professional letters of reference from creative professionals, and two personal letters of reference from colleagues or people who are aware of their difficulties. Applications can be submitted in various languages, including English, Spanish, and Arabic. The APF subsequently translates them into English for the evaluation process. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year.

For the PAUSE programme, artists must apply in partnership with a host institution, which is responsible for submitting the application and handling all administrative procedures. If the artist already has connections within the French artistic community, they are encouraged to reach out directly to institutions that meet the PAUSE programme's eligibility criteria. If not, the artist can either request assistance from PAUSE by submitting a dedicated application form, or seek support from L'Atelier des artistes en exil, a partner organisation of the programme.

For the PAUSE programme the application must include the artist's portfolio, CV, and a detailed professional project with the host institution (e.g. participating in the institution's programme, leading workshops, or teaching, in the case of art schools). Applicants must also demonstrate that they are in a situation of emergency or distress due to security conditions in their country of residence and/or persecution or fear of persecution based on ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, opinions, sexual orientation, or the content of their work. Applications have to be submitted in French and applications are accepted through three calls launched per year (in January, April and September).

Eligibility criteria

Both programmes take into account not only the urgency and severity of the risk faced by the applicant, but also the quality of their artistic practice. APF assess if the applicant: i) is facing or has recently fled from immediate, severe, and targeted threats to his/her life and/or artistic practice in his/her home countries or countries of residence; ii) demonstrates accomplishment and promise in their artistic practice; iii) will benefit their home and/or host communities.

APF also encourages applications from women and members of ethnic, racial, cultural, or religious minority groups, or those otherwise underrepresented in their fields. It gives priority to individuals still living in their home country or who have recently fled.

In the case of PAUSE, artists must provide a detailed account of their situation, explaining the reasons they were forced to leave their home country or why they are currently in France. They are also assessed based on the quality of their artistic portfolio and, equally importantly, the quality and relevance of their proposed project with the host institution. Indeed, according to PAUSE, projects that ensure strong participation of the artist in the host institution's activities are more likely to enhance the artist's visibility and professional integration into the French cultural sector.

Evaluation process

To select applicants, both programmes rely on **independent Evaluation Committees** that operate on a voluntary basis. However, as one is a public initiative and the other is privately funded, their selection processes differ slightly.

In the case of APF, all submissions undergo a rigorous internal review and background check to verify the coherence and accuracy of the information provided regarding the situation of threat, conducted by the fund's team. Once this review is completed, the applications are forwarded to the APF Selection Committee, which meets up to two times per year.

The APF has access to a global pool of experts, including academics, museum directors, curators, regional specialists, and artists. These experts volunteer their time and must demonstrate expertise in at least one primary artistic discipline, as well as general knowledge of the sector and political situation. APF equips them with up-to-date contextual information on geopolitical situations, conflicts, and risks, often provided through its network of regional advisors.

The Selection Committee is newly composed for each call and includes five to seven members, ensuring diverse perspectives. To guarantee a fair and transparent selection process, APF provides members with detailed IIE-APF Selection Committee Guidelines and evaluation criteria.

When it comes to PAUSE, the team also conducts thorough security checks on all candidates. Afterwards applications are reviewed by an Evaluation Committee composed of cultural professionals and artists who assess the quality of the portfolio and proposed project. PAUSE has a pool of experts that it mobilises depending on the type of applications receive; for instance, if the

applications are in dance, PAUSE will consult a dancer or choreographer. As a result, the experts change regularly. All experts work on a voluntary basis. The programme consistently seeks to integrate new members into the Committee in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest. The Committee uses specific evaluation criteria and an evaluation grid provided by the programme.

Once this assessment is completed, the Direction Committee—comprising representatives from all ministries and institutions involved in the PAUSE programme—validates the final selection. While the Direction Committee generally follows the Evaluation Committee's recommendations, it may request additional verification if there are doubts about a candidate.

The PAUSE programme also has an emergency procedure for artists facing imminent danger. In such cases, the evaluation process is accelerated to approximately two weeks in order to evacuate the individual, depending on the availability of funding. Otherwise, the evaluation process takes two months.

PAUSE also offers the selected applicants the possibility to renew their stay for an additional year. To do so, they must submit a new application during one of the three annual calls, updating their portfolio and professional project with the host institution.

APF selects an average of 12 to 14 fellows each year, while PAUSE programme co-finances an average of 20 artists per year. However, this number doubled last year due to a significant increase in applications from Gaza (in 2024, the programme supported 28 Palestinian artists and 27 scientists, and 173 of their family members).

Support offered

APF fellowship grant is 35,000 USD and is usually disbursed directly to the selected host institution, which administers the funds to the fellow in the form of a monthly stipend. The grant amount is standardised across all fellows, ensuring consistency and fairness.

Each grant is complemented by in-kind and/or financial support from the host institution. This support typically includes visa sponsorship (a key requirement), housing, social services, health and mental health care, language tutoring, studio space, artistic materials and supplies, as well as access to professional development programming and networking opportunities. Host institutions are encouraged to provide support that is inclusive and programmatically sound, while recognising that their capacities may vary. For instance, residency programmes and academic institutions may offer different types of resources and infrastructure. The APF allows for flexibility to accommodate this diversity.

The PAUSE programme covers 60% of the total budget required to host the artist, while the host institution contributes the

remaining 40%. The funding allocated to each artist varies depending on their specific needs and, primarily, on the host institution's financial capacity to co-fund the project. In general, PAUSE funding ranges from 20,000 EUR to 40,000 EUR. The funding is provided in the form of a salary, as the artist is officially employed—ideally under a fixed-term employment contract—by the hosting institution during the residency.

Beyond financial support, the programme, through host institutions, facilitates access to housing, assistance with administrative procedures (visas, residence permits, social security), and broader integration into French society. For administrative procedures, the PAUSE programme is in contact with the Ministry of the Home Affairs, which facilitates the visa process. Moreover, the programme offers additional funding (a maximum of 5,000 EUR) to support cultural and professional integration which may be used for French language courses, to strengthen scientific and cultural competences or to develop a career plan. PAUSE can also accommodate the artist's family, however, this support is not covered financially.

Monitoring and evaluation

To assess the programme's effectiveness, APF has a dedicated evaluation process that gathers regular, structured feedback from both fellows and host institutions. This feedback helps identify service gaps and adapt the programme accordingly. For instance, based on early evaluations and feedback from artists and hosts, the initial grant size was increased to better reflect the actual needs of participating artists. Additionally, over time APF has come to recognise the critical importance of supporting artists during the arrival and adaptation period,

and adjustments have been made to improve this aspect.

APF conducts regular reporting cycles—initial, mid-term, and final reports—for itself and funders. These reports are used for internal monitoring and are not publicly available.

The PAUSE programme publishes annual activity reports that are available on its website⁴. At the end of the stay, both the artist and the host institution are asked to submit a report detailing

⁴ The most recent Activity Report available (as of 30 June 2025) is from 2023. The author, however, has also had access to the 2024 report, which is expected to be published in mid 2025.

the support received from the programme, their impressions, what could be improved, what was missing, and what was successful. Programme staff discuss this feedback in team meetings and it is used to identify areas for improvement.

Collaboration with host institutions

The PAUSE programme staff maintain ongoing contact with both artists and host institutions, which often require support due to limited staff capacity. The PAUSE team provides guidance, resources, and tools to assist them throughout the process, such as a welcome guide and online orientation sessions to support the integration process. PAUSE also provides training for host institutions' staff to help them prepare to receive artists. For instance, they offer training on issues related to mental health, equipping staff with tools to support individuals arriving from **conflict zones**. The PAUSE team remains consistently available to provide any assistance the institutions may require. Once a host institution agrees to participate in the programme-even with limited resources—it demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting the artist throughout their stay.

As for APF, it is continuously working to expand its network of host institutions, which vary widely in size, resources, and infrastructure. Identifying the right fit for each artist can be a lengthy process, as it involves not only finding a suitable host institution but also ensuring that the available support mechanisms align with the fellow's specific needs. Sometimes, the willingness to host an artist originates from the personal initiative of an individual within the institution. However, as the decision must involve a specific department, it often requires ongoing dialogue and time to establish the appropriate conditions for hosting the artist.

Recognising that art spaces and cultural centres often lack the resources or specific expertise—such as navigating complex visa procedures—to provide long-term support to at-risk artists, the APF has begun establishing a consortium style

placements. These consortiums of organisations. These consortiums bring together complementary skills and capacities, enabling them to collectively offer the comprehensive support needed by the artists.

APF has also developed strong partnerships with universities, particularly in the USA, which often have infrastructure and existing systems in place due to their experience in hosting international scholars. However, supporting artists typically require additional adaptations, such as access to studio space. Additionally, when accompanied by family members, the responsibility for host institutions becomes significantly greater.

APF has also focused its efforts on partnering with academic institutions due to their capacity to support visa processes. Moreover, while the university typically serves as the main host, there is often a network of on-campus cultural spaces, exhibition venues, or interested departments that together can meet the various requirements involved in hosting an artist.

The responsibilities of host institutions are outlined in the APF Hosting Support Guidelines, which detail the requirements regarding housing, studio space, administrative support, social services, and more. Additionally, the programme provides a comprehensive Handbook to help host institutions prepare for receiving artists. Whenever possible, the APF conducts on-site visits and organises internal mid-term and final check-ins with host institutions to monitor progress, address challenges and offer support. Throughout the entire residency period, the APF remains consistently available to host institutions, offering guidance and assistance in case any challenges or difficulties arise.

Challenges and limitations

When it comes to challenges, both programmes have mentioned their limited human and financial resources.

APF operates with a small team, which limits the scale of its operations and capacities. PAUSE programme's team is primarily dedicated to the scientific component: two staff members focus on professional integration, two manage relations with host institutions, and one is responsible for fundraising. Only one person is currently in charge of the artistic component.

Although APF is generally considered a well-funded programme, the funding is not sufficient to ensure that the artist feels financially comfortable in the host country. There is a pressing need to develop a long-term funding model that can guarantee the programme's continuity and increase its capacity to support more artists at a deeper level.

Securing sustainable funding remains a critical issue, especially in the face of shifting political climates. The rise of right-wing governments globally, including the challenges during the Trump administration second term, has already had tangible impacts on artist mobility. For instance, in 2025 the USA reinstated travel bans for certain countries, and several European governments are becoming increasingly reluctant to welcome refugees—affecting legal pathways for artists at risk.

The PAUSE programme is also constantly making an effort to secure additional funding. It aims to reverse their proportion of public/private funding in the future to become more independent and autonomous, with less reliance on public funding. The programme is developing fundraising campaigns targeting private donors as well as successfully participating in international cooperation projects funded by the European Commission; however, currently these projects

focus exclusively on scientists and researchers at risk, not artists. The objective of the team in charge of the artistic component is to develop new collaborations that could similarly lead to cooperation projects or fundraising campaigns, however, the challenge lies in finding the time, as only one person is currently working on this component.

Another challenge PAUSE is facing is maintaining its capacity to respond to the increasing number of crises. The programme has managed to mobilise additional financial resources to support artists from Ukraine and Gaza; however, these resources are not sustainable.

Responsiveness and adaptability are required not only at programme level but also at the level of host institutions, whose strong commitment must be highlighted despite often insufficient resources. Indeed, host institutions require significant support from the programme's team when hosting artists-such as assistance with administrative procedures, finding housing, strengthening their teams through additional contacts and networks, and providing necessary tools. The close collaboration between the PAUSE programme and the Ministry of the Home Affairs greatly facilitates the reception of artists and the handling of administrative procedures. Maintaining this dialogue with ministries is essential.

For both APF and PAUSE, another ongoing challenge is determining the extent and duration of support each artist requires, and how to scale that support in a realistic and productive manner. It is essential to consider what happens after the residency—whether the artist will have further opportunities to continue their work and rebuild their life and career. However, due to limited resources, the programmes are currently unable to provide structured, long-term support to artists once the residency has ended.

APF has, however, observed that many alumni have successfully transitioned to other opportunities after their fellowship. Some have gone on to join other programmes or residencies, while others have returned to their home countries—which remains one of the programme's primary goals—when possible. Additionally, many fellows have benefited from the relationships and networks established during their time in the programme, particularly through connections with other institutions and organisations.

For PAUSE, the priority is to ensure the professional integration of artists after the programme ends. Artists are employed by the host institutions,

which guarantees their social rights, for example, the access to unemployment benefits. In 2024, over 60% of the supported scientists and artists benefited from additional funding programmes or secured temporary positions. Some even obtained permanent roles, either in academia (as lecturers, university professors, or researchers at the National Centre for Scientific Research) or in the private sector with long-term contracts. Very few artists supported by PAUSE have returned to their countries of origin (although this was the case of several Ukrainian artists who were supported through an emergency fund when the war in Ukraine started). In general, artists preferred to stay in France.

Potential developments

APF has underlined that it is important to manage expectations and avoid overpromising. It is vital that support programmes remain transparent about the scope of what they can offer, and do not create the false hope of indefinite safety or ongoing financial support. Clear communication and realistic commitments are central to maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the programme.

Institutions must make a systematic effort to secure the necessary resources and spaces for the artists they host. Even those that have hosted artists multiple times and developed appropriate infrastructure may eventually face resource constraints and become unable to continue their consecutive support. For this reason, the programmes must continuously build relationships and adapt their approach to engage new host institutions.

Moreover, hosting artists requires a degree of flexibility from host institutions, as each artist comes from a different context and has unique needs. A positive experience with one artist does not necessarily guarantee a similarly smooth process with another. Therefore, the programmes must ensure ongoing support to

host institutions—including those with prior experience—since challenges may arise at any point in the hosting process.

There is a need to strike a balance between smaller institutions—such as galleries and cultural spaces-that may not yet be fully equipped to host an at-risk artist for an extended period but are deeply committed to the cause, and larger institutions that have the necessary systems and infrastructure in place but may eventually face resource limitations or shifting priorities regarding support for international artists. It is crucial to support the growth and capacitybuilding of smaller institutions so they can effectively meet the needs of the artists they host. The only path to sustainability lies in maintaining this balance between larger, well-funded host institutions and smaller, dedicated spaces that, while more limited in resources, can offer unique forms of support and valuable connections that complement those provided by larger institutions.

Another important aspect is maintaining a network of contacts across different areas of expertise—such as administrative and legal support, psychological assistance, and language instruction—that can be mobilised whenever

needed. For instance, PAUSE already collaborates with local structures supporting people in exile, such as the **Primo Levi Centre**⁵, among others. However, these networks should be expanded and strengthened in order to better meet the diverse and evolving needs of artists.

Both programmes have emphasised the importance of and the need to build a community of practice, a collaborative network of diverse initiatives and organisations that share goals but vary in approach. This would allow programmes to align, adapt, and support each other across different phases of an artist's journey (e.g., prefellowship, during fellowship, and post-fellowship). Sustainability could be further explored by establishing stronger links with public institutions, other complementary support programmes, and long-term strategic partnerships.

There are multiple pathways to effectively support artists. It is important to approach this work with integrity and sustainability, ensuring that similar efforts are carried out in complementary—not competing—ways, in order to avoid overlap and maximise opportunities for artists. This also requires a deeper understanding of the diversity of artists' contexts and the need for varied programme designs.

⁵ Primo Levi Centre is a Paris-based nonprofit organisation dedicated to the care and support of survivors of torture and political violence exiled in France. The centre welcomes more than 400 people from nearly 50 different countries every year for multidisciplinary treatment. Drawing from its 30 years of experience in trauma-informed care, the Primo Levi Centre educates and trains professionals and volunteers working with exiles to promote appropriate care. It also uses this experience to regularly advocate to politicians, policy makers, and enterprises for better access to health care, to raise awareness on mental health, and ensure appropriate care for survivors of torture.

About the Author

Dace Kiulina is a consultant in culture and development cooperation, with over 15 years of experience in designing and managing international cultural cooperation projects, and in conducting analyses and evaluations in the fields of culture, creative industries and arts. Over the past five years, she has also specialised in supporting arts organisations with fundraising. Her work spans various geographical regions, including Europe, Latin America, North and Sub-Saharan Africa.

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To fully appreciate the breadth of the research on The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals, please do consider reading the <u>other chapters</u> gathered in this third report, as well as the first two reports available for download: <u>Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition – Volume 1 Scoping Review</u> and <u>Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments, and Patchwork Solutions – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis</u>.

