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*Ovcharuk Olga,*

*Doctor of Science in Cultural Studies, Professor,  
Professor at the Department of Cultural Studies  
and Intercultural Communications  
National Academy of Culture  
and Arts Management  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5540-3286>  
Web of Science Researcher ID  
AAP-1604-2021  
OvcharukOlga.19@gmail.com*

**ART PROJECTS AS HUMANITARIAN STRATEGIES FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT:  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**The purpose of the article** is to substantiate the possibilities of using the international experience in the field of cultural and artistic practices as a humanitarian strategy for psychosocial support for children and youth in Ukraine under martial law, based on a cultural analysis of the implementation of the «Mobile Arts for Peace» (MAP) art project. **The research methodology** is to use interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to study the specifics of the therapeutic impact of various types of arts – theatre, music, visual arts, choreography in the implementation of international art projects in post-conflict societies. The main research methods are: the method of hermeneutic analysis – for the interpretation of works of art created within certain national cultures; the method of semiotic analysis – for revealing the meanings and values of artistic phenomena as sign systems; the method of psychological experiment – for analysing the results of using innovative artistic methods in the process of psychological support for project participants. **The scientific novelty** consists in summarising the international experience of developing and implementing the «Mobile Arts for Peace» art project in different countries of the world – Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan; substantiating the possibilities of providing psychosocial support to participants in art projects as forms of cultural and artistic practices; identifying the features of the MAP project implementation based on the specifics of national cultural traditions, historical, and cultural memory, and the depth of cultural trauma in each society. **Conclusions.** The analysis of the process of implementing the «Mobile Arts for Peace» art project allowed us to summarise the international experience of engaging art as an effective tool for peacebuilding, establishing dialogue, and providing psychological assistance to societies in countries that have gone through various types of conflicts. The studied international experience can be successfully used to develop concepts, programs, and methodological recommendations adapted to the needs of Ukrainian society in the context of war.

**Key words:** international art project, Mobile Arts for Peace, cultural and artistic practices, psychosocial support, humanitarian strategies.

*Овчарук Ольга Володимирівна, доктор культурології, професор, професор кафедри культурології та міжкультурних комунікацій Національної академії керівних кадрів культури і мистецтв*

**Мистецькі проекти як гуманітарні стратегії психосоціальної підтримки: міжнародний досвід розробки та впровадження**

**Мета статті** – на основі культурологічного аналізу процесу реалізації мистецького проекту «Мобільні мистецтва заради миру» («Mobile Arts for Peace», MAP) обґрунтувати можливості використання набутого міжнародного досвіду в сфері культурно-мистецьких практик як гуманітарної стратегії для психосоціальної підтримки дітей та молоді в Україні. **Методологія дослідження** полягає у використанні *міждисциплінарного* та *компаративного* підходів для вивчення специфіки терапевтичного впливу різних видів мистецтв – театрального, музичного, образотворчого, хореографічного у процесі реалізації міжнародних мистецьких проектів у постконфліктних суспільствах. Провідними методами дослідження є: метод *герменевтичного аналізу* – для інтерпретації творів мистецтва, створених в межах певних національних культур; метод *семіотичного аналізу* – для розкриття смислів та значень мистецьких феноменів як знакових систем; метод *психологічного експерименту* – для аналізу результатів використання інноваційних мистецьких методів у процесі психологічної підтримки учасників проектів. **Наукова новизна** полягає в узагальненні міжнародного досвіду розробки та реалізації мистецького проекту «Мобільні мистецтва заради миру» в різних країнах світу – Руанді, Непалі, Індонезії, Киргизстані; обґрунтуванні можливостей надання психосоціальної підтримки учасникам мистецьких

проектів як форм культурно-мистецьких практик; виявленні особливостей впровадження проекту, заснованих на специфіці національних культурних традицій, історичної та культурної пам'яті, глибини культурної травми в кожному із суспільств. **Висновки.** Здійснений аналіз процесу реалізації мистецького проекту «Мобільні мистецтва заради миру» дозволив узагальнити міжнародний досвід залучення мистецтва як ефективного інструменту для розбудови миру, встановлення діалогу, надання психологічної допомоги суспільствам країн, які пройшли через різні види конфліктів – військовий, етнічний тощо. Вивчений міжнародний досвід може бути успішно використаний для розробки концепцій, програм, методичних рекомендацій, адаптованих для потреб українського соціуму в умовах війни.

**Ключові слова:** міжнародний мистецький проект, Мобільні мистецтва заради миру, культурно-мистецькі практики, психосоціальна підтримка, гуманітарні стратегії.

The relevance of the research topic. Almost nine years of war in Ukraine, the full-scale Russian armed aggression that began in 2022, aimed at destroying Ukrainian statehood as such, and the large-scale destruction of infrastructure, much of which is made up of educational and cultural heritage sites, have caused not only catastrophic destruction and economic losses to the state, but also severe psychological trauma to the Ukrainian society. Children and young people have become the most vulnerable group. Under these conditions, contemporary humanities should not only theorise large-scale socio-cultural transformations that unrecognisably change the contemporary cultural reality and shape its uncertain future, but also outline new strategies centred on the personality with the experience of war, tragedies and losses, and psychological health disorders.

In this regard, a significant scientific rethinking, filling with new sessions and practical recommendations, requires an appeal to modern cultural and artistic practices based on the psychological and therapeutic capabilities of art. The synthesis of different types of art – music, dance, theatre, and visual arts, combined with effective practical forms can be an effective tool for overcoming the effects of psychological stress, restoring mental health, and an important resource for overcoming the current humanitarian crisis. The “National Program of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support” [3], initiated by the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, and supported by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, is aimed to solve these problems.

Of particular importance for the Ukrainian society today is the study of the practical experience gained by international institutions and public organisations based on the implementation and realisation of cultural and artistic projects in societies affected by various kinds of conflicts – military, ethnic, and others. Among them, the «Mobile Arts for Peace» (MAP) art project [13] attracts attention as a source of relevant international experience in using the power of art to address pressing humanitarian, social, and ethnic

issues, as well as to provide psychosocial support. This project was implemented by an international team of scientists organised around the University of Lincoln (United Kingdom, Lincoln). The project was led and developed by Ananda Breed, a well-known scientist, professor of theatre arts, and author of many works on psychosocial support through the arts [16]. The researcher proposed her own concept of engaging the creative potential of art to build peace and establish dialogue in societies that have gone through various types of conflict. The acquired international experience in implementing art projects can be successfully used to develop concepts, programmes, and methodological recommendations adapted to the needs of the Ukrainian society. The relevance and necessity of studying it is obvious from the standpoint of both theoretical and practical cultural studies.

Analysis of research and publications. The search for ways to overcome psychological trauma, provide psychosocial assistance and support, and engage the potential of culture and art are urgent problems of contemporary humanities, which can be solved through an interdisciplinary approach. In this context, it is psychology that has a wide range of studies of these problems. This is evidenced by a number of scientific monographic publications and methodological recommendations that have appeared recently based on the results of fundamental research of the H. Kostyuk Institute of Psychology. Among them are works devoted to the problems of psychological health and their overcoming: «Сучасні психологічні технології надання психологічної допомоги сім'ям постраждалих у подоланні складних життєвих обставин» («Modern Psychological Technologies for Providing Psychological Assistance to Families of Victims in Overcoming Difficult Life Circumstances») (Kyiv, 2020) [4], «Технології психотерапевтичної допомоги постраждалим у подоланні проявів посттравматичного стресового розладу» («Technologies of Psychotherapeutic Assistance to Victims in Overcoming Manifestations of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder») (Kyiv, 2020) [6], «Психолого-організаційні детермінанти забезпечення

психологічного здоров'я персоналу освітніх організацій в умовах соціальної напруженості» («Psychological and Organisational Determinants of Ensuring the Psychological Health of Staff of Educational Organisations in Conditions of Social Tension» (Kyiv, 2021) [5].

The relevance of engaging cultural practices as a strategy for detraumatizing domestic society in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war is evidenced by the publications of contemporary Cultural of Studies scholars [1]. The problems of mental health and psychological state in wartime are the subject of discussion at forums at the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine [2].

An essential aspect of these problems is the content, tools, means and forms of psychological support. In this regard, the developments of another important, but relatively young, area of psychological assistance – art therapy, whose theoretical and practical achievements have recently been actively used as a preventive tool for the development of a healthy worldview and lifestyle, are of particular importance. It should be noted that music therapy appears not only as an effective tool for psychological assistance, but, above all, as a new technology of human self-realization, based on a targeted influence on the subconscious of an individual, transforming his or her character in an objectively determined direction. This possibility is based on the revival of the ancient role of music not as art, but as a sacred instrument of being [6]. Dance therapy through the understanding of body language, its expression through movement, allows to achieve an important therapeutic effect. Such a synthetic type of art therapy as theatre therapy is becoming more widespread, which allows combining different artistic trends and revealing different facets of one's own personality through stage reincarnation. Thus, theatre becomes a play of roles and impressions through the interpretation of real or fictional stories. In this context, it is especially significant to study the specifics of the therapeutic impact of various types of arts – theatre, music, visual arts, and choreography on the personality in the works by foreign authors (J. Alvin, R. Benenson, K. Bruscia, B. Grinnell, E. Heimlich, S. Hogan, J. Moreno, P. Nordoff, C. Robbins, M. Priestley, D. Gfeller, R. Edward) and domestic (O. Voznesenska, N. Kalka, Z. Kovalchuk, H. Poberezhna, L. Terletska, O. Fediy, etc.) scholars.

The synthesis of the arts – music, dance, drama is actively used as the basis of many cultural and artistic practices. In this regard, the research of many foreign scholars, which presents the

experience of using innovative art-based methods to build peace and dialogue in post-conflict societies, as well as to provide psychosocial support to children and youth as the most vulnerable segments of society through the implementation of art projects around the world, becomes especially important. Among such works, the studies by Ananda Breed [7, 8, 9, 10, 15], Chaste Uwhoreye [10, 15], Eric Ndushabandi [10], Kirrily Pells [8, 16], Matthew Elliott [8], and others are particularly noteworthy.

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the possibility of using the international experience in the field of cultural and artistic practices as a humanitarian strategy for psychosocial support of children and youth in modern Ukrainian society based on a cultural analysis of the implementation of the «Mobile Arts for Peace» (MAP) art project.

Summary of the main material. In the globalised world of the third millennium, Ukraine's chance for success can be realised through the formation of fundamentally new approaches to its humanitarian sphere. As a European nation by its civilisation, the Ukrainian nation should base its development on a human-centred system of values that has repeatedly proven its effectiveness. Based on this approach, Ukraine needs to significantly change the vision of the role of a person in the political, economic, and social life of the country, which requires a new holistic policy of humanitarian development adequate to the modernisation challenges of the modern world, the needs of the post-war restoration of the basic foundations of Ukrainian society based on the latest humanitarian strategies.

Art, as a powerful force capable of transforming a person, their worldview, inner world, continues to be an important tool for spiritual change in the current conditions of social transformation, both for individuals and for the whole community. It is through the influence of art that it is now possible to solve complex social problems. This is confirmed by the large-scale international project «Mobile Arts for Peace» (MAP), based on the use of interdisciplinary artistic practices aimed to build peace, establish dialogue in societies that have gone through various types of conflict, and use art to provide psychological support to the population through the integration of mental health knowledge.

The MAP project was launched in 2018 with the support of international organisations such as the «Global Challenges Research Fund» (GCRF), «Arts and Humanities Research Council» (AHRC) as part of a larger project called «Changing the Story: Building Inclusive Societies with and for Young People in Post-Conflict Countries». The

MAP is a collaborative project that brings together a wide range of participants: universities, public organisations, artists, cultural figures, educators, politicians, civil society, and young people from around the world. The research centres of the MAP are the Institute for the Study of Dialogue for Peace in Rwanda, Lincoln University and University College London in the UK.

Ananda Breed, a renowned scholar and professor at the University of Lincoln, developed the concept and was the principal investigator of the Arts for Peace project. The researcher is the author of many scientific works, including the book «Performing the Nation: Genocide, Justice, Reconciliation» (Seagull Books, 2014), co-editor of «Performance and Civic Engagement» (2017), «Creating Culture in (Post) Socialist Central Asia» (2020), and a number of publications on the role of art in fostering dialogue and understanding. In addition, Ananda Breed has provided conflict prevention consultancy in Kyrgyzstan, conducted arts and crafts workshops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Palestine, Rwanda, and Turkey, and acted as a co-researcher on the project «Changing the Story: Building Inclusive Societies with and for Young People in Post-Conflict Countries» (2018–2022). Ananda Breed became the principal investigator of the project «MAP at Home: online psychosocial support through the arts in Rwanda» (2020–2022) [16].

The “Mobile Arts for Peace” (MAP) project was implemented in four countries: Rwanda, Indonesia, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan, each of which has gone through a conflict – military or ethnic, and needed effective tools to establish a dialogue in society and provide psychological support to their citizens. Thus, in 2018, the Eastern Province of Rwanda hosted a pilot MAP project in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations, cultural figures, artists, educators, and youth workers through a series of workshops, including training of trainers and youth camps, to find ways to build peace in the country [18]. To this end, the project introduced various artistic practices based on national cultural traditions as a way to prevent conflict. Particular attention was paid to the role of young people in the peacebuilding process through the acquisition of relevant competencies.

Professor Ananda Breed developed an appropriate model for using artistic approaches to establish social dialogue. For this purpose, teachers and facilitators were trained and «MAP Clubs» were created. This helped to increase youth participation in peacebuilding initiatives. The main goal of the clubs was to integrate various arts –

music, dance, drama to engage children and youth in an atmosphere of creativity as a way to interact, establish cooperation, and build partnerships. The «MAP Clubs», together with organised workshops, schoolchildren, teachers, and local artists, promoted participatory peacebuilding methods. During the classes, students and teachers combined local and regional art forms, such as white paint painting, Umuduri music, traditional songs, and dances. MAP techniques were also used – participatory art exercises and games to improve youth leadership development. During the workshops, participants were encouraged to discuss opportunities for communication between students and teachers, as well as between youth and adults [7].

Among other methods, such as storytelling and theatre performances based on Augusto Boal’s «Theatre of the Oppressed» (1974), a space was created for exchanging ideas and considering solutions to conflict resolution. The result of this work was an art curriculum. It is based on a methodology for restoring psychological health and psychosocial support.

In this regard, the methodological developments proposed by scientists Ananda Breed and Chaste Uwhoreye deserve special attention. Among them is the «Psychosocial Module» manual [17]. The structure of the manual includes the following sections: «Emotion», «Sharing Stories», «Active Listening & Deep Stories», «Family & Community Engagement», and «Give& Take». Each of the sections includes a system of creative exercises aimed to share experiences, as well as a plan for creating artwork. They contribute to improving psychological health, help understand emotions, and establish trust between young people and their community. For example, the section on «Emotion» includes exercises aimed to develop skills to understand oneself and others through emotions and feelings, as the ability to connect to one’s emotions, feelings, and thinking helps counteract negative consequences and mental health problems. The exercises in the section «Active Listening & Deep Stories» help participants share their personal stories that have influenced their psychological life, develop listening skills through art-based methods.

The practical concept of the «Family & Community Engagement» section is based on traditional Rwandan values – a culture of celebrating achievements and success, including hunting and battles. Appreciating and enjoying victory is therefore a crucial culture for Rwandans, as it gives them courage, strengthens their emotions and thoughts about challenges, and increases their

desire to continue on the path to finding a solution. The importance of this manual lies in the possibility of applying and adapting the presented concept of providing psychological assistance through the arts for the countries that have gone through or are in a state of conflict. Ukraine, as a country whose citizens, especially children and youth, have deep psychological traumas, needs such developments today.

The MAP project has been launched in other countries, including Indonesia. Its goal is to shape national curricula and influence youth policy. This work will be carried out through cooperation with representatives of the local level, as well as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. It is planned to establish cooperation with local civil society organisations, artists, and cultural figures to engage local artists with experience in theatre, film, sculpture, art, and music. MAP's work in Indonesia is planned to be carried out with organisations that address children's issues, such as the «Children's Forum», «Child Protection Agency» and youth. The MAP will provide young people (ages 12–24) and their guardians, who are facilitators, with approaches and tools to explore and communicate issues of importance to young people in order to inform a policy sphere that has ignored the rights of young people [11].

As with all projects, MAP's management in Indonesia focuses on the use of arts-based methods and approaches. However, the peculiarity of their use in Indonesia is to combine the proposed methods and approaches with local cultural traditions. This is due to the fact that the country unites various nations with traditional art forms. Among them, the most popular is Lenong, a traditional theatre form that has been used to entertain people. Traditional theatre continues to evolve, full of jokes, rhymes, sketches, and live music that allows interacting with the audience. This allows us to explore community issues and also meet the needs of a wide audience, including young people. Thus, Lenong is an example of how national traditional theatre as a cultural form can be used to create dialogue and build peace in society [11].

MAP's activities in Nepal are aimed to create national curricula and influence youth policy through local school and after-school clubs, local governance structures, including the Pathways to Impact Child Rights Committee, the Provincial Child Rights Committee, and the National Youth Council. Initiatives led by children's and youth clubs will help identify and prioritise local problems that need to be addressed. Involving young people in addressing them will promote intergenerational dialogue and peer-to-peer

learning to share, motivate, and train other children to develop similar practices in their respective schools and communities. An important aspect of MAP's activities is the inclusion of local cultural forms (Deuda, Mithila Art, Lok Geet), as well as folk songs specific to different parts of the country, to realise the project's dialogic goals. For example, Deuda can be used as a cultural form to explore local issues due to its question-and-answer structure and inclusiveness. Mithila art allows exploring local issues through visual art, using local materials to paint murals inside houses, entrances, and exterior walls. Art-based communication systems will be created through Forum Theatre, Playback Theatre and street drama with the partner organisation Mandala Theatre. This will help create opportunities for children and young people to express themselves as video makers. Such projects can be implemented through cooperation with a wide range of partners, including artists, cultural and educational figures, and politicians [14].

In Kyrgyzstan, the MAP art project aims to improve national curricula and youth policy. One of the main problems in Kyrgyzstan is the problem of child violence, as well as young migrants who are concentrated in the new settlements of Bishkek, including border areas with a high risk of violence with neighboring countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Many of them are out-of-school and multi-ethnic communities. To address these acute social problems, the MAP has partnered with the nomadic «Sakhna» theatre and the artistic institutions «Artist Group Sakhna» and «Art Institution». This allows us to use cultural forms centred on Manas or the Central Asian era to find solutions to current problems through traditional performances, storytelling, and improvisation. The MAP project builds on initiatives such as the «Child Friendly Communities» program. It covers both rural and urban areas, cooperates with national and regional departments of education, local governments, secondary schools, and the «Youth Theatre for Peace» network of drama clubs. It helps to create children's and youth forums to inform policy through theatre productions [12].

The scientific novelty consists in summarising the international experience of developing and implementing the «Mobile Arts for Peace» art project in different countries of the world – Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan; substantiating the possibilities of providing psychosocial support to participants in art projects as forms of cultural and artistic practices; identifying the features of the MAP project implementation based on the specifics of national

cultural traditions, historical, and cultural memory, and the depth of cultural trauma in each society.

Conclusions. The analysis of the process of implementing the “Mobile Arts for Peace” art project in Rwanda, Nepal, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan allowed us to summarise the international experience of engaging art as an effective tool for peacebuilding, establishing dialogue, and providing psychological assistance to societies in countries that have gone through various types of conflicts – military, ethnic, and others. The presented MAP project is interdisciplinary, which helps to combine the achievements of various fields of knowledge – socio-humanities, psychology, art history, art therapy, and socio-cultural communications. Their integration ensures the development of an effective mechanism based on the involvement of innovative artistic methods and the interaction of various cultural and artistic practices. The studied international experience of implementing the MAP art project can be successfully used to develop concepts, programmes, and methodological recommendations adapted to the needs of Ukrainian society in times of war. The experience gained by the international scientific community in using art as an effective mechanism for providing psychological assistance and establishing dialogue and peace in society can become a crucial strategic guideline for the restoration of Ukrainian society in the context of overcoming the consequences of Russian armed aggression. In this aspect, the important social role of cultural studies as an interdisciplinary knowledge capable of providing recommendations for overcoming the aggressive challenges of modern reality by developing effective humanitarian strategies can be realised.

### Література

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