

POLICY REPORT
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Creative Expression to Heal the Ukrainian Soul

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Cover Image: Watercolor abstract painting (Anastasiia Bid / Getty Images)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ukraine faces an unprecedented mental health crisis as the ongoing full-scale war with Russia affects every segment of society. While infrastructure reconstruction dominates recovery discourse, a parallel crisis demands immediate attention: The psychological and social wounds inflicted by the conflict threaten Ukraine's long-term stability. Surveys reveal that only 10% of Ukrainians trust municipal-level authorities' wartime performance, and small communities report being unable to employ even a single psychologist.¹ This erosion of government trust, coupled with widespread trauma exposure, creates conditions for intergenerational psychological challenges that will persist without intentional intervention. Moreover, unaddressed mental health needs threaten workforce productivity, increase long-term health care costs, and impede economic recovery, highlighting the strategic importance of psychosocial investment for Ukraine's future stability.²

Policy Recommendations

1. **DEDICATE NATIONAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMS**
2. **INTEGRATE ARTS-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS INTO SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY CENTERS, AND HEALTHCARE FACILITIES**
3. **TRAIN INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS OF ARTISTS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**
4. **IMPLEMENT RIGOROUS MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS TO SCALE EFFECTIVE PRACTICES**

Introduction

Community-based healing through creative arts offers an evidence-based, culturally resonant, and stigma-reducing pathway to address collective trauma while rebuilding social cohesion. From ballet performances in bomb shelters to the Happy Wall installation in Kyiv, Ukrainians demonstrate the healing power of cultural expression.³ UNICEF's Spilno Spots provide child-friendly spaces where creative activities support emotional resilience amid displacement.⁴ International research highlights that arts interventions improve psychosocial well-being, foster inclusion, and reduce stress for forcibly displaced populations.^{5,6}

Research on Holocaust survivors and Holodomor descendants, and recent Ukrainian studies confirm that collective trauma is transmitted both psychologically and biologically across generations, with epigenetic markers observed in survivors' children.⁷ Without intervention, Ukraine risks embedding trauma into its demographic future. Creative arts – accessible, communal, and deeply tied to national identity – are uniquely positioned to interrupt this cycle.

The Crisis Beyond Physical Reconstruction

The Russian invasion has created what researchers term collective trauma: psychological injury affecting entire populations that fundamentally alters how communities perceive themselves and their environment.⁸ Trauma manifests in rising anxiety and depression, deteriorating social trust, and tensions between groups with different war experiences: combatants versus civilians, families in occupied territories versus those who fled, and parents of deployed soldiers versus families whose children remain home.

Ukraine's collective trauma carries unique characteristics that intensify its

1 Kaplan, Y. *Zasady stiykosti ta osnovni vyklyky dlya hromad pid chas vyny*. National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion, 2024. https://hromady.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NP_Analytical_Report_1-UA_revIL.pdf

2 Bandura, R., and P. Reynal. "Investing in Mental Health Will Be Critical to Ukraine's Economic Future." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. August 21, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/investing-mental-health-will-be-critical-ukraines-economic-future>

3 Associated Press. "In an Underground Bunker, Ukrainian Ballet Dancers Perform for Audiences Awaiting War's End." *AP News*. November 2, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-civilians-ballet-bunker-52ef3ff7a77bdf3825101e0a0ab025a0>

4 UNICEF. "Largest Ever Spilno Spot to Open at Kyiv Central Railway Station." 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/largest-ever-spilno-spot>

5 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcdn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf

6 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshelthlab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>

7 Frankova, I., O. Chaban, G. Petrenko, and A. Tokarchuk. "Collective Trauma in Ukraine: Realities and Prospects of the Multigenerational Legacies Research." *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice* 8, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.26766/pmgp.v8i3.442>

8 Vosnesenska, O., N. Robelot-Timtchenko, V. Marcow Speiser, and P. Speiser. "Mitigating Collective War Trauma through Expressive Arts Therapy." *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy* 11, no. 1 (2025): 184–96. <https://doi.org/10.15212/CAET/2025/11/11>

A man participates in a clay modeling workshop in Kyiv for military personnel exposed to combat-related mental trauma. The workshop, held in May 2024, is part of an art project created by the National Union of Artists of Ukraine and professional doctors. (Ruslan Kaniuka / Ukrinform / Future Publishing via Getty Images)



impact. Smartphones expose children and adults to real-time violent imagery, overwhelming cognitive processing and heightening stress responses.⁹ Betrayal by a neighboring nation undermines foundational assumptions of safety and trust, while repeated attacks on infrastructure disrupt daily rhythms and compound trauma. Critically, the war's unpredictable duration prevents closure or traditional recovery processes necessary for psychological stabilization.

Current recovery efforts understandably prioritize reconstruction of physical infrastructure. However, consultations with representatives from 17 Ukrainian regions reveal that communities identify mental health, social cohesion, and functional capacity as equally urgent concerns.¹⁰ Small communities frequently report they cannot afford to hire psychologists, while educational staff experience burnout manifesting in classroom conflict and reduced social cohesion. Social tensions emerge around draft mobilization, with perceived unfairness breeding resentment.

Creative arts provide unique advantages for addressing these challenges. They offer nonverbal processing pathways when language fails, engage communities collectively rather than isolating individuals in clinical settings, and preserve cultural identity – a key protective factor in resilience.¹¹ Artistic expression allows for creating meaning and beauty amid chaos, counteracting existential despair. International frameworks emphasize that arts and culture foster inclusion, dignity, and resilience for forcibly displaced and trauma-affected populations.^{12,13} Importantly, such practices are already happening organically across Ukraine, demonstrating cultural readiness and existing momentum that policy can amplify.

- 9 Frankova, I., O. Chaban, G. Petrenko, and A. Tokarchuk. "Collective Trauma in Ukraine: Realities and Prospects of the Multigenerational Legacies Research." *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice* 8, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.26766/pmngp.v8i3.442>.
- 10 Kaplan, Y. *Zasady stiykosti ta osnovni vyklyky dlya hromad pid chas viyny*. National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion, 2024. https://hromady.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NP_Analytical_Report_1_UA_revII.pdf.
- 11 Dieterich-Hartwell, R., and S. C. Koch. "Creative Arts Therapies as Temporary Home for Refugees: Insights from Literature and Practice." *Behavioral Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs7040069>.
- 12 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshealthlab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>.
- 13 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svcdn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

“The World Health Organization emphasizes that arts-based interventions support psychological well-being, social cohesion, and community rebuilding for forcibly displaced populations ...”

Why Creative Arts Work for Collective Trauma

Neurobiological and Psychological Mechanisms

Arts-based interventions support trauma recovery through multiple validated mechanisms. Visual arts, music, theater, and dance activate brain regions associated with emotional regulation while bypassing language-dependent areas often impaired by trauma.¹⁴ Creative expression externalizes internal feeling states, rendering them visible and manageable. Group artistic activities synchronize participants physiologically through shared rhythm and attention, restoring interpersonal connection disrupted by trauma.

Studies of transgenerational trauma highlight the urgency of early intervention. Research on Holocaust survivors identifies three post-traumatic parental adaptation styles – victim, numb, and fighter – with the victim style strongly predicting increased mental health disorders in children.¹⁵ Similarly, Holodomor survivors’ descendants exhibit inherited hypervigilance, food hoarding, and social hostility, demonstrating both psychological and biological transmission via epigenetic alterations in stress-response genes. These findings underscore the high stakes of addressing trauma promptly.

Creative Arts as “Temporary Home” and Transitional Space

Rebekka Dieterich-Hartwell and Sabine Koch¹⁶ describe creative arts therapies as functioning simultaneously as a “container” and a “bridge” for refugees and displaced persons. Ukraine’s internally displaced population of over 6 million experiences ongoing disruption to their homes and routines. Dance, music, and visual art serve as temporary sanctuaries, allowing expression of grief and fear while supporting identity continuity and emotional regulation. Cultural practices such as singing, dancing, and embroidery provide particularly resonant frameworks, connecting participants with familiar heritage and reinforcing resilience.¹⁷

The World Health Organization¹⁸ emphasizes that arts-based interventions support psychological well-being, social cohesion, and community rebuilding for forcibly displaced populations, with benefits including reduced isolation, improved coping, and strengthened cultural continuity. The “Creative Care” resource¹⁹ underscores practical approaches for artists working in humanitarian contexts, highlighting the importance of structured programs, supervision, and ethical engagement.

Ukrainian Initiatives and Community Needs

Grassroots Creativity

Despite the ongoing crisis, Ukrainian communities exhibit remarkable creative resilience. Kyiv’s Happy Wall allows residents to contribute drawings and messages of hope, transforming collective grief into public testimony of endur-

14 Vosnesenska, O., N. Robelot-Timtchenko, V. Marcow Speiser, and P. Speiser. “Mitigating Collective War Trauma through Expressive Arts Therapy.” *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy* 11, no. 1 (2025): 184–96. <https://doi.org/10.15212/CAET/2025/11/11>.

15 Frankova, I., O. Chaban, G. Petrenko, and A. Tokarchuk. “Collective Trauma in Ukraine: Realities and Prospects of the Multigenerational Legacies Research.” *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice* 8, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.26766/pmgp.v8i3.442>.

16 Dieterich-Hartwell, R., and S. C. Koch. “Creative Arts Therapies as Temporary Home for Refugees: Insights from Literature and Practice.” *Behavioral Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs7040069>.

17 Vosnesenska, O., N. Robelot-Timtchenko, V. Marcow Speiser, and P. Speiser. “Mitigating Collective War Trauma through Expressive Arts Therapy.” *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy* 11, no. 1 (2025): 184–96. <https://doi.org/10.15212/CAET/2025/11/11>.

18 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People* 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcdn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

19 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshelplab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>.



Ukrainian children created these drawings at a Gen.Ukrainian summer camp in the Lviv region in 2025. Gen.Ukrainian is a nongovernmental organization specializing in mental rehabilitation of children who have faced the horrors of war. (Oksana Parafeniuk / For The Washington Post via Getty Images)

ance.²⁰ Ballet performances in bomb shelters provide moments of transcendence, preserving cultural continuity amid existential threat.²¹ UNICEF's Spilno Spots offer child-friendly spaces with creative materials and psychological support, ensuring emotional safety even in transit during displacement.²² Street art and murals across cities memorialize fallen soldiers and assert cultural survival, converting public spaces into collective memory sites.²³

Documented Community Needs

Consultations by the National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion²⁴ highlight interconnected priorities:

- **Mental Health Crisis:** Small communities lack access to psychologists, while schools report staff burnout manifesting as classroom conflict.
- **Social Fragmentation:** Differing war experiences foster divisions that threaten long-term cohesion.
- **Communication Breakdown:** Poor connectivity between local authorities and peripheral populations limits participation in recovery planning.

Creative arts initiatives offer nonstigmatizing, accessible solutions to address these needs while preserving cultural identity and promoting collective coping mechanisms, as shown in international best practices.^{25,26,27} Supporting psychosocial recovery is therefore not only a public health imperative but also a strategic investment in Ukraine's economic stability and resilience, as highlighted in recent analyses of Ukraine's postwar rebuilding.²⁸

International Lessons: Arts-Based Interventions in Conflict Contexts

Research from countries affected by war and displacement shows that community-based creative arts interventions reduce trauma, strengthen social cohesion, and improve psychosocial well-being.²⁹

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Postwar arts programs in schools and community centers helped bridge ethnic divides, providing safe spaces for youths to process trauma while rebuilding trust between communities.³⁰
- **Rwanda:** Creative storytelling, music, and theater initiatives supported genocide survivors in expressing grief and promoting reconciliation,

20 Kyiv Informator. "На Контрактовій площі з'явилася 'Стіна щастя.'" 2024. <https://kyiv.informator.ua/uk/na-kontraktoviy-ploshchi-z-yavilasya-stina-shchastya-interaktivnu-instalyaciyu-zminyuvatimut-sami-kyiani>

21 Associated Press. "In an Underground Bunker, Ukrainian Ballet Dancers Perform for Audiences Awaiting War's End." AP News. November 2, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-civilians-ballet-bunker-52ef3ff7a77bdf3825101e0a0ab025a0>

22 UNICEF. "Largest Ever Spilno Spot to Open at Kyiv Central Railway Station." 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/largest-ever-spilno-spot>

23 Vosnesenska, O., N. Robelot-Timtchenko, V. Marcow Speiser, and P. Speiser. "Mitigating Collective War Trauma through Expressive Arts Therapy." *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy* 11, no. 1 (2025): 184–96. <https://doi.org/10.15212/CAET/2025/11/11>

24 Kaplan, Y. *Zasady stiykosti ta osnovni vykyky dlya hromad pid chas viyny*. National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion, 2024. https://hromady.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NP_Analytical_Report_1-UA_rev11.pdf

25 Bandura, R., and P. Reynal. "Investing in Mental Health Will Be Critical to Ukraine's Economic Future." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. August 21, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/investing-mental-health-will-be-critical-ukraines-economic-future>

26 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshealthlab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>

27 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf

28 Bandura, R., and P. Reynal. "Investing in Mental Health Will Be Critical to Ukraine's Economic Future." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. August 21, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/investing-mental-health-will-be-critical-ukraines-economic-future>

29 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf

30 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf

demonstrating that culturally grounded artistic expression mitigates inter-generational trauma.³¹

- **Northern Ireland:** Theater and visual arts programs engaged youth in conflict-affected neighborhoods, reducing aggressive behavior and improving social integration.³²
- **Sierra Leone:** Arts-based psychosocial interventions in communities affected by both Ebola and conflict enhanced resilience, promoted social cohesion, and reduced stigma associated with mental health services.³³

Policy Implications for Ukraine

These international examples demonstrate that culturally embedded, community-led creative arts initiatives are scalable, cost-effective, and capable of reaching marginalized populations. Ukraine can adopt similar models, tailoring interventions to local traditions, schools, community centers, and displaced population settings.

Conclusion

Evidence demonstrates that unaddressed trauma persists biologically and psychologically, creating cascading mental health crises. Simultaneously, Ukraine has remarkable advantages: Its rich cultural traditions, grassroots creativity, and international support provide a unique opportunity to embed trauma-informed, community-based healing alongside physical reconstruction.

The stakes of community-based healing extend beyond Ukraine's borders. Supporting Ukraine's psychosocial recovery is not solely a matter of humanitarian solidarity – it is a strategic investment in the stability, resilience, and security of the European Union. As Ukraine advances toward deeper cooperation and possible eventual accession, the well-being of its citizens becomes increasingly intertwined with the EU's future.

A Ukraine that is psychologically robust, socially cohesive, and culturally vibrant is less likely to experience internal fragmentation or mass displacement, both of which might impose political and economic burdens on EU member states. In the years ahead, the EU will continue to invest heavily in Ukraine's reconstruction, integration, and reform. In that context, fostering recovery, resilience, and civic capacity within Ukrainian communities aligns with the strategic interests of both Ukraine and the EU.

Already, health and mental health cooperation between the EU and Ukraine is institutionally embedded: Under the EU4Health framework, Ukraine is associated with programming covering mental health and psychosocial support, including for Ukrainians both in the country and displaced.³⁴ This institutional link provides a strong basis for scaling psychosocial arts-based interventions in alignment with broader EU health objectives.

Community-based creative arts healing is more than a national recovery tool – it is a bridge toward European integration. By planting seeds of resilience now, Ukraine and the EU together may ensure that rebuilt infrastructure supports not only buildings, roads, and energy but also thriving, healthy communities capable of sustaining democratic, stable European society.

31 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshelathlab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>.

32 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcdn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

33 Kaplan, Y. *Zasady stiykosti ta osnovni vyklyky dlya hromad pid chas vyny*. National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion, 2024. https://hromady.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NP_Analytical_Report_1_UA_rev11.pdf.

34 European Commission. "EU-Ukraine: Solidarity and Cooperation in Health." *European Commission*. 2024. https://health.ec.europa.eu/internationalcooperation/eu-ukraine-solidarity-and-cooperation-health_en.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 ESTABLISH NATIONAL FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAMS

A dedicated funding line should support competitive grants for community-led arts initiatives addressing trauma and social cohesion, with priority for conflict-affected regions, small communities, and programs serving displaced populations.³⁵ Partnerships with international donors, streamlined application processes, and fast-track funding for mobile arts programs will ensure equitable access. International examples, including programs in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Northern Ireland, show that small-scale, locally led creative arts initiatives produce measurable psychosocial benefits and increase intergroup trust.

2 INTEGRATE ARTS-BASED PSYCHOSOCIAL INTERVENTIONS INTO SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, AND COMMUNITY CENTERS

Embedding structured creative arts modules into schools, hospitals, and community centers facilitates trauma-informed support for children, families, and patients recovering from conflict-related injuries or stress. Beyond simply offering activities, these interventions aim to develop a rich creative environment in which learning, expression, and emotional recovery are intertwined. In hospital settings, where wounded civilians, combatants, and their families spend significant time, arts-based programs can transform clinical spaces into welcoming environments for psychological stabilization, reflection, and hope.

Facilitating such a creative environment involves intentionally designing spaces and curricula that encourage exploration, collaboration, and skill-building while reducing stress and promoting engagement. Interactive workshops, art corners, music and movement sessions, and storytelling circles can provide patients, children, and families with opportunities to express trauma safely, strengthen social connections, and reclaim agency in their recovery. For educators and healthcare staff, these programs offer relief from burnout by fostering collaborative, joyful learning experiences that integrate cultural practices and promote a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

UNICEF's Spilno Spot model demonstrates feasibility for scalable, family-focused programming,³⁶ and global evidence shows that arts-based interventions successfully integrate into child protection, educational, and health services to mitigate trauma in conflict-affected communities.^{37,38} Prioritizing creative, engaging environments for learning and recovery ensures that psychosocial support reaches not only children and families but also patients and staff in hospitals and other critical care settings, strengthening resilience, fostering hope, and cultivating communal healing.

3 DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR ARTISTS AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Interdisciplinary training ensures that artists are trauma-informed while mental health professionals gain skills in creative facilitation. Such collaboration optimizes scarce human resources and creates teams equipped to address collective trauma in complex, resource-limited contexts.³⁹

To maximize reach and effectiveness, task-sharing approaches can be implemented, whereby trained artists, community facilitators, and paraprofessionals work alongside psychologists and social workers to deliver structured psychosocial support. Establishing a dedicated Arts and Mental Health Task Force at the national or regional level could coordinate these efforts, deploy mobile

35 Kaplan, Y. *Zasady stiykosti ta osnovni vyklyky dlya hromad pid chas viyny*. National Platform for Resilience and Cohesion, 2024. https://hromady.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NP_Analytical_Report_1-UA_revII_.pdf.

36 UNICEF. "Largest Ever Spilno Spot to Open at Kyiv Central Railway Station." 2024. <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/largest-ever-spilno-spot>.

37 Bandura, R., and P. Reynal. "Investing in Mental Health Will Be Critical to Ukraine's Economic Future." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. August 21, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/investing-mental-health-will-be-critical-ukraines-economic-future>.

38 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People*. 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

39 Dieterich-Hartwell, R., and S. C. Koch. "Creative Arts Therapies as Temporary Home for Refugees: Insights from Literature and Practice." *Behavioral Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs7040069>.

4 MONITOR, EVALUATE, AND SCALE IMPACT

creative therapy units, and prioritize underserved or high-risk communities.

Beyond direct care, these collaborative teams can develop community-driven social engagement projects such as collective murals, public performances, intergenerational storytelling initiatives, or neighborhood arts festivals. These projects provide both psychosocial support and opportunities for community members to actively rebuild social cohesion, strengthen local networks, and participate in public life. Integrating social engagement into arts-based interventions reinforces cultural identity, promotes civic participation, and addresses isolation and fragmentation caused by conflict.

WHO guidance and the Creative Care resource emphasize that structured training, supervision, and ethical practice are essential for scaling arts-based interventions safely and effectively, especially in conflict-affected settings.^{40,41} By institutionalizing task-sharing, coordinated deployment, and community-focused social engagement projects, Ukraine can expand psychosocial coverage, reduce practitioner burnout, and foster resilient, connected communities capable of sustaining long-term recovery.

Standardized assessment tools, longitudinal tracking of psychological and social outcomes, and qualitative evaluations allow evidence-based scaling of successful programs.⁴² Integration of Ukrainian cultural practices ensures interventions are contextually relevant, while continuous monitoring informs future policy adjustments and resource allocation. International monitoring frameworks demonstrate that combining quantitative and qualitative data strengthens policy advocacy and program adaptation.⁴³

Implementation Considerations

- **Funding and Sustainability:** Investment in psychosocial interventions is modest relative to infrastructure spending yet provides exponential returns in prevented intergenerational mental health costs. Public-private partnerships and international funding can supplement government budgets.
- **Security and Adaptation:** Activities must account for conflict-zone conditions, including mobile formats, remote programming, and shelter-based arts interventions. Programs should prioritize psychological safety alongside physical protection.
- **Cultural Acceptance and Community Ownership:** Messaging must emphasize evidence-based benefits while linking interventions to Ukrainian traditions. Local capacity building ensures sustainability and encourages community-driven program development.
- **Coordination Across Sectors:** Interministerial working groups with civil society representation can prevent duplication, facilitate shared learning, and align national policy with grassroots initiatives.
- **Addressing Obstacles:** Gender-specific programming, linguistic inclusivity, and practitioner support networks mitigate barriers to participation and reduce vicarious trauma among professionals.^{44,45}

40 Jameel Arts & Health Lab. *Creative Care: A Resource for Artists Working in Humanitarian Contexts*. 2023. <https://www.jameelartshelathlab.org/research/research-projects/creative-care-a-resource-for-artists-working-in-humanitarian-contexts>.

41 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People* 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

42 Frankova, I., O. Chaban, G. Petrenko, and A. Tokarchuk. "Collective Trauma in Ukraine: Realities and Prospects of the Multigenerational Legacies Research." *Psychosomatic Medicine and General Practice* 8, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.26766/pmpg.v8i3.442>.

43 World Health Organization (WHO). *Arts and Health: Supporting the Mental Well-Being of Forcibly Displaced People* 2022. https://crooked-antechinus.files.svdcn.com/production/images/who_arts-and-health-forcibly-displaced-people-final.pdf.

44 Dieterich-Hartwell, R., and S. C. Koch. "Creative Arts Therapies as Temporary Home for Refugees: Insights from Literature and Practice." *Behavioral Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2017): 69. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs7040069>.

45 Vosnesenska, O., N. Robelot-Timtchenko, V. Marcow Speiser, and P. Speiser. "Mitigating Collective War Trauma through Expressive Arts Therapy." *Creative Arts in Education and Therapy* 11, no. 1 (2025): 184–96. <https://doi.org/10.15212/CAET/2025/11/11>.

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