



## 2023 Periodic Activity Report Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine May - June 2023

### Summary

In May-June 2023, the Ukrainian Intercultural Cities dedicated their efforts to the implementation of the projects generously supported by the Intercultural City of Stavanger (Norway). The key common priority of these projects was to effectively address the challenges faced by cities' populations, which have been steadily growing more diverse due to the continuous internal displacement.

The members of the Ukrainian Network and the national coordinator held an ad-hoc meeting on 12 June following the breach of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine that unfolded into a profound humanitarian and environmental disaster. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the network members promptly mobilized their resources to provide essential assistance to the affected communities.

At the end of June 2023, the national ICCUA coordinator participated in the Brussels Urban Summit 2023 #BUS2023 delivering a compelling presentation on intercultural innovation in Ukrainian ICC cities and showcasing their resilience and mutual support during current challenging times.

*The opinions expressed in this document are the responsibility of the author Dr. Kseniya Rubicondo, Coordinator of the Intercultural Cities Network of Ukraine and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe. This document is published as it was submitted to the secretariat.*

## Network coordination and activities

During this period, a number of projects were successfully implemented with the financial support of the ICC city of Stavanger, Norway, and under the methodological guidance of the ICCUA national coordinator.

### Easter Together

Project “Easter Together” (ICC Lutsk) was implemented by the Lutsk City Council in collaboration with Lutsk Art School and the NGO "New Level". A series of art installations were created by local and IDP youth around three key themes and presented in open space of the city popularizing cultural heritage of the national minorities and IDPs residing in the city. The collective creative work of children and youth in Lutsk, with the assistance of instructors from Lutsk Art School, embodied the dreams of all Ukrainians for a happy and peaceful life in a flourishing Ukraine.

- "And Ukraine will blossom!..."

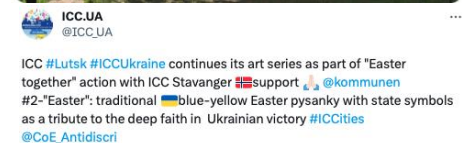
The creative concept of this theme was based on the "Tree of Life" with a sturdy crown in the shape of a map of Ukraine, symbolizing unity, resilience, and the country's future rebirth and prosperity. The miraculous birds soaring into the sky pay a tribute to those who have passed away while defending their country and freedom.

- Easter Installation

The Easter composition contained objects in yellow and blue, depicting the national symbols of Ukraine. It showcased the profound belief of young Ukrainians in the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil. The adorned towels in traditional ornamentation are spiritual symbols of the Ukraine.

- "Christ's Risen, Ukraine Rises!"

The main element of this composition was decorative birds symbolizing the radiant Resurrection of Christ, heralding the arrival of spring and the beginning of new life, restoration, and blossoming of Ukraine.



## Places of Goodness and Care

"Places of Goodness and Care" (ICC Pavlohrad) is an ongoing city-wide project aimed at engaging youth and children, including minorities and internally displaced persons. This initiative is led by the city's librarians and encompasses a diverse range of activities, such as art therapy [games](#), [workshops](#), educational courses, musical explorations, thematic readings, and more.

For example, on May 15, the Intercultural City of Pavlograd, Ukraine, demonstrated their unwavering spirit and commitment to promoting unity and peace despite facing a recent military attack by the aggressor country. In support of their diverse community members, including internally displaced children and youth, a notable event titled "Treasures of My Family" was organized as part of the city's library initiative dedicated to International Family Day. This event served as a testament to their resilience and determination to create a harmonious environment amidst challenging circumstances. Participants, including children and youth, embarked on a meaningful quest to explore and embrace true family values, such as kindness, sensitivity, trust, reliability, care, and mutual support. Various contests and games were designed to nurture these qualities, with the assistance of a playful teddy bear. Dances, riddles, outdoor games, and competitions created a joyful and friendly atmosphere throughout the event, all while underscoring the paramount importance of cherishing and upholding family and human values.



## Social Theater

The initiative implemented by ICC Vinnytsia addressed social issues, psychological and physical challenges faced by internally displaced individuals of different age groups. The goal was to explore the perceptions and experiences the displaced from various minority ethnic populations. Theater, as a form of art that emphasizes social interactions, was deemed particularly suitable for this purpose. It included three training sessions that used artistic interventions activities to foster interpersonal connections, enhance group cohesion, and promote tolerance. The trainings aimed to provide a safe space for all participants to engage in the creative process and discuss and find solutions to the socio-economic problems they were facing.

This approach created opportunities for dialogue, critical reflection on social realities,





and the active search for grassroots solutions to interactive form of theater, participation in the individuals to rehearse actions and explore different possibilities within the safe environment of the theater, which could later be applied to real-life situations.

social problems. As an project allowed

## Interculturalism in Practice: Life Stories on Campus

The ICC Sumy organized an event titled "Life Stories on Campus", specifically targeting foreign students who have returned to Sumy after being evacuated due to the war in Ukraine. The main objective of this initiative was to re-establish communication between the city and the foreign university students, addressing important issues related to their education and living conditions, while also fostering an open dialogue between faculty members and the students, thereby promoting intercultural communication.

This event also provided an opportunity for the ICC Sumy to apply the intercultural competence skills and methodologies gained through its participation in the 2020 ICC Competence project "[Introducing and Engaging Diversity Globally](#)", supported via an inter-city international grant by the Intercultural Cities Programme of the Council of Europe. The participants were divided into two groups and engaged in a 'story circles' training format. Each participant shared their personal experiences of student life following the onset of military aggression in Ukraine, including their feelings upon returning to the Sumy university campus, their adaptation to the current circumstances, and the assistance they need from the university and the city.

The City of Sumy places great importance to intercultural connections, and the "Life Stories on Campus" event aimed to further enhance these connections. Additionally, these meetings are of significant value for the local residents, as the presence of international students in the city serves as a notable psychological factor that strengthens feelings of support and unity among nations, reinforcing belief in the reconstruction of the country and the attainment of a peaceful future.



@ICC.Sumy #ICCUkraine hosts ICC meeting with international students returning to Sumy after Mar'22 evacuation. "Campus Life Stories" are told today by the students who want to restore their life in Sumy in spite of martial law & keep ICC dialogue going #ICCcities @CoE\_Antidiscri



## Assistance to Kherson region

The breach of the Kakhovka Dam in Ukraine on 6 June 2023 unfolded into a profound humanitarian and environmental disaster, causing extensive flooding along the lower Dnipro in Kherson Region. The urgency of the situation called for action. The members of the Ukrainian Network and the national coordinator held an ad-hoc meeting on 12 June dedicated to this pressing issue. Recognizing the gravity of the situation and understanding the need for collective action and support, the network members promptly mobilized their resources to provide essential assistance to the affected communities in whatever way possible.

## Sumy

From the day of the disaster onwards, the ICC Sumy maintained close communication with the affected region. In response to their request, essential equipment, including a powerful motor pump, was provided for water drainage. Additionally, 650 liters of drinking water were promptly dispatched to the affected area. The Sumy community demonstrated its readiness to offer assistance and support by providing accommodations for individuals who wished to relocate. Many of these individuals had fled perilous circumstances, leaving behind their homes, possessions, and, tragically, even loved ones. The unwavering solidarity between Sumy and the Kakhovka region persisted, as evidenced by the Sumy City Council's decision to allocate a portion of its employees' salaries to aid the residents of Kakhovka.



## Pavlohrad

ICC Pavlohrad, a community of 103,000 residents, has actively engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to their affected neighbors in Kakhovka as well as in welcoming up to 300 individuals arriving from the region. The city also sent humanitarian aid to support those in need in Kherson, including two truckloads of supplies dispatched by the Municipal Institution "Center for Social and Psychological Assistance of Pavlohrad." Additionally, the residents of Pavlohrad took the initiative to independently send aid through the free delivery service in Ukraine provided by "Nova Poshta" These collective efforts reflect the strong commitment of the community in Pavlohrad to support and assist their fellow citizens facing challenging circumstances.

## Vinnytsia

In ICC Vinnytsia, preparations were made to accommodate more than 4,000 people from the flood-affected areas in Kherson. Representatives of national communities in the city, as well as international students from Vinnytsia National Medical University have actively contributed to the humanitarian relief efforts. The students approached the city with a request to assist in transporting supplies and food to the affected areas. As a result, additional vehicles were dispatched by the city to transport the donations collected by the students. Additionally, the establishment of the "Kherson is Ukraine" Center has been initiated in Vinnytsia to provide further support and resources to those affected. The city's collaborative efforts, including the involvement of national communities and international students, highlight the importance of unity and support in times of crisis. Vinnytsia remains committed to providing a safe haven and essential aid to those affected by the war and the ecological disaster caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam and power station.

## Melitopol

The ICC Melitopol played an active role in providing assistance to the Kakhovka region during this challenging period. Mayor Ivan Fedorov emphasized the city's commitment to extending immediate aid to the affected areas and to overcome the related challenges together. Humanitarian cargoes were promptly delivered to the region in cooperation with organizations such as the Melita NGO, the Support Melitopol Charitable Foundation, the Unbreakable Zaporizhzhia Charitable Foundation, and the US charitable fund Chalice of Mercy Inc. A boat and motor pumps were provided for emergency evacuations from the flooded areas. Water, food supplies, hygiene products, clothing, and gas burners were also distributed to residents who had been relocated to safe zones.

## Odesa

ICC Odesa swiftly mobilized to provide assistance to the residents affected by the breach of the dam at the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Station. It promptly dispatched trucks carrying drinking water to the Novooleksandrivska community in the Kherson region, where the issue of water supply was the most pressing. Crews equipped with water pumps to help with the drainage were also sent to the region. Furthermore, the Odesa territorial defence brigade sent a high-performance KrAZ truck. This vehicle's primary purpose is to transport personnel and cargo in any weather conditions can also serve as a towing vehicle. Additionally, city procured 30 boats for rescuing people and mitigating the consequences of flooding. Alongside these, 80 rescue vests were provided. "We will continue working diligently, moving closer to our shared victory," said Odesa mayor.



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## #BUS2023

In addition, at the end of June, the national ICCUA coordinator actively participated in the Brussels Urban Summit 2023 #BUS2023, where she delivered a compelling presentation on intercultural innovation in Ukrainian ICC cities. Highlighting the resilience of these cities during challenging times, the coordinator showcased how their communities have effectively embraced interculturality amidst one of the most difficult periods in Ukraine's history. The intercultural bonds within their diverse populations have fostered a culture of mutual care and support, allowing them to navigate the harsh realities of war and demonstrate remarkable innovation. This insightful contribution at the summit emphasized the vital role played by intercultural values and social bonds in promoting resilience and mutual support within Ukrainian ICC Network.



## Communication

Throughout the designated reporting period, the ICCUA network diligently maintained its visibility and media engagement by consistently disseminating pertinent news and updates. This was accomplished through various channels such as newsletters, websites, and social media platforms. Additionally, ICCUA member-cities' official webpages and the official ICCUA social media accounts were utilized, ensuring conformity with the ICC Programme's standardized branding and adhering to the guidance provided by the ICC team Strasbourg. This report includes some examples of these posts alongside with the descriptions of key activities of the network.

## Next steps

Despite the difficulties of long-term planning during times of war, the Ukrainian network is determined to plan for the future and take proactive next steps towards achieving its goals. The Ukrainian ICC cities persist in their steadfast commitment to advancing intercultural understanding and integration within their increasingly diverse communities. Their initiatives prioritize the unique needs and aspirations of not only the cities' native inhabitants but also internally displaced persons (IDPs) and representatives of national minorities. In view of this, the network members are resolute in their dedication to fostering collaborative partnerships with international ICC cities-members as well as non-ICC counterparts. With a focus on realizing their envisioned projects for the current year, the network remains poised to capitalize on these alliances and drive meaningful progress in intercultural development and social cohesion.