



Humanitas Commission

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Since our commission is so young, I would like to start the report with a reminder about our vision, mission, and the work lines we proposed.

Vision

We understand “Humanitas” as love and respect for the diversity of humanity and its expression through puppetry arts.

Mission

- We support freedom of expression and mutual respect between peoples and cultures of the world.
- We believe that it is important for puppetry artists to be informed about the circumstances of artists in other countries, cultures, nations.
- Our goal is to help and protect puppetry artists by providing moral support and by raising public awareness about the puppeteers being in threatening situations
- We support and promote the work of puppetry artists striving to broker peace, cross-cultural exchanges and human rights.
- We will assemble and disseminate information regarding conflict situations and legislative crises affecting puppetry artists. We will bring special attention to puppetry artists who find themselves unable to perform due to circumstances which reduce their human rights and freedom.
- The Humanitas commission will also work to protect “the puppet” as an object of art, when precious puppetry collections are under threat due to economic or political situations. Our objective is to raise awareness about the cultural value and heritage they represent and about the importance of protecting free expression.



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Approach

Our approach towards meeting these objectives is consultative.

We aim to work in close collaboration with puppetry artists from the affected regions.

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Aim:

People reacted really emphatically about the FB page and immediately they wrote us about their own problems and situations (for example: from Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Afghanistan). This made us acknowledge that there is a lot of need everywhere and that the help we can provide to reach the people is limited.

This is why we think that we should find a procedure regarding how we can show these problems to others and how we can help puppeteers in need.

Activity of the commission during the interval 2021 – 2022

The Humanitas Commission has been working to contact and assist puppeteers in two main crisis regions, Afghanistan and Ukraine. Our commission has been collaborating with the Cooperation commission collecting and sharing information and consulting on different issues.

1. Afghanistan

Helping puppeteers who have been in a situation of economic and freedom of expression crisis has been very difficult. Our liaison has been Karim Asir, who managed to leave the country together with his family and is now in Germany where he is involved in the making of a film. Karim gave us a list of names without specifying if they are puppeteers, where they are and what is their situation. Contact with puppeteers in Afghanistan has been difficult and we lack information about them. At this point we are waiting for Karim who promised to get in touch with his contacts as soon as he finishes filming.

2. Ukraine

Russia attacked Ukraine on February 25, 2022. Humanitas Committee Facebook page launched on March 4, 2022 with the help of József Gyócsi, who has been the administrator of the page since (<https://www.facebook.com/Humanitas-103290918978686>). Two weeks later we had more than 200 followers and was shared by thousands of people.

Humanitas Committee Facebook posts have reached thousands of people with targeted information for refugees and advertisements. Advertisements were paid for by our committee colleague (József), this was his own donation.

From March 4, 2022, the Humanitas Committee has been in permanent contact with Ukrainian puppeteers and other Ukrainian artists during the following months.

We received lists of people from Terence Tan and Daria Ivanova. We started looking for Ukrainian artists by name on these lists. In 1 day, on 2022.03.05 we reached more than 50 artists on Facebook. (We had a little difficulty, because the FB accounts were closed in many situations). We could communicate not only via Messenger, but via Telegram as well.



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The war in Ukraine provoked a deep humanitarian crisis. Our puppetry colleagues are struggling with many problems and we have been assisting them in different ways.

- Together with the Cooperation commission we created a list of puppeteers who are members of UNIMA and tried to contact them and learn about their situation.
- We created several lines of communication via Messenger, Telegram, and Facebook pages.
- Our main partners in Ukraine have been Daria Ivanova and Mikhail Uritskyi, but not they are not the only ones.
- The Cooperation commission initiated a crowd funding page “UNIMA free of strings fund” which raised over 6000 dollars. The money raised has been allocated to Ukrainian puppeteers, assisting them in many situations such as providing food and medicine. A new fundraiser is being developed to meet increasing needs of artists. We hope you will continue to support.
- Our commission created the Facebook page [Humanitas](#) which updates daily information for Ukrainian refugees provided by our friends in HUNGARY, ROMANIA, POLAND, SLOVAKIA, LITHUANIA, SLOVENIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, GERMANY, AUSTRIA, MOLDOVA, SWITZERLAND, DENMARK, ITALY. The information offers important data on free transportation for refugees to different European countries, where to find lodging, food, interpreters, medical assistance, and legal help. For this work we collaborated with puppeteers from the countries we mentioned above.
- We also publicized the names of the schools which opened their puppetry programs to Ukrainian students in puppetry. We listed the necessary contacts and we are trying to help our Ukrainian colleagues get in contact with different puppet festivals.
- At the same time, we kept in touch with our Russian colleagues who are in a difficult situation too.

The work takes engagement and time. Sometimes we get situations which need urgent action, urgent help, urgent money. Sometimes we had to act before getting the response of our general secretariat office. This created bad feelings and we are very sorry for that, but we didn't know to do better in emergency at that time.

Our activity hasn't ended here. It just started. It takes a lot of time, heart, and, work. Many hours of work every day.

These are the main points of our activity as the UNIMA Humanitas commission.

Thank you,
Kata Csató , February 2023