

International House London

Nikita Burzanitsa

Nurturing peace through music for war-affected children in Donetsk, Ukraine
Ukraine

Background

Children's wellbeing and development in Donetsk have been severely disrupted since May 2014, when a civil war broke out in the east of Ukraine. This Donbas war is a very complex conflict based on territory, one that grapples with history and geography. Children have carried the brunt of the war as they have psychologically suffered from post-traumatic stress and trauma that occur in these contexts. UNICEF estimates that 430,000 children live with psychological trauma as a result of the prolonged conflict in the region (2019). This demographic is the most vulnerable part of society as they cope with the difficult world they find themselves in with very limited resources. The lack of external international aid meant that they have been left with no other outlet to cope with the effect of war on their lives. My proposal aims to address this problem by nurturing musical creativity in children to improve their wellbeing. It would contribute to bringing peace in the lives of musically talented children who have been disadvantaged by war in Donetsk. I hope to use my background in music and piano in this project to help develop their neglected talents and aspirations.

Music schools across the region have either closed or are facing difficulties with their limited capacity to provide quality education to their students. To address this, my proposed project with the gifted children music school in Donetsk aims to host various activities in order to help children creatively cope with the external effect of war on their childhood and wellbeing. The specialised music school for gifted children supports and trains young talented musicians in Donetsk. Until 2014, the school has performed exceptionally well, confirmed by its highly qualified graduates who went on to study abroad in the best music schools globally. After 2017 its work resumed again, but with many challenges. Some of the material base of the school had deteriorated, and its equipment was heavily damaged. The school has since then renovated its building, but with the lack of resources it has struggled to keep up with the same standard of education it used to have and as a result a lot of these pupils quit.

As a former graduate of this school who went on to pursue music later in life, I have a great appreciation and understanding of this institution's capacity to build genuine connections with its students. Having personally grown up in the events that led up to the civil war in my country, I am deeply connected to the mission of music in cultivating peace in the world. I would therefore like to collaborate with the director of the school on an initiative that aims to support these young pupils who have been gravely affected by the war and its impact on their musical talent. I therefore request a Davis Projects for Peace grant in order to start an initiative in Donetsk that aims to address this challenge by connecting children creatively with music. This would take place in the summer of 2022. The project funds would go towards covering the costs of the proposed music activities such as masterclasses and concert events, in addition to helping the school with acquiring needed music equipment. It would cultivate peace by helping musically talented children pursue music in a place that has unjustly deprived them of creative development.

Project Activities

The music school's education and infrastructure have been heavily affected by the ongoing events in Donetsk. To facilitate peace through music, this project aims to develop the talents of the school's pupils. The proposed activities are centered around hosting a variety of musical events, concerts and workshops in the school. Running in the summer of 2022, the activities would firstly include hosting masterclasses with talented professors of the Donetsk Conservatory. By organising this, talented

children would be offered an opportunity to develop their professional skills, as the teachers can offer useful advice and fun workshops to engage them. These masterclasses would be mainly for piano players but we would also include other instruments based on availability. This would be a significant feat as masterclass events in the school are rare and do not cater to children, and their talent has been neglected. The grant would cover the cost of some instruments that will be used for the events. This would be very important to help children access activities they otherwise would not be able to.

Additionally, the grant would enable me to organise a concert in the philharmonic hall and invite the children of the school to participate in it. It would give them a practical way to apply the masterclass techniques that they would have learned. This would give them an exceptional experience in solo performing, and would be an exciting event for them to take part in because such events have been seriously lacking in the past few years. The final event of the project would be hosting a concert with an orchestra in the philharmonic halls in which I will play to dedicate music for children's experiences of war, where they would have a banquet afterwards. Both of these concerts are events that would nurture a sense of peace for these talented pupils and provide much needed attention and energy towards their passion for music. The grant would therefore cover the cost of renting the hall and running the events.

Project Goals and Indicators of Success

The main goal of this project is to provide children with resources and opportunities to develop their musical talent in order to help them cope with some of the effects of conflict on their childhood. The grant will additionally provide the school with instruments that will help future generations in their music development.

Some of the short term indicators of success would therefore be having a positive impact on young music pupils in their school that would help them deal creatively with the harsh everyday reality they face. This would be measured by participation with enthusiasm in masterclasses and performances, in addition to successful learning practically from talented musicians. The longer term success indicators of the project would be that these pupils would develop their talents and pursue their passion to an excellent standard despite the circumstances in which they find themselves. This would help them pursue a future music career, develop the music scene in Donetsk as a whole, and provide an outlet of comfort and encouragement for other children. Additionally, the music school would be able to materially facilitate more lessons for its pupils by providing them with some instruments.

This initiative would be an effective way to aid children's development by creative means. Doing so, it will directly contribute to peace facilitation in Donetsk for the most vulnerable part of society, a much needed humanitarian action.

References:

UNICEF. 2019. '430,000 Children Continue to Bear the Brunt of Eastern Ukraine Conflict'. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/430000-children-continue-bear-brunt-eastern-ukraine-conflict>. Accessed January 10 2022.

Name: Nikita Burzanitsa
Project Name: Nurturing peace through music for war-affected children in Donetsk, Ukraine
School: International House London

Note: all funds in US dollars.

Projects for Peace grant: \$ 10,000.00
 Additional Funding, if any:
Total funding available: \$ 10,000.00

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:
 \$ -

TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
 \$ 10,000.00

Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
500	200	50	100	50	60	4800	2000	2140	100
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 500.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,140.00	\$ 100.00

Total Student Expenses: \$ 900.00

Total Project Expenses: \$ 9,100.00

Artema street 44
83-102
Special Music School for Gifted Children
drsmusicschool@gmail.com
0713941241

Confirmation Letter

To whom it may concern,

I can kindly confirm that our team of Special Music School for Gifted Children would be very delighted and honored to cooperate with Nikita and help him with his Davis Peace project.

Our school would be very thankful for Nikita's help and this special grant as we are underresourced and always want to expand our mission for much needed peace initiatives such as this one.

Elena Knisheva

Director of Special Music School for Gifted Children

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'E. Knisheva', is written over the typed name and title.

Nikita Burzanitsa

229 Great Portland Street, London, UK | W1W 5PN | +447366415282 | nikita.burzanitsa@gmail.com

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Bachelor of Music in Royal College of Music, London

Sep 2018 – Jun 2022

- Grade: First Class Honours (1:1 expected)
- Relevant modules: Historical Studies; Aural skills; Musicianship; Harpsichord and Pianoforte studies; Chamber Music; Innovations in Performance style; Writing about Music; Sound Recording and Production L6.
- **Awards:**
 - Double Scholarship which includes the Milstein Medal Award Holder supported by International Students House at the Royal College of Music;
 - Winner of Kendall Taylor Beethoven Piano Competition (London, UK);
 - Second prize, "Hopkinson Gold Medal and Cyril Smith Prize" and winner of the "Esther Fisher Prize" for the "Best Undergraduate Performance" of the Chapell Medal Piano Competition;
 - Winner of Sevenoaks Young Musician of the Year;
 - First prize of 3rd "László Spezzaferri" International Music Competition;
 - First prize and Special prize of Moscow International Music Competition.

Sep 2017 – Jun 2022

Rostov State Conservatory

- Grade: Specialist in Music with Honours.
- Awards: The best student pianist of the 2019-2020 years.

Master of Music in Royal College of Music

Sep 2022 – Jun 2024

- Grade: First Class Honours (1:1 expected)
- Relevant modules: Chamber Music L7.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Donetsk State Conservatory

Sep 2019 – Aug 2021

- Visiting teacher at Donetsk State Conservatory
- Worked on technical difficulties with students and helped to solve problems with playing on the stage.
- **Russian Spring**
 - Invited world famous musicians from Russia to perform at our Conservatory and Philharmonic Hall.
 - Was a participant of the project in 2019 and in 2020 was a music advisor of "Russian Spring"

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Talent Unlimited Trust (London)

Oct 2021 – Current

Was invited to be a part of the trust which supports young talented musicians around the UK.

Piano Charitable Trust (London, Rome, Paris)

Dec 2021 – Current

Was awarded to be a scholar of the Trust which helps famous pianists around the whole world to have concerts. First concert will be played at "Steinway Hall" in London in 2022.

International Students House (London)

Sep 2018 – Jul 2022

Was awarded to be a scholar of International Students House while doing the Bachelor in Music.

LANGUAGES: English: Fluent, Russian: Native, Ukrainian: Native

SKILLS: Technical: Microsoft Office, Sibelius, Logic Pro.