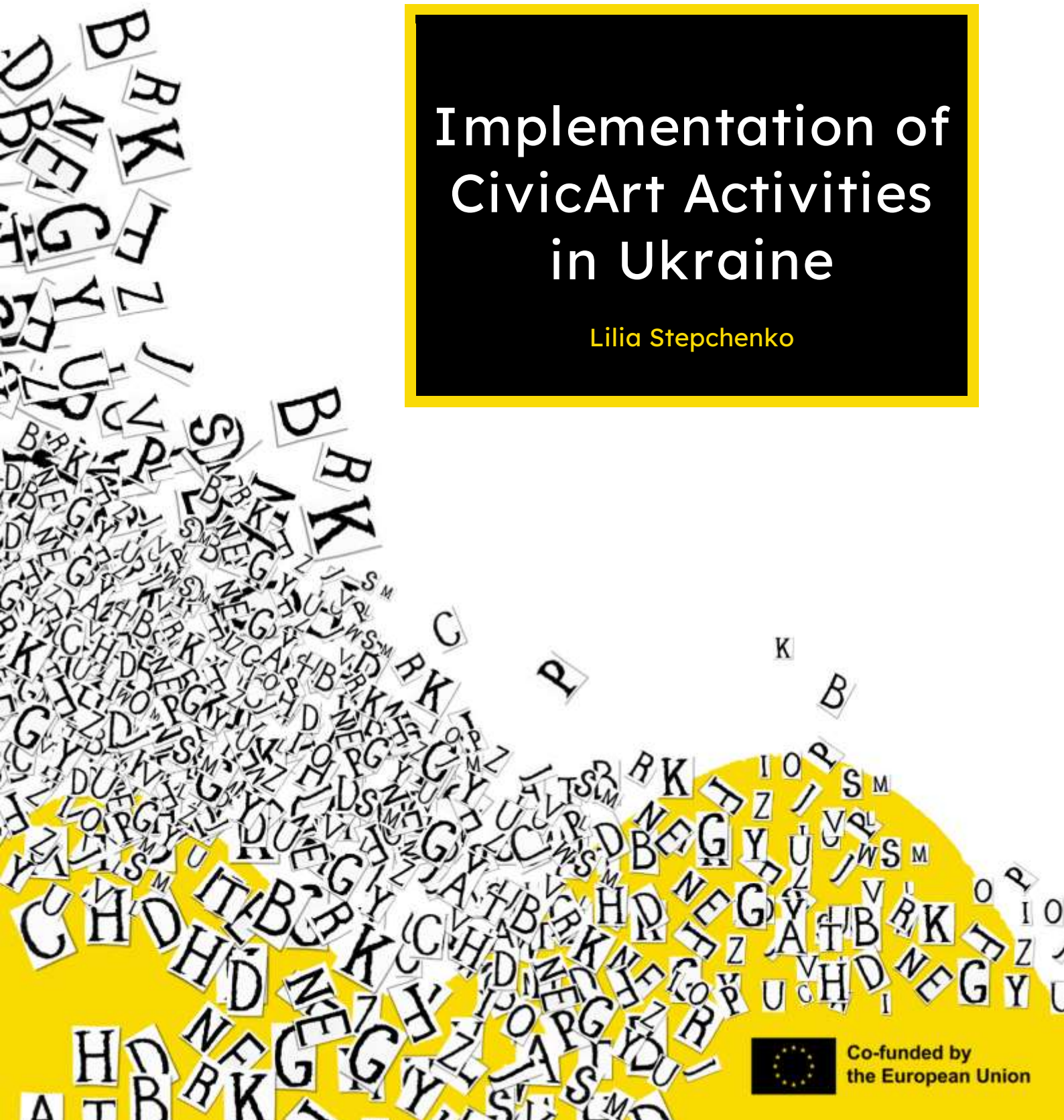
Implementation of CivicArt Activities in Ukraine

Lilia Stepchenko



Co-funded by the European Union

The document has been prepared within the framework of the Erasmus+ Project CivicArt: Capacity-Building for Art-Based Civic Education (101184018 — CivicArt — ERASMUS-YOUTH-2024-CB)

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Project Consortium:

- *Resonance Foundation (Ukraine)*
- *Gergart (Georgia)*
- *KulturNest E.V. (Germany)*
- *Asociacion International initiatives for cooperation Letur (Spain)*

Design: Dagna Gmitrowicz

This document contains information, which is proprietary to the CivicArt Consortium. Neither this document nor the information contained herein shall be used, duplicated or communicated by any means to any third party, in whole or in parts, except with prior written consent of the CivicArt Coordinator.

The information in this document is provided as is and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any particular purpose. The user thereof uses the information at its sole risk and liability.

My involvement in the CivicArt project started with participation in an international training course in Alicante, Spain, focused on using art as a tool for civic education, youth participation and social change. The training provided practical approaches to integrating artivism and creative methods into non-formal education. In particular, I explored how contemporary art, street art, collage and other creative practices can be used to create spaces where young people can express their opinions, discuss social issues and become more actively involved in their communities. Another important part of the training was learning how to adapt European approaches to art-based civic education to local contexts.

After returning to Ukraine, I immediately started testing and adapting these methods in my work with young people. Two offline collage workshops on the theme “Togetherness / Unity” were organised for students from two partner educational institutions. The participants worked with local newspapers and magazines, cutting out and combining visual materials, reinterpreting them and adding elements to each other's works. The central question of the workshops was where participants could see unity in their own communities.

Although the activity was based on a simple creative technique, it encouraged participants to discuss more complex issues, including mutual support, relationships with people around them, shared experiences and challenges that bring communities together. The workshops demonstrated how an artistic format can create an accessible space for dialogue and self-expression, allowing young people to communicate ideas that may be more difficult to express through conventional discussion.

Reels: https://www.instagram.com/p/DVaefXbiIJo/

Post in Insta: https://www.instagram.com/p/DXV9WAWiHAa/?img_index=1

Another activity was organised for young people from Brovary Lyceum No. 7, who visited Bila Tserkva as part of our cooperation with the partner institution. Instead of providing a conventional city tour, we used the CivicArt approach to encourage participants to explore the city as a source of civic messages and stories.

The participants worked in groups and explored different aspects of the urban environment. One group focused on murals, street art and visual messages in public spaces. Another explored trees, green spaces and the relationship between people and nature. The third group explored bookstores as places where civic ideas and social perspectives can be communicated, discovering contemporary Ukrainian authors and their stories. After the exploration, the groups came together to share their observations and interpretations.

The activity encouraged participants to look at a familiar urban environment from a different perspective and to recognise that learning and civic expression can take place not only in formal educational settings, but also in streets, public spaces, books, nature and everyday interactions. The visit also included an introduction to

the work of Association Kebetas, youth opportunities and the role of non-formal education in supporting young people's engagement.

Reels: https://www.instagram.com/p/DaVAlyDI2l-/

Insta Post: https://www.instagram.com/p/DaiS9VCCO_T/?img_index=1

In addition to the offline activities, I was invited to deliver two online workshops on CivicArt. For these sessions, I adapted the same community exploration methodology to an online environment. The workshops began with an introduction to CivicArt and a discussion of where participants encounter art and public visual messages in their own cities and communities.

The sessions then explored the relationship between art, protest and social change, as well as the question of when artistic expression can become civic art. Participants discussed examples of socially engaged and participatory art and reflected on how creative practices can communicate social issues, give visibility to different voices and encourage people to think and act.

The main practical activity was organised as “Digital CivicArt Researchers.” Participants were divided into three groups and asked to investigate their communities through different perspectives: walls and street messages, civic voices represented through bookstores and literature, and nature, trees and people's relationship with their environment. Each group collected visual materials and observations, identified civic or social messages and prepared creative outputs to share with the others.

The workshops concluded with a reflection session where participants discussed what they had learned, what they had discovered and what they would like to explore further.

Overall, these activities allowed me to transfer the knowledge and methods gained through the international training into practical youth work in Ukraine. The approaches were tested in both offline and online formats and adapted to different groups and contexts. Through these activities, CivicArt became not only a topic explored during international mobility, but a practical methodology for youth participation, dialogue, community exploration and civic expression.

Presentation #1 https://canva.link/rnuqmk6fwzgqbc4

Presentation #2 https://canva.link/3jut9x47k0uyqpb

RESONANCE
REGIONAL CHARITY FOUNDATIO

Gerg rt

KULTUR NEST e.V.

IICL

Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them

