

# Jameel Arts & Health Lab in collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe convenes “Healing Arts in Times of War” Roundtable at UK Parliament

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**London, UK** — The [Jameel Arts & Health Lab](#) and WHO Regional Office for Europe joined John Slinger MP to convene a high-level roundtable at the House of Commons on the theme of “Healing Arts in Times of War.” The session – which was co-organised by King’s College London, and Ukrainian NGOs, Art Therapy Force, Unbroken and Cultural Forces - examined the arts as a vital, scalable tool for veteran recovery and civilian resilience and children’s trauma in conflict zones, highlighting emerging evidence and frontline case studies in Ukraine.

The roundtable aligns with the APPG on Creative Health’s 2026 mandate to embed arts-based interventions within the UK Government’s 10-Year Health Plan and supports the £50 million VALOUR programme for holistic veteran mental health.

It signals the start of *Healing Arts Ukraine*, a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of the significant contribution made by arts and health practitioners and organisations to support resilience and recovery across the country. Healing Arts Ukraine is part of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab’s global outreach campaign in collaboration with the World Health Organization and is supported by European Union funding as part of a programme implemented by WHO Europe looking to improve resilience in its Eastern Partnership countries.

As of early 2026, 239 million people worldwide require urgent humanitarian assistance. In Ukraine, 2025 saw a 20% increase in attacks on healthcare infrastructure, the arts have emerged as a “forgotten pillar of health,” providing low-cost psychological support where traditional medical facilities are inaccessible.

While 93% of the Ukrainian population reports symptoms of PTSD or stress, only 25% of those seeking help have successfully accessed it. The roundtable focused on bridging this gap through frontline case studies from practitioners including Iryna Holubetska (Unbroken), Ostap Ukrainets (Cultural Forces), and Veronika Skliarova (Art Therapy Force).

Academic evidence was presented by Dr. Henry Redwood (King’s College London) and Dr. Angela Kennedy, alongside reflections from UK war artist David Cotterrell. Chaired by John Slinger MP, Christopher Bailey (UCL), and Stephen Stapleton (Jameel Arts & Health Lab), the session called for arts-health strategies to be prioritized within international humanitarian and reconstruction frameworks and featured closing remarks from George Richards (Community Jameel).

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**John Slinger MP:** *“As someone who is a musician, I appreciate the positive effects that creative arts can have on the individual, community, country and even the world. I believe they can provide much more than just pure entertainment value, roundtables such as the one today show that they are effective in treating mental health conditions including depression and anxiety. This could become a crucial avenue of support to veterans and the wider public in an increasingly hostile global environment. I am glad different researchers, organisations, defence and culture officials attended the meeting and witnessed the powerful impact that the creative arts can have”*

**Iryna Holubetska (Unbroken):** *“In Ukraine, we see every day how war affects the mind, the body, and the social fabric. Arts-based approaches allow people to process trauma in ways that words often cannot. Integrating the arts into health systems is not a luxury in wartime - it is an essential part of recovery and resilience”*

**Ostap Ukrainets (Cultural Forces):** *“The healing power of Art during wartime may be set back with many ethical and logistical issues. Art, and its potential for rehabilitation, becomes a resource and requires constant and delicate balancing between frontline and homefront experiences”.*

**Veronika Skliarova (Art Therapy Force):** *“In the wake of mass displacement and war-related trauma, art therapy has become a crucial instrument for recovery, offering communities a non-verbal pathway to process experiences of loss with resilience and participatory tools.”*

#### **About the Jameel Arts & Health Lab**

Launched in January 2023 by the World Health Organization, New York University, Community Jameel, and CULTURUNNERS, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab is a global initiative to measurably improve health and wellbeing through the arts. With a focus on overlooked and underserved communities, the Lab leverages scientific evidence, a global Healing Arts campaign, and capacity building to drive the integration of the arts into mainstream healthcare across 193 UN member states.

Healing Arts is the Jameel Arts & Health Lab’s global outreach campaign in collaboration with the WHO. Healing Arts has established the Lab as a leading convener of arts and health stakeholders worldwide and played a central role in socializing arts and health research, demonstrating best practice, and informing policy implementation at the institutional, city, state, national and intergovernmental level. Notable events include annual activations at the UN General Assembly and bi-annual activations in Scotland, as well as in Singapore, Barcelona, London, Houston, Jaipur, Riyadh, COP28 in Dubai,

[jameelartshealthlab.org](http://jameelartshealthlab.org).

**WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe)** is one of WHO’s six regional offices worldwide. It serves the WHO European Region, which comprises 53 countries, covering a vast geographical area. It guides health policy and supports member states in responding to health emergencies and systemic health challenges.

[www.who.int/europe](http://www.who.int/europe)

**King’s College London** is one of the world’s leading research universities. Its Department of War Studies and various health faculties are at the forefront of researching the intersection of conflict, mental health, and social recovery, providing the academic rigor behind arts-based trauma interventions.

[www.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.kcl.ac.uk)

**Art Therapy Force** is a project of ArtDot, a Ukrainian non-governmental organization that develops artistic, educational, and awareness-raising initiatives to support the psycho-emotional wellbeing of society, promote civic engagement, and foster a culture of social responsibility.

[www.arttherapyforce.com.ua](http://www.arttherapyforce.com.ua)