the digital methods …
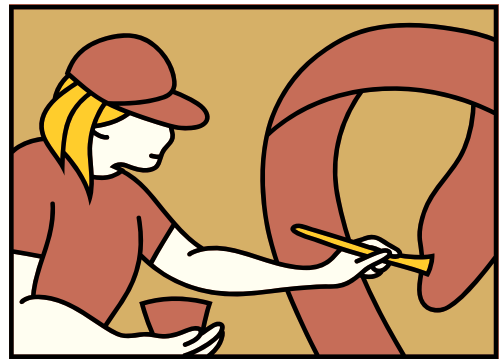# Virtual Mural

#1. Short description:

A mural artwork project is a beautiful option to share ideas within the community, make art for social transformation visible and strengthen local relationships. Art is a universal language that knows no limits. You can also create a mural with the help of the artist "virtually", i.e. connected online and able to give instructions to the group of participants on the other side on how to paint, based on the projected black and white image on the wall, similar to "paint by numbers" paintings, but this time on larger scale and with multiple painters co-creating the masterpiece simultaneously. As tools for decolonization, murals were often using art to convey indigenous knowledge and wisdom, as well as efforts for emancipation and awareness raising of the region's original citizens, as is the case in so-called Chicana/o indigenous murals movement of California.

#2. Educational goals:

Mural painting can be characterised as a community art, which connects people who might not otherwise be involved in art. It is a process, which provides a team-building element and transcends words, art speaks to us in different ways and connects us on different levels beyond reason.

By connecting it with a topic, the mural can provide an inspiration and motivation for discussion, leaving a sustainable result of community action for years to come.

The common work and the sharing and seeking of common goals for global issues builds self-esteem and strengthens the feeling of affiliation by forming a part of something important, thus bringing also new levels of empowerment to the participants

#3. Implementation details:

Number of participants: 10-15.
Age of participants: 8 - 99
Time: At least 4 hours or longer.
Attachments: Black and white image chosen by the artist to be projected onto a wall.
Tools: Projector, sustainable colours, paint brushes, buckets, protection duck-tape, protection cardboards for the floor, overalls, masks, gloves, computer with Zoom.

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Implementation steps ...

Step 1 Preparation Phase

Concept: Create your own concept and follow these questions:
What do I want to show with a mural artwork?
Who do I want to address as a main target group?
Which artist could transmit joint group message / aim?

Does the mural artist:
Have experiences in international projects?
Is he / she experienced in mural artworks?
Is he / she also professional in educational / pedagogical terms and / or is experienced in working with topics of SDG or at least interested / related to such topics?
Is willing to cooperate in a team and with a group of participants following his or her instructions?
Does he / she speak a language, which could be easy to translate?

Space and neighbourhood:
Where could the mural take place?
Check the availability of the chosen wall. Is the wall easy to access (also thinking of the participants)?
Does the wall have a paintable surface?

Step 2 Planning phase

Content and material:
Contact the artist and explain the concept idea. Ask the artist for a sketch in advance. For the projection image, ask a black and white image from the artist, focusing only on main illustration lines (in black) in the image, e.g. like the one below. To make process as easy as possible, the artist could also include numbers of colours in the white spaces of his / her illustration (mimicking "paint by numbers" instructions).
Discuss the space, the wall of the mural with the artist (discuss also the topics of accompanying workshop with participants). Think of the materials to be used as well as the connection needed for Zoom session. Please respect the environment, we recommend „Eco Paint" colours that are environmentally friendly and non-toxic. Think of extra materials for a workshop needed (colours, brushes, paper, scissors, markers, glue, protection overalls, masks).
You will also need electricity in the room for projector to be able to project the image of selected black and white image on to the wall of your choice. Also, you will need another computer to be able to connect via Zoom with the artist.

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Step 3 Production Phase

Logistics & Production:
Get all required material in advance (colours may be sold out, you need to order them).

If needed, select the interpreter to be able to translate at the Zoom session. If you paint in winter the mural needs more time to dry, you might need extra light as it gets dark early // you shouldn't paint with less than 10° or more than 30° C in the room.

Connect with the artist via Zoom and introduce him / her to the participants. Talk about the image and why it was selected, the symbolism behind it. Project the black and white image on to the wall. Artist then leads the co-creation of the mural, with instructions of which particular paint goes where in the image on the wall.

During the painting process, you can also use the topic of the image for the general discussion / workshop in more detail.

The attached image, for instance, was used for the discussion of Pachamama – Mother Earth belief of the indigenous peoples of South America and their connection with nature.

PR & (potential) public event of inauguration of the mural:
Don't miss to take photos before, during and in the final of the mural process, get photo and data protection rights if needed. Post on social media regularly // invite Press & media in time to inauguration // arrange interviews with the artist or the group involved.

Inauguration of the mural (arranging the venue -chairs, tables, canvas / theatrical stage -if a performance is also planned, food for the participants, sound system, electricity).

Think of documentation, naming of sponsors and funding partners, collaboration partners.

Image: Pachamama (artist TinTin)

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Info corner:

Throughout the last two centuries, murals present an art form, used as both, a communication tool for expressing political caricature and social satire, as in for instance in the Sardinian villages of Orgosolo and Baradili, as well as an educational and awareness raising tool and empowerment of communities. Political murals in Northern Ireland have become symbols of its country, depicting the region's past and present political and religious divisions. Belfast and Derry contain arguably the most famous political murals in Europe.

It is believed that almost 2,000 murals have been documented since the 1970s in Belfast and Derry alone. The so-called Wall of respect in Chicago on the other side of the Atlantic, a public art project was being created in the times of the Civil Rights Movement in the US.
Through such murals, communities – often of oppressed peoples – collaborated and empowered themselves to narrate identities and histories, making their political struggles visible and concrete.

Murals as such were often a radical force of liberation, for instance the ones on the Berlin Wall - "World's longest canvas". Or on West Bank apartheid wall, where Palestinians have created a powerful collection of protest murals expressing their opposition to wall's existence and their fight for freedom and dignity.

Further notes

Usage:
(a) preparation / debrief; (b) development of the relationship; (c) learning about a topic

Sources:
Krohn T., Setinc Vernik, M. & Vogelgsang A., Colours of global voices. 2021. CULPEER4CHANGE European Union, available at: https://culpeer-for-change.eu/en/article/146/publication-colors-global-voices

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