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Thesis summary

Title: Children's Drawings under Compression of War and Poverty (Syria and Hungary)

The ongoing Syrian civil war, which began in March 2011, has left the country in chaos, with no safe place for its citizens. The conflict persists even in 2024, with no hopeful end. The researcher, who lived through the war between 2009 and 2016 as a teacher assistant and art educator in Syria, observed significant weaknesses in the Syrian art education system across all levels. This realization, coupled with a personal interest in children's drawings, motivated the researcher to investigate how art education could alleviate the psychological distress of children in war-torn environments.

This research focuses on two areas.

The first area would be Syria, while the second one would be Hungary.

In Syria, we have a civil war ongoing and because of it, millions of children are living under the poverty line, affected by war disasters, and living in a poisoned society. While in Hungary, the situation is much better now, but Hungarians have experienced the impact of war through the Yugoslavian Civil War and World War I and II, in Hungary also there are still nowadays some children living below the poverty line and they live in tough circumstances.

I assume that war and poverty have a similar effect (even if not exactly the same) on children's drawings, therefore, similar methods may be used to “cure” through art in both cases.

I chose to compare these two countries because of what I'd noticed of a very close similarity between the two countries in terms of the living situation for children (in some areas).

The most important is that Hungary has some serious attempts to cure and solve this problem through art with successful programs like The Real Pearl Art Schools and Tanoda, and there was a lot of research done to understand,

analyze, and help the refugee children suffering from the Yugoslavian civil war, especially in Szeged.

On the other hand, Syria is still at the starting point of research, there is no serious effort to contain this massive problem that threatens our future.

This research's main interest will be to study the children drawing under compression in both countries and use the Hungarian experience to help the Syrian art education system.

Research aims

- 1- An analytical study of selected samples of children's drawings under compression from two different areas with different backgrounds (Syria and Hungary).
- 2- Finding an artistic methodology to be used to help children in areas under compression.
- 3- Collaborate with professionals to enhance the situation of children under compression.
- 4- Launching a program to help Syrian refugees using the Hungarian experience.

Assumptions:

- 1- Wars and poverty affect children in life domains and this is reflected in the child's behavior and ideas expressed in different ways, including their drawings.
- 2- Children's drawings can help us to understand their ideas.

Research Questions:

- 1- What is the importance of study and research in children's drawings made under stressful situations?

- 2- Do war and poverty affect children's drawings? how? Are they affected in a similar way?
- 3- Is the effect different from one place to another? Or there are some general and similar features which don't change.
- 4- Could we use art to help children under compression as a therapy?
- 5- Could we use an experience designed for a certain place in another area? And is it going to give the same results?

Research Significance:

- 1- Clarify the features, characteristics, and importance of children's drawings.
- 2- Showing some methods of scientific research that can be followed in the study of children's drawings.
- 3- Clarify the healing potential of art toward children under compression.
- 4- Highlight a serious problem facing Syrian society and encourage organizations to launch a program to help Syrian refugees using the Hungarian experience.

Research limits:

The research main domain or place is Syria (Damascus, Alqunaitera, and Swaida) between 2011-2018, and Hungary (Berettyoujfalu, Komádi, Magyarhomorog, Körösszakál, Körösszegapáti, Biharkeresztes and Told) from 2000 until now.

The research consists of four chapters, in the first chapter I talked about the healing possibilities of children's drawings, the influence of drawing on children's communication, the importance of drawing as a therapy, and the use of art therapy.

In the second chapter, I studied the effect of war and poverty on children's drawings, mentioning many other related experiences.

The third chapter is the core of my research where the practical study merged with the theory and I talked about the project Two Stories which involved more than 600 children, at the end of this chapter I wrote my conclusions

The final chapter is dedicated to my practical artwork and the connection to this research.