

## COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS EDUCATION IN DIASPORA CONTEXTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND THE SDGs

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**Abstract.** *This paper explores community-based arts education initiatives within Indonesian diaspora communities as informal and non-formal learning practices relevant to sustainable development agendas in Asia. Drawing on phenomenological data from diaspora artists and cultural practitioners in European contexts, the study explores how arts-based learning emerges through small-scale, community-led workshops and shared practices rather than through formal or regular training programs. These episodic learning activities function as spaces for cultural literacy, social inclusion, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. The findings suggest that community-based arts learning offers insights into pathways aligned with selected Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). Rather than positioning government as a direct provider of arts education, the study highlights the importance of facilitative public sector roles that recognize, enable, and partner with community initiatives. Although the empirical setting is in Europe, the practices examined are rooted in Asian cultural traditions and offer implications for government education management in Asian contexts characterized by cultural diversity and reliance on non-formal learning. This paper draws on selected data from an ongoing research project and presents a focused analysis relevant to the conference theme.*

**Keywords:** *Community-Based Arts Education; Diaspora Communities; Government Education Management; Informal and Non-Formal Learning; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires strategies that account for both participation and the unique characteristics of Asia's multifaceted cultures. Governments are typically regarded as primary proponents of sustainable development. Nevertheless, there is increasing evidence that community-based initiatives are also instrumental in facilitating social, educational, and cultural development. These community programs are seldom recognized by policymakers in policy dialogue, especially when they exist beyond the realm of bureaucracy (Aini et al., 2025).

Education administration policies tend to be geared towards formal schools, established curricula, and quantifiable outcomes. Non-formal and community-based education, particularly culturally and artistically based programs, are often neglected by policymakers. These forms of education are crucial for lifelong learning, enhancing social inclusion and identity formation (UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education, 2024); Community learning, n.d.). To transmit culture, values, and memories to future generations in the diasporic communities while migrants engage in informal practices outside the home (IPA-NL, 2025). This underscores the policy gap.

Artistic practices such as dance, music, and performance are important in diaspora communities for far more than cultural expression. These programs support language, history, and moral learning and provide recipients with a sense of belonging (Chappell et al., 2022). Culture and arts-based education is widely regarded as a significant modality of non-formal

education that contributes to cultural comprehension and social cohesion, particularly in contexts of displacement and marginalization. (UNESCO, 2024). However, the contributions that education leaders and project developers make to sustainable development tend to go unacknowledged and are dimly perceived by policymakers (Green Foundation, 2023; Aini et al., 2025).

Diasporic populations rely on artistic practices — dance, music, performance — for more than just cultural expression. These activities provide educational opportunities in language, history, and ethics, but they also offer a sense of community. Arts-based learning is considered a relevant form of non-formal education that can promote cultural dialogue and social cohesion, particularly in contexts of displacement and marginalization (UNESCO, 2024). Nevertheless, such contributions are seldom acknowledged or given priority by education management or policymakers for sustainable development (Scott & Tinnemore, 2009; Aini et al., 2025).

The marginalization of this has created a rift between cultural practice and development objectives. The result is that cultural sustainability is undervalued in policy, despite its contributions to education, equity, and sustainable cities (Hosagrahar, 2017). Therefore, community-based arts education is still not fully acknowledged, nor has it been examined how it contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (Paranti et al, 2025).

Filling this gap, this paper contends that community-based arts education within the Indonesian diasporas is a significant contributor to sustainable development, albeit informally and non-formally. The paper shares and analyses data with diaspora artists and practitioners to make visible how arts-based learning is a form of non-formal education with its social and educational benefits, as well as a diversity of public or government support and partnerships. Explaining these points, the article illustrates the relevance of such education-based findings for policymakers formulating agendas to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

There are three objectives of this research. First, it conceptualizes community-based diasporic arts as a site of non-formal education and recognizes their social and educational significance by relating them to the SDGs. Second, it analyses the role these arts play in helping diaspora communities maintain their culture and achieve social inclusion. In conclusion, the findings are discussed in terms of their implications for civil and government leaders. It recommends responses such as integrating these arts into education planning, supporting venues for participatory arts, fostering cultural collaboration, and treating the government entity as a partner rather than the sole provider. These recommendations are intended to guide educational management in developing approaches that cherish diversity and encourage community participation.

This study situates arts-based diasporic education at the intersections of education administration, public-sector participation, and sustainable development and calls for a centrist government to act. It advocates the recognition of community-led arts-based education within education policy by governments, the formation of collaborative governmental models with diasporic communities, the provision of targeted resourcing, and the reform of education models to incorporate non-formal and cultural learning experiences. These are key measures to address the SDGs, including those related to inclusivity, cultural relevance, and meaningful public engagement.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *2.1 Community Education & Non-formal Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning*

Lifelong learning is being promoted as a new policy lever amid inequalities, demographic trends, and evolving skill demands. Non-formal learning is a type of organized learning that takes place outside the established formal system and leads to some form of non-official certification or recognition, and includes community classes, workshops, and civic and cultural programs.

Recent comparative policy analyses of education systems show that they unevenly account for lifelong learning goals. Resource distribution and policy often prioritize formal education

pathways (Desjardins, 2020). Lifelong learning is crucial for social cohesion and social resilience, according to the OECD Education Policy Outlook (2025). It also demonstrates lingering inequalities between stages of life and types of learning. (Education Policy Outlook, 2025). This educational policy emphasis is perfectly suited to considering diaspora-led arts learning as a legitimate form of non-formal education. Instructors report that such methodologies frequently facilitate ongoing, organized instruction (i.e., routine rehearsals, mentorship, curriculum-like sequences, and performance-based evaluations) even when participants don't gain formal accreditation (Aini et al., 2025).

From an administrative perspective, community providers need to be better acknowledged, embraced, and partnered with by the education system. These changes are significant because they influence learning outcomes such as cultural literacy, belonging, participation, and well-being. These are fields where traditional metrics don't tend to capture much (Sonke et al, 2023). This view is consistent with the expansion of education as a social right and as an instrument for sustainable development, as discourses emerging at the international level suggest.

In this article, we operationalize community arts education as casual, non-formal education that evolves around small community-based workshops, practice-sharing sessions, and participatory arts meetups. They are not regular or formal training courses. Most of the attendees have no access to institutional arts education or accredited training. Learning occurs in episodes and through relationships. Availability, community needs, and engagement collectively shape learning. It is not from traditional scripted curricula or timed classes (Johnson & Majewska, 2024).

## *2.2 Arts Education as a Cross-sector Policy Field*

Recently, UNESCO has presented a new policy articulation for the field of arts education with its Framework for Culture and Arts Education (2024). It specifically refers to embedding culture and arts education in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts. It cautions against silo thinking in governance. The framework promotes cross-sector collaboration, public policy-oriented, long-term, and evidence-based interventions, as well as shared monitoring. This is closely related to the 'facilitative government' principle outlined in this paper.

UNESCO policy statements on culture and education call on educators and policymakers to consistently integrate culture into education systems. They also advocate nominating 'societal actors' who are instrumental in knowledge transfer. These are the policy logics that enable us to conceive of community-based diasporic arts as educational infrastructures. It's more than just thinking of them as extracurriculars (NAEA, 2022).

## *2.3 Diaspora, Cultural Sustainability, and Learning as Transmission*

Diasporic situations magnify the importance of non-formal education, as members of communities typically maintain cultural knowledge, language use, and identity narratives through intergenerational transmission in community locales (Oktaviani et al., 2023). While studies in diaspora have, for decades, critically explored the politics of identity and belonging, an expanding applied literature examines how participatory cultural practices foster social inclusion and community capacity-building. For instance, research on participatory cultural institutions and youth from refugee backgrounds underscores the challenges and possibilities of opening meaningful participation through cultural spaces such as museums, and points to learning, belonging, and civic participation as outcomes of mediated cultural engagement (Linn et al, 2021). As Maxson, McCullough, and Seow (2025) note, thoughtful (though not uncritical) programming for youth audiences is emerging in museums worldwide, providing examples of how arts-based methodologies can engage racially, socio-economically, and culturally diverse youth and youth-serving community organizations as methods and meaning-making processes in community contexts. These are examples of programs that demonstrate that arts

participation can be deliberately structured and sustained to produce anticipated effects, supporting key tenets of non-formal education (Ferrer-Fons et al., 2022:4923).

#### 2.4 Cultural Organization, Inclusion, and Public Value in Debates on Cultural Policy

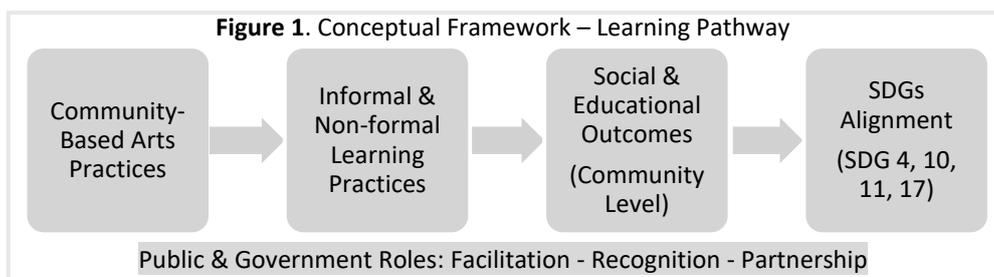
One of the significant recent developments in international cultural policy discourse is the claim that culture is not a marginal, but a structurally relevant element in inclusive and sustainable societies. The policy paper submitted by UNESCO to the third United Nations (UN) World Culture Report, *Culture: The Missing SDG (2025)*, synthesizes cross-national data on the degree to which public policy incorporates culture as a factor in multiple domains, substantiating the argument that cultural ecosystems are related to inclusion, rights, participation, and sustainable development. UNESCO has stated that cultural policy contributes to establishing trust, cooperation, and social cohesion — elements that are essential to sustainable development and extend beyond what can be achieved with technological instruments alone (UNESCO, 2014). This holds true, particularly in diaspora arts education, where her influence impacts community building, recognition, and voice building, which are not attainable through economic measures. But it continues to have meaning for policy (Gholami, 2025).

#### 2.5 SDGs and the Rationale for Multi-Actor Partnerships

The SDGs are explicitly grounded in the principles of global partnership and multi-stakeholder participation (Rosas, 2025). The latest UN monitoring continues to stress that expansion is not uniform and that acceleration must be joined up across sectors, well beyond education, to support inclusive social development (UNESCO, 2020). For this paper, four SDGs are most affected by diasporic arts pedagogy:

- SDG 4 (Quality Education): as sustained nonformal learning, cultural literacy, and lifelong learning routes.
- SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): through inclusion, recognition, and participation of minority and migrant groups in the societies of hosts.
- SDG 11 (Community and Sustainable Cities): through cultural continuity and community cohesion, and by sustaining cultural difference within the context of city life.
- SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals): by translating collaboration between community projects, local governments, and education and culture organizations.

Two converging arguments inform the paper's conceptual framework across these strands (See Figure 1). First, non-formal and community-based learning are increasingly recognized as integral parts of lifelong learning systems under current international policy guidance, even though the practice is lagging behind policy. Second, recent culture and arts education frameworks advocate cross-sector involvement and long-term collaboration, reducing the government's role as the dominant supplier and increasing its position as an enabler through recognition, resourcing, and partnership (UNESCO, 2026).



Hence, this paper is informed by these policy and research trajectories to investigate how Indonesian diasporic arts education serves as a site of community-based non-formal education that produces social and educational outcomes with evidently strong SDG relevance, while

advocating for a facilitative public sector presence that enables scale, inclusion, and sustainability (Figure 1).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study followed a qualitative phenomenological inquiry to investigate community-based arts-practices as informal and non-formal education in contexts of diaspora. Phenomenology was the most appropriate approach for this study because the goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the participants who lived through experiences and their sense-making as it pertained to arts-based learning and not to quantify outcomes or test predictions, consistent with the tenets of qualitative research as described in Creswell.

This study was situated in and takes its subject matter from communities of Indonesian diaspora in European settings, where the opportunities for formal arts education were scarce and teaching was largely informal, organized by the community. Fieldwork was conducted over a substantial period as part of ongoing doctoral research. The schedule of the fieldwork was guided by the need to capture genuine practices of informal and non-formal learning on this occasion (the period when community events started to increase and became more regular). There was a total of 8 out of 16 events observed.

The participants included Indonesian diaspora artists and cultural activists who are not only participants but also organizers of community-based arts programs. The study subjects were chosen because of their experience with extended community-based practice (at the time of the study) and informal learning contexts since they understand the way learning is structured and transmitted beyond formal educational provision. Data was gathered from in-depth interviews and participant observation. The use of interviews allowed this study to gather participants' reflections on learning experiences while observations made it possible to record learning in action during workshops on a small scale and within collective practices. These approaches were deemed appropriate because of their ability to offer rich contextual information on non-formal learning that a quantitative study might not be able to produce.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's key findings and discusses their implications for government education management and sustainable development. The results are organized thematically to reflect recurring patterns across participants lived experiences of community-based arts education in diaspora contexts.

**Table 1.** Overview of Community-Based Arts Learning Contexts

ASPECT	DESCRIPTION
Type of education	Informal and non-formal, community-based arts learning
Learning format	Small scale and episodic workshops, shared artistic practices
Organizational structure	Community led, non-institutional, without formal curricula
Learning mode	Practice-based, embodied, and intergenerational learning
Regularity	Nonregular and flexible, shaped by community availability
Access to formal arts education	Limited or absent
Primary learning outcomes (community level)	Cultural literacy, identity formation, social inclusion

This table provides a contextual overview of the learning practices examined in this study without detailing participant identities or locations, in line with the ethical considerations and the study's positioning as part of an ongoing research project.

#### 4.1 Community-Based Arts as Non-Formal Education

Results. Among these participants, diasporic arts practices were consistently described as structured processes of learning, rather than casual or accidental forms of cultural participation.

Normal rehearsal schedules, mentoring relationships, preparations for performance, and modelling met identifiable pedagogical commonalities. The participants wrote that learning by doing, iteration, and group deliberations played an important role, that there was often no written curriculum, but that there were unambiguous messages about discipline, skill development, and cultural values. In addition, arts education in those settings served as a conduit to culture, including language, history, ways of being, moral standards, and symbolism found within the arts. The program was characterized by significant intergenerational connection, with elder artists serving as teacher-caretakers and novice artists taking on roles of observation, engagement, and apprenticeship.

Discussion. These results count toward reframing community-based diasporic arts as non-formal education that speaks to lifelong learning agendas. In line with current education policy rhetoric, learning is taking place outside formal sites of instruction, albeit in an organized, purposeful, and repetitive manner. The lack of formal credentials does not detract from the value of education; rather, its outcomes manifest in cultural literacy, identity formation, and social competence. From the perspective of government education management, this calls into question the narrow definitions of education that consider formal schooling as the sole component. Validation of arts-based community learning as part of a holistic education system supports SDG 4 and its implications for fostering equitable learning opportunities across life skills.

#### *4.2 Arts Education as a Social Inclusion and Identity Policy Tool*

Results. The study participants portrayed community arts education as a place to be or a moment in time when migrants, cultural bearers, and citizens of multicultural states could, at some level, come to terms with who they were. People who practiced the arts and cultural activities identified more with the community and the past, especially the second generation of the diaspora, who seemed to feel even more removed from their cultural roots. Arts spaces were also reported to serve to inscribe social inclusion beyond the diasporic community per se. Public showcases and workshops, as well as intercultural events, served to engage with broader society and helped envision the other and foster cultural recognition. Participants observed that such encounters often challenge marginalizing experiences by placing cultural differences within a framework of cultural contribution.

Discussion. These findings underscore arts education's role as a social vehicle for advancing SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by facilitating the inclusion and engagement of minorities. Instead of tackling inequality solely through redistribution, community-based arts education engages at the levels of recognition, voice, and representation. The findings also resonate with research on culture as public value, where inclusiveness emerges through participation and co-construction of meanings. For the public and government stakeholders, this means that investment in community arts education will provide strong policy support for community social integration policies, especially in culturally diverse cities.

#### *4.3 Cultural Sustainability and the Sustainable Community*

Results. Cultural Engagement of Participants in Arts Education. The Cultural Following Dimension of Survival is argued to involve teaching and cultural maintenance against the threat of decay, cultural survival and continuity, and keeping cultural knowledge alive and developing in diaspora contexts. Sustainability was not in terms of maintenance of fixed forms but in terms of evolving through instruction, reinterpretation, and community practice.

And community arts organizations played an important role in shaping the culture of the local territory by hosting regular events, building networks of reciprocity, and engaging with audiences and participants over time.

Discussion. Contributing to that is community-based arts education that, in turn, partly aligns with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), especially its cultural aspect. While social

sustainability and cultural sustainability remain somewhat vague and ill-defined in the broader urban context, arts-based urban practices have a key role in cultivating cohesive and resilient communities in multicultural cities.

What this means in terms of policy impact is a refocusing away from the marginalization of culture within frameworks for sustainable development. To view arts education as cultural infrastructure is to consider a broader notion of sustainability that encompasses social cohesion, identity continuity, and community resilience.

#### 4.4 Public and Governmental Institution Interfaces

Consequences. Participants described diverse experiences of interacting with the public and government institutions, namely schools, municipalities, culture houses, and embassies. The relations of information differed from those of support and recognition in a symbolic sense, with a transnational linkage. Nonetheless, the interviewees highlighted the unevenness of institutional interest in and cooperation with their work, including the scarcity of funds for continued support, bureaucratic hurdles, and the absence of formalized placeholders for informal arts education. The participants were highly participatory and clearly preferred cooperation and independence to what they perceived as ‘top-down control’. Government support was appreciated when it facilitated action, dismantled structural obstacles, and validated the community's knowledge.

Discussion. These results feed directly into the conceptualization of government as an enabler rather than a deliverer (Figure 1). Enabling conditions are theoretically associated with successful public sector engagement, including recognition, partnership, and flexible support mechanisms. This is consistent with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which promotes cross-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Implications for government school management: policy instruments need to be attuned to the presence of diverse learning care providers and cultural forms. An implication for government school management and for policy is that policy instruments need to be suitable for use across a diversity of learning agencies and cultural formats. Instead of defining our community arts through formal systems and standardization, a facilitative stance acknowledges (and even challenges) the separate pedagogic logic of arts-based learning, while fostering its continued viability and growth potential.

#### 4.5 Discussion: Connecting the Results to the Conceptual Model and SDGs

Overall, the findings provide support for the pathways specified in the conceptual model (Figure 1). Community-based diasporic arts are a form of nonformal education that produces social and educational impacts that advance several SDGs. The public sector and government officials are crucial facilitators in this process when they treat community efforts as legitimate education and establish policy environments that enable such recognition.

This synthesis highlights the importance of grounding both educational management and sustainable development approaches in lived reality. By prioritizing community-based arts education, the research illustrates how culturally specific methodologies can work in tandem with formal educational systems to promote inclusive, sustainable development within multicultural settings.

**Table 2.** Alignment of Key Findings with the Selected SDGs

KEY FINDINGS	DESCRIPTION	SDG ALIGNMENT
Arts-based non-formal learning	Community-based arts practices function as informal and non-formal learning spaces beyond formal education systems	SDG 4 (Quality Education)
Social inclusion & recognition	Participation supports belonging, visibility, and recognition of diaspora communities	SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)

Cultural sustainability	Sustained arts practices support cultural continuity and community cohesion	SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities & Communities)
Partnership-oriented governance	Government roles emphasize recognition, partnership, and support rather than direct provision	SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals)

Note: The SDG alignment presented reflects conceptual and policy-relevant linkages rather than claims of direct impact.

### *Policy Implications*

Results of this research imply that community arts education belongs in a system of education ecosystems, a system of systems, especially when in an informal or non-formal learning environment. Rather than the government acting as a provider, it emphasizes the importance of facilitative roles that nurture recognition and facilitate flexible support and collaboration with community activities.

In terms of the education system, this means creating a policy environment that supports community-driven learning without superimposing institutional frameworks. Facilitating structures, such as the provision of space, symbolic vectoring, or collaborative programming, may contribute to the resilience of community-based arts education, as well as to its ability to insulate and sustain itself in the face of social pressures. These implications align with selected Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting inclusive education and learning, social engagement, cultural sustainability, and collaborative governance, without suggesting immediate policy outputs.

### **CONCLUSION**

This article explores Indonesia's diasporic community arts education programs as informal yet impactful community educators in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. As such, the results indicate that, in the context of the study, diasporic arts practice can be viewed as an art-based form of culture-oriented non-formal education that promotes cultural literacy and social inclusion, as well as intergenerational knowledge sharing.

At a conceptual level, the research extends discussions in educational management by conceptualizing 'community-based arts education' as situated within an educational ecosystem rather than as a marginal cultural practice. By introducing a model that connects diasporic arts and non-formal education to social and educational outcomes, the paper highlights how learning grounded in culture and lived experience drives sustainable development. The framing of government and public actors as enablers rather than providers introduces a governance lens that positions education management on a multi-actor trajectory highlighted in the SDGs.

From a phenomenological perspective, the study's findings offer insight into how arts-based learning is practiced in diaspora communities. What emerges from the participants' experiences is that learning is organized, continuous, and pedagogical, even though there are no formal curricula or certification. These are uneven practices that sustain Quality Education (SDG 4) through greater equity of access to relevant learning; contribute to Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) through social inclusion and recognition; and advocate for Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) by keeping culture and community alive.

At the policy implementation level, the research highlights the need to enable public-sector participation in support of community-based arts education. Recognition of non-formal learning, flexible support schemes, and responsive governance at the educational institution level, tailored to the needs of grassroots cultural initiatives, the public education administration, and the sustainability agenda, seem to be among the most significant measures. These measures directly reflect the collaborative nature of SDG 17.

To conclude, the research suggests that community-based arts learning in diaspora settings is a promising, underexplored means of promoting the SDGs. Bringing together lived experience, conceptual insight, and policy relevance, the article advances more inclusive, culturally responsive strategies for educational leadership and public administration in pluralistic societies.

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