

Theoretical Framework on the Use of Art-Inspired Pedagogy in Early Childhood to Mitigate Urban Barriers

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Abstract

Cities around the world are changing rapidly, putting new pressures on the education system. Vietnam has particularly seen a period of rapid economic growth in many of its major cities. These urban environments can create both barriers and opportunities for learning. This paper aims to answer the question of if and how art-inspired pedagogy (AIP) can be used to mitigate the urban barriers in the early childhood education system. Through a rapid literature review of 48 papers, we discovered how AIP can contribute to children's holistic development (particularly in social emotional learning and literacy) and what conditions are needed to implement AIP in Southeast Asia. Additionally, CITIES, a 3-phase programme in Da Nang, Vietnam with 29 schools, provides a practical lesson learned on how AIP can fit within the existing system and support the new early childhood curriculum in Vietnam, and what still needs to be in place for this to be successful. This paper provides a theoretical framework, based on literature and practice, for implementing AIP in the urban environment in Vietnam.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Art, Urban Education, Art-Inspired Pedagogy, Learning Through Play, Vietnam

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1. Introduction

Vietnam's recent economic growth has been among the highest in Southeast Asia (SEA), framed as an 'economic miracle' leading to rapid urbanization (Van & Sudhipongpracha, 2015). Da Nang, the sixth largest city in Vietnam, is a prime example of rapid urbanization given its current economic growth and foreign investment (World Bank, 2013). While urbanization is seen as a driver of economic growth and poverty alleviation (UN Habitat, 2016), the process also creates specific social challenges, particularly for children. Da Nang is now home to a considerable number of migrants workers from neighboring provinces who fill the need for low-income labor, seasonal jobs in construction and food sales, and as street vendors (Chatterjee, 2015). This economic growth has contributed to the marginalization of certain populations by pushing up land and rental prices, thus widening the economic disparities within the city. Certain adverse experiences resulting from urban growth have the potential to affect child development, such as poor social and emotional development and a higher risk of mental health problems, which can hinder school readiness for preschoolers (Perry and Conners-Burrow, 2016, cited in Solis Schnyder et al, 2020).

1.1 VVOB CITIES Programme

To analyze and respond to the potential educational challenges resulting from urban growth in Da Nang, VVOB's CITIES programme aimed to strengthen teacher capacities to discover the urban barriers that hinder children's development, learning, and well-being and to develop interventions to mitigate them. In this first phase, teachers and school leaders identified common barriers such as, limited access to green spaces and interaction with surroundings, changes in social cohesion, lack of parental time, and increased screen time, highlighting similar factors as mentioned by Perry and Conners-Burrow, 2016 (VVOB, 2019).

To address the above-mentioned challenges, teachers created learning activities based on art-inspired pedagogy (AIP) using professional learning communities (PLCs). These activities were introduced into teaching and learning environments as part of innovative practices for teachers to tackle these challenges. **VVOB defines art-inspired pedagogy¹ as a creative approach that stems from the foundation of 'learning through play.'** It leverages the arts as a vehicle that teachers can use to promote creativity and exploration while meeting set learning goals. AIP is a pedagogical approach that uses one or more art forms² to deepen understanding and support learning objectives in the classroom (Burnaford, April & Weiss, 2009; Dohahue & Stewart, 2010; PCAH, 2011; Silverstein & Layne, 2010). Because the CITIES programme was in Da Nang, a city rich with culture, history, and arts; the city's identity³ was also leveraged to mitigate the urban barriers children are facing.

1.2 Rationale for Framework

Little is known about the casual effects of AIP in preschool education in Vietnam on the holistic development of children. Because of this, primary research through harvesting

¹ Many terms are used to describe similar approaches, such as "arts-based" and "art integration." VVOB has chosen to use "art-inspired pedagogy" as "art" is a technique used to meet learning goals rather than art products or art education being the end goal.

² **Art forms** include visual arts such as painting and drawing or performing arts such as music, drama, or dance.

³ **City identity** in VVOB CITIES programme: what a city or urban environment can offer in terms of pedagogical opportunities

(consisting of interviews, group discussions and a survey) and secondary research through a rapid literature review were conducted to answer the research questions. Due to the high level of interest, and teacher-reported effectiveness in AIP shown through the harvesting, VVOB, in collaboration with national and international education experts, has developed empirical research to create a theoretical framework for the use of AIP to mitigate urban barriers. The initial harvesting results show the participants' positive perceptions of AIP in enhancing the professional capacity of teachers as well as in creating an active and engaging learning environment for children. However, the question to be raised is what the effects on the holistic development of children are and how this approach can be applied systematically and effectively in preschool education.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research questions and sub-questions

The following research questions were answered through the rapid literature review and project data collection.

Main research question: *“What is known about the effect of art-inspired pedagogy on the holistic development of children in early year childhood education in urban environments?”*.

Sub-questions:

1. How can art-inspired pedagogy facilitate the development of preschool children?
2. What is the evidence that art-based pedagogy helps to mitigate urban barriers faced by children in urban environments?

2.2. Rapid review

Conventional literature reviews provide an overview of the relevant scientific literature published on a topic, however; its trustworthiness is often low (Briner, 2014). Clear criteria for inclusion are often lacking and studies are selected based on the researcher's individual preferences or theorizing perspective. Here, a 'rapid review' method is being used which aims to identify the most relevant studies on a specific topic as comprehensively and structured as possible and to select appropriate studies based on explicit criteria⁴. The rapid review is transparent, verifiable, and reproducible, and as a result, the likelihood of bias is considerably smaller. In this case, there were two separate rapid reviews conducted, one on AIP in general on an international scale and one specifically focused on Southeast Asia (SEA) and AIP.

2.3. Project Data Collection

Along with the rapid review, the CITIES programme reports have been collected and carefully reviewed. Harvesting was completed after programme implementation to gain insight into the interest, practicality, and effectiveness of AIP from the perspectives of government officials, school leaders, and teachers. The harvesting employed a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and methods including survey questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Data collection activities were applied with 98 teachers from 29 preschools, 29 school leaders from

⁴ The inclusion criteria for the rapid reviews can be found in Annex 1.

29 preschools, 7 officials from Bureaus of Education and Training (BOET) and 1 Department of Education and Training (DOET) official.

Harvesting was conducted to understand how and at what level the teachers applied and plan to apply AIP with children and to provide evidence of the changes that were institutionalized in the schools' operations. The results present the successes and challenges on the ground when implementing AIP and the effects that teachers, school leaders, and government officials saw after implementation. In addition, it discusses the practicality of AIP to fit in with and enhance the current curriculum and systems in place in early childhood education (ECE), from the perspective of DOET, BOET, and school leaders.

3. Research Findings

3.1 General Findings

3.1.1 AIP on Holistic Development

Whilst extensive research has demonstrated the positive effect of AIP on children's development in learning and wider outcomes, there is still very little scientific understanding of the causal effect of this relation. There is strong evidence that the use of art activities in the classroom could contribute to children's academic outcomes and psychological and social outcomes such as the attitude towards achievement, creativity, critical thinking, communication skills and emotional intelligence. The arts can serve as a tool for cross-domain integration and can enhance both the teaching methodology and the learning process (Stoycheva & Perkins, 2018).

One domain that tends to show positive effects from AIP is in literacy outcomes. In Taiwan, pilot research found that AIP could foster young learners' Chinese language ability by facilitating their pronunciation and word memorization (Chen, Chien-Hsu, et al., 2007). Other findings suggest that DBP has a significant positive effect on achievement. Through drama, students could learn about characters, thematic understanding, complex language, as well as increase enjoyment of and persistence with interpreting and creating stories (Lee et al., 2020). Music interventions also generally had a positive and significant effect on the teaching of reading skills, though they were inconsistent across studies. Song lyrics often contain elements of reading comprehension and practice for visual decoding skills, and listening stations allow students engage in repetition that is not perceived as drilling (Standley, 2008).

Visual arts can play a strong role in teaching emergent literacy skills. Arts instruction could help children pay more attention to forms and detail, leading to an increase in their reading readiness scores. Burger and Winner (2000) carried out meta-analyses that supported that when reading instruction was integrated with art instruction, children became more motivated to read as they find art activities engaging compared to traditional reading curricula.

3.1.2 Possible Moderators

To gain a nuanced understanding of the effect of AIP on children's development, it is important to understand possible moderators that might influence the intervention. This review found two possible moderators, namely instructors and structure of the intervention.

Instructors

Lee et al., (2015) conducted moderator analyses on the type of instructor to understand the potential moderating effects of the facilitator. In sum, interventions directed by the researcher or classroom teacher had significantly more positive effects than interventions led by a teaching artist for achievement and 21st-century skills whereas the opposite pattern showed when the interventions led by teaching artists had more positive effects on attitudes towards school. This raises the question of teachers' training and preparation on how to combine pedagogical teaching skills and a strong understanding of the arts and its application. If schools opt for teaching artists as leaders in a class context, it is essential to provide them with extensive training in pedagogy and content knowledge to be more effective in the classroom (Lee et al., 2015). It is relevant to note that the achievement moderator analysis has the strongest effect in preschools.

In the meta-analysis regarding the effect of DBP on literacy-related outcomes, Lee et al (2020) also found that the leader of the DBP is the crucial moderator of studies. The largest effect is for studies reporting the classroom teacher leading the DBP which is significantly larger than treatments led by the researcher and treatments led by teaching artists.

Structure of the Intervention

The second possible moderator is the structure of the intervention⁵, including the duration and model of the given intervention. According to Stanley (2008), music for reading achievement functioned better when it was added to ongoing music education activities than when it replaced regular music education in the general curriculum. Studies that employed more than 60 hours of music instruction in the given period showed no significantly greater effects than those with less than 20 hours of intervention even when spread across the entire school year. On the contrary, the duration of intervention plays an essential role in the effect of DBP on children's academic-related outcomes (Lee et al., 2015, 2020). This shows that the effect of the duration is likely dependent on the specific art form being used.

In the research on the effect of DBP on literacy outcomes, Lee et al (2020) used the intervention duration as coded as the number of hours. The largest average effect is for the 3-10 hours of lessons which is significantly greater than all other categories. Studies reporting 11-20 hours are significantly more positive than more than 20 hours of lessons. Lee et al (2020) recommended that DBP learning experiences are more impactful when informed by a focused inquiry and by learning theory and practice. The requirement of sufficient time in instruction highlights the specific feature of DBP which focuses on the process-oriented and reflective experience rather than the final product or theatrical outcome.

A randomized experimental study of Çetin (2021) also argued that artistic activities should be process-oriented rather than product-oriented. Artistic learning is the creative process between the individual and the work through planned, meaningful relationships created in pre-programmed aesthetic activities between the teacher and the learner. This explains why they proposed a modular art education program guided by a researcher in 7 weeks for 54

⁵ The intervention can be expressed in two main forms, including visual arts, and performing arts. Visual arts focus on what children see and how they develop their artistic awareness, for example, painting, drawing, photography, etc. while performing arts consider the activities related to body movements such as dance, drama, and music activities.

preschoolers. As a result, Çetin (2021) identified that the emotional and social development of children in the experimental group is significantly different from those of the control group after participating in modular art education.

3.1.3 AIP and Urban Barriers

Although no high-quality studies are identified on the role of AIP on the relationship between urban barriers and preschool children's development explicitly, this review acknowledges that AIP could foster children's development and study-related outcomes, fitting in the general practice of 'play-based learning'. Given the context of urban environments, art-based programs seem to support urban children to develop self-esteem, creativity, and social skills as well as their coping skills to overcome adversities. Certain types of performing arts have been shown to help increase emotional intelligence skills like self-confidence, well-being, self-control, and efficiency in interpersonal relationships (San-Juan-Ferrer & Hípola, 2020).

This rapid review indicates some studies showing how city context could convert urban-related challenges into learning opportunities for young children. One of the ways that researchers recommended is to rethink city infrastructures as 'spaces of learning' (Face & Buchczyk, 2019; Tuitjer & Muller, 2020). The lessons conducted in the combination of arts and city materials not only could improve children's creativity, social and emotional skills but also create occasions for them to learn more about 'what is there' in their city and come up with ideas how they would like to make their city better.

Using the city as a space for learning creates unique moments in which students can experience, explore and be more attentive to their surroundings. Careful attention inspires children to take more active roles, raise questions, communicate with others, and feel more connected to their living places. This might help to improve social cohesion between the child with the space and place they are living as the idea of an assemblage of the city. City infrastructures such as public art spaces have the potential to invite the children's gaze, arouse their curiosity, stimulate different ways of seeing as well as offer them chances to think about how city center spaces might be designed as more aesthetic and playful places supportive of public life. In other words, the employment of art in this case highlights the value of a city's identity and its resources in which children do not simply learn *about* the city, but rather they learn *with* it.

3.2 AIP in Asia

Despite many Asian countries adopting child-centered ECE policies, studies in several East Asian countries suggest that children still find their curriculum consisting of scripted instruction, repetitive learning, and standardized testing (Hui & Yuen, 2010; Lee & Yelland, 2017; Lim-Ratnam, 2013). Lee and Yelland (2017) report that parental expectation is that pre-school teaching shall bring about academically rigorous instructions, as well as conduct regular assessments to acquaint children with high-stakes testing. Equivalently, creative and "outside-the-box" thinking is obliquely downplayed in the major parts of Asia which are still influenced by Confucian principles of modesty, particularly in the Chinese traditions (Hui & Yuen, 2010). Because of these expectations many Asian families and teachers have for preschool students, AIP has not been a widely adopted practice in this context, therefore providing us with limited research on its effectiveness in this context as well as a need to analyze the relevance and adaptability of this model.

Despite the challenges presented above, there are some schools and organizations in the region that are applying AIP. In Singapore, the “Nurturing Early Learners” (NEL) approach based on AIP has been increasingly adopted to facilitate children’s creative thinking and self-exploration. Also in Singapore, Bautista et al. (2018) found some promising results as to the positive effects of AIP, including students’ positive attention, generating enthusiasm, and/or curiosity, self-expression, creativity in children, and tailoring arts-related activities to students’ interests.

There have been a variety of AIP initiatives starting in Asia which show a growing interest in the methodology as well as provide us with some lessons learned. Creative Arts Activities (CAA) program in Malaysia, for instance, has deployed a five-step creative process to inspire teachers' and school leaders' new ideas in the teaching and learning (Kuong, Ling Pik et. al., 2012). Research in Indonesia also implied that certain elements, namely adequate facilities, and infrastructure; teachers’ creativity; teacher-children cooperation; and parents’ assistance are key factors for the effective implementation of AIP (Trisnawati & Sugito, 2020). Moreover, the implementation of AIP poses some challenges which consist of facilitating different students’ creativeness, the requirement of teachers’ high competency to manage the classroom, and the need to attend to children’s queries and expectations. In the Asian context, teaching is often highly structured, and children’s needs are seldomly used in lesson planning creating a need for specific professional development to support teachers in implementing AIP (Lim-Ratnam, 2013).

3.3 AIP in Practice: Programme Findings

In Vietnam’s education system, AIP is a new methodology both in policies and practice. In CITIES, AIP was introduced to schools to improve children's learning and to overcome urban barriers. The programme left valuable results and lessons learned in the application of AIP in preschools and the needed conditions of human capacity and institutional systems to support its implementation. It provides us with a promising model that should be explored on a larger scale and in different contexts to validate its relevance and effectiveness.

3.3.1 Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP)

The end-project KAP survey indicated a proficient level of knowledge and understanding of art-based innovation among the programme participants, demonstrating the effectiveness of the AIP training. Teachers have utilized arts in experimental activities as well as activities to achieve foundational skills, such as learning numbers, shapes, and letters. To enhance the practice, teachers shared what they had tried and learned via teacher professional learning communities (PLCs). In CITIES, PLCs were used as a platform for teachers to tackle teaching and learning challenges, such as urban barriers, through a collaborative process of co-designing, trying out, and reflecting on the application of innovative methods such as AIP. This provides us with encouraging results that with focused training and coaching, teachers can make significant advances in their teaching practices.

3.3.2 Interest and application

The KAP survey revealed that arts/innovative activities were applied in all schools to varying degrees. Most teachers (98%) showed their willingness and commitment to continue integrating art-based innovations in their work. There is a correlation between the way teachers select activities to continue in their work and the difficulties teachers have

experienced in implementing art-based activities in the previous school years. These results lead us to believe that while teachers are motivated to apply AIP, there are conditions needed to do this successfully (VVOB, 2021).

3.3.3 Effectiveness

According to the teachers in CITIES, applying AIP in activities has helped remove urban barriers to learning. Many teachers observed that students participating in art-based activities spent more time exploring the materials and the environment, expressed their ideas and thoughts in more creative ways, and asked more questions in comparison with how they were in the previous activities. Teachers recognized that their students improved their linguistic, social, emotional, and cognitive skills, however; full impact research would need to be conducted to prove statistical significance. It was stated by a teacher of a 4–5-year-old class that her students learned shapes and numbers faster when they made or created the shapes and numbers by themselves through the given materials such as clay, paint, or wood (VVOB, 2021).

Throughout the programme implementation, government officials demonstrated their positive perspectives on the success of AIP in enhancing the capacity of teachers to create an active learning environment. DOET officials expressed that the innovative methods have allowed teachers to become flexible in designing educational activities which are play-based and offer experiential opportunities for children at different ages. They emphasized that AIP could go hand in hand with the national curriculum and they are able to see the effectiveness of this implementation in mitigating barriers related to urban contexts. Many school leaders consistently stated that AIP created a comfortable teaching environment for teachers and an active learning environment for children. In terms of effectiveness in dealing with barriers to learning, 86% of BOETs asserted that the applied arts/innovation activities have been effective in mitigating barriers related to urban contexts (VVOB, 2021).

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Basis for the Framework

While there is still a lot to be discovered in terms of AIP's ability to mitigate urban barriers and improve students' holistic development, the rapid review and practical experience provide promising information to allow this theoretical framework to be designed. AIP has been shown to be effective in increasing students' social-emotional and literacy skills. Many of the urban related barriers to student learning center on the high stress city environments and lack of social cohesion, therefore; leading us to believe the AIP could be used as a tool in the classroom to mitigate some of these barriers. While there may be some challenges in the implementation in SEA, new student-centered policies in ECE lend themselves to the adoption of methodologies such as AIP. With this theoretical framework, we hope to provide readers with a practical way to implement student-centered policies while increasing students' holistic development and mitigating urban barriers.

4.2 Explanation of the Framework

This framework aims to support school leaders and teachers in the implementation of the emerging ECE curriculum that emphasizes holistic development through child-centered pedagogy. AIP complements this approach by providing specific methods that integrate art

into teaching and learning for preschools. AIP is one way that child-centered pedagogy can be implemented and could be a preferred method for ECE as art-based activities are already commonly used. AIP is a pedagogy that allows art to be integrated into daily lessons and activities to increase engagement and interest, which often leads to improved wellbeing and involvement and learning outcomes.

The CITIES programme proposed 8 art-inspired activities as a toolkit for teachers to implement in their classrooms. However, the ways in which AIP can be included in the daily ECE curriculum are vast and should be explored further. The goal of AIP is for teachers to develop the mindset and skills necessary to take ownership of this pedagogical approach and implement it as part of their daily lessons, while meeting the necessary ECE standards. The below model can help explain how AIP fits in the existing push for a child-centered approach in the new Vietnamese ECE curriculum and what the intended holistic development outcomes are.

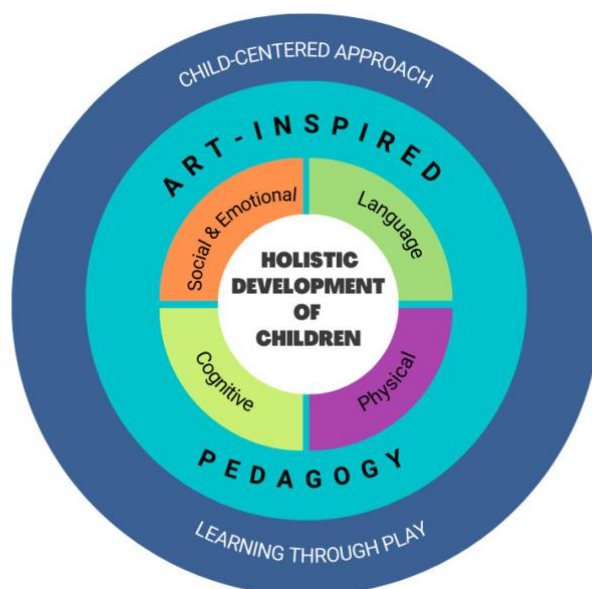


Figure 1. Holistic Development of Children

4.3 Implementation of the Framework

The desired environment for an art-inspired pedagogy framework consists of four pillars: **teachers' capacity, art-inspired activities, school support, and professional learning communities (PLCs)**. The four pillars are interconnected, and the framework best supports the application of art-inspired pedagogy when all four components are in place and supporting each other. They take into account the two factors of instructors and structures of intervention as discussed in section 3 and expand on what other conditions might be needed to successfully implement AIP based on experience in the field.

Teacher capacities for implementing AIP include the toolset, skill set, and mindset for implementation. AIP can require unique materials and environments to be implemented. Not only the physical tools are needed but also the foundational tools of methodologies such as

process-orientated child monitoring (POM)⁶ and learning through play. Teachers also need a specific skillset that includes understanding AIP, facilitation skills, ability to adapt and modify curriculum implementation while meeting the desired government standards and managing the classroom during these activities. It includes a teacher's ability to reflect, give and receive feedback and adjust teaching practices accordingly. The last, and arguably most important feature, is the mindset. It is not just applying prescribed art activities or games, but rather an ability to internalize the essence of AIP and learning through play to apply it systematically and consistently. As mindset shifts are a complex process, school leaders must provide close coaching to ensure they are able to transfer this into practice.

Art-inspired activities refer to the blending of the arts into class activities. This requires looking into the current curriculum to identify the opportunities to integrate arts to enhance learning outcomes. Teachers can consider a variety of visual and performing arts as the means to help achieve educational goals. Activities that are inspired by arts have different dynamics, allowing for more child-led exploration meaning that student learning will require more teacher facilitation rather than direct teaching.

Specifically, for those in urban environments, teachers are encouraged to explore the features and resources in the city that can enrich the learning experience for the children which will provide students with meaningful experiences to connect with their community and with the curriculum. Some characteristics that ought to be included in AIP include (but are not limited to):

- Integrating song, dance, painting, drama, etc. into the lesson while maintaining set learning objectives
- Using open materials
- Engaging in meaningful tasks
- Using the 5 senses in activities
- Using natural materials
- Visiting community cultural centers

School support includes instructional guidelines and school leadership. The framework recommends that a set of guidelines be provided to schools that would give an overview of AIP and suggestive instructions on how to integrate in teacher professional development (TPD) activities. The guidelines provide core steps and examples to help schools applying AIP approach and at the same time will give space for the schools to adjust to suit the school's needs. The CITIES 8-activity toolkit could be used as the starting point for the creation of AIP guidelines for schools.

School leaders must also possess the mindset necessary for AIP and that they create a healthy environment for learning, sharing, and reflecting. School leadership also includes the right policies and incentives to encourage the application and sustain AIP practice in the school based TPD system.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are an essential component of this framework as they provide a platform for teachers and educators to share experiences in applying AIP. A

⁶ POM is a tool developed by VVOB to monitor the well-being and involvement of the child and act steps to improve those aspects. More information can be found here: https://vietnam.vvob.org/sites/vietnam/files/20210720_vvob_pom_for_endorsement_en-light.pdf

PLC is a group of educators that come together to discuss teaching challenges, come up with possible solutions, try them out in practical environments and evaluate their effectiveness. PLCs can be created among teachers from a school, school leaders, and/or other stakeholders in art education. Harvested results indicated the two most favorable learning channels of the teachers are learning from doing and from exchanges with colleagues. AIP is new to schools and teachers; therefore, PLCs will facilitate exchange and feedback between teachers as they try out these new methods.

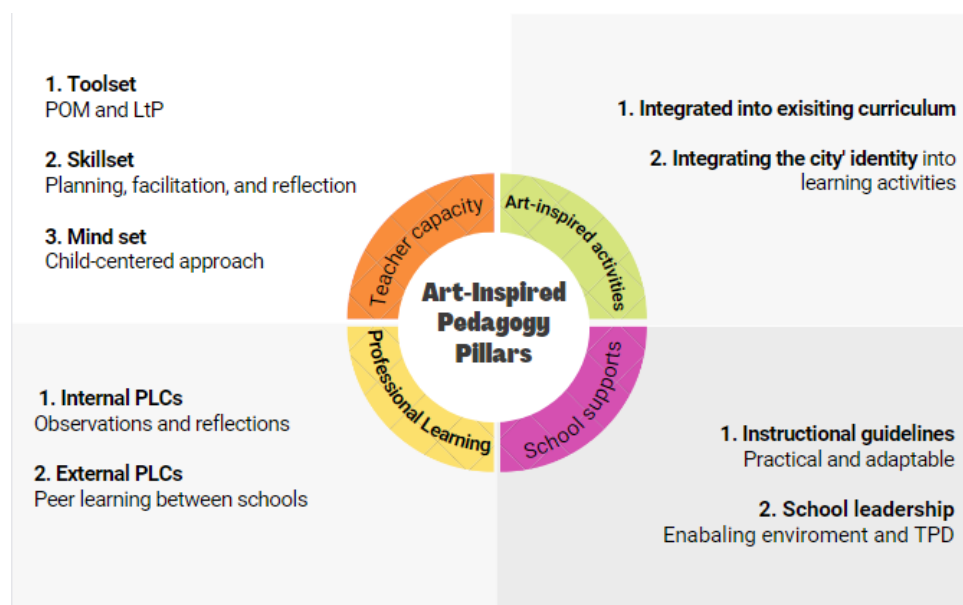


Figure 2. Art-Inspired Pedagogy Pillars

4.4 AIP and the ECE National Curriculum

In the Vietnamese ECE curriculum, art is included as a means of aesthetic education for preschool children. According to this framework, art is not only for aesthetic education, but also for language, physical, cognitive, social-emotional skills. According to one government official who participated in the CITIES programme, “*The schools made plans and allocated funds for the activities so that the teachers had opportunities to apply activities in parallel with the MOET’s curriculum that focuses on the child-centered approach*” (VVOB, 2021). After review, a governmental official stated that the framework supports the current curricular which promotes the empowerment of ECE preschool teachers and school leaders to “supplement educational contents and methods” to ensure the best learning outcomes for their students. She finds the framework highly feasible in this context and stressed the importance of teacher capacity and motivation to respond to the individual needs and interests of children (Le Thi Dieu Thuy, 2022).

4.5. Limitations

Within this study and the theoretical framework, two main limitations have been identified: (i) research gaps particular in SEA; (ii) the project scale of the CITIES programme.

The research team used some extended key words: “education through art” OR “Art-related pedagog*” OR “Music pedagog*” OR “learning through art” OR “learning with art” yet there is limited research focused on documenting what AIP looks like in actual preschool classrooms, particularly in SEA countries.

Regarding the project scale, most activities were conducted in Da Nang, a central coastal city of Vietnam which may not be representative of all urban environments in Vietnam. The fact that the scale of this project is quite small and no baseline and endline studies were conducted, makes it insufficient to make conclusive or casual statements regarding effectiveness. We also acknowledge that other approaches might be more beneficial in mitigating urban barriers and that more research would need to be done to prove that AIP is the most effective for this. Given the shortage of evidence on the causal impact of arts, See and Kokotsaki (2016) recommended considering the effect of arts as a bonus if it leads to improvements in academic attainment and other affective outcomes when integrating it in teaching and learning environments. Full impact research and further consultation with other policy makers would help make conclusive statements to answer the above research questions.

5. Conclusion

Art-inspired pedagogy and its connection to the mitigation of urban barriers is a topic with still a lot to be discovered. In Vietnam, where rapid urbanization is underway and the effects this is having on the early childhood sector is becoming more pronounced, governments and schools must begin to try new models and expand research on how the school system can best support the ECE students. This framework provides a starting point for the discussion on the effects of urbanization on children and possible solutions. The current trend shows that the population and economic growth in Vietnams major cities will continue into the next decade. The education system must be prepared to recognize its effects on the ECE system and provide school leaders and teachers with practical tools to support their students. The above proposed framework, including the CITIES activities tool kit provides a starting point for teachers, school leaders and government officials to explore the possibility of AIP to integrate the child-centered approach in the new policies and mitigate the urban barriers that rapid urbanization induces.

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