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The 2030 Agenda: The potential of Sweden's art and music schools to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

This article considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in relation to music education and specifically small-group instrumental teaching. Sweden ranks high in democracy indices and was recently judged to be the fourth-most democratic country in the world according to Economist Intelligence (EIU 2022). Nonetheless, the Swedish society struggles with issues such as inequality and segregation. The 82 Swedish billionaires' wealth amounts to USD 2 418 billion, which equals 49 per cent of Sweden's GDP (Cervenka 2022), while 9.2 per cent of all children and their families in Sweden are financially vulnerable (Rädda Barnen 2021). The definition of poverty differs between countries. Those living in poverty in Sweden can usually pay their bills and afford food, but may not be capable of paying for children's leisure activities – their quality of life is negatively affected and there is a risk of social exclusion. Swedish music education researchers (for example, Di Lorenzo Tillborg 2021; Jeppsson 2020) have taken an interest in how leisure time music education might contribute to a more democratic society through broadened recruitment and increased availability and access.

This article will also discuss teachers' professional duty to enact social responsibility (Westerlund & Gaunt 2021) and democratic teaching (Biesta 2017). Teachers are to implement sustainable education, and thus their professionalism affects the degree to which in practice their teaching aligns with the SDGs. To make the democratic dimension explicit by linking Swedish art and music schools (*kulturskolor*) to the 2030 Agenda could strengthen music education's legitimacy and future relevance.

The issues at stake are universally agreed to be desirable, namely the 2030 Agenda's ambition to create a better world. Any tensions between normative and epistemic ideals must be dealt with responsibly. Renn (2021) describes how a goal-oriented research approach should work to systematically produce knowledge that is oriented towards a specific problem; the research provides background knowledge on which policymakers can base their decisions, and which thus helps society reach its predefined goals or address its problems. The researcher's task is to propose strategies and assess their effects and side effects while adopting an analytical and ideology-critical approach to the analysis to counter wishful thinking or researcher's bias (Renn 2021).

Background

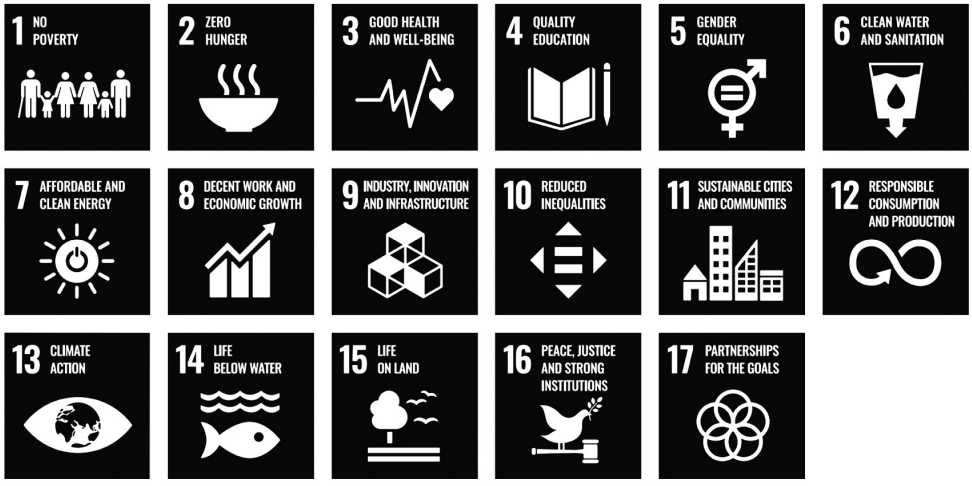
I begin with brief descriptions of, first, the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs and, second, the Swedish art and music school system. The social dimensions of music making are then outlined to explain the current focus on small-group instrumental teaching instead of general music education. Lastly, the literature on social justice in music education is discussed as the backdrop for interpretations of democracy in small-group instrumental teaching.

The 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs

> *On behalf of the people we serve, we have adopted a historic decision on a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative goals and targets.* (United Nations, 25 September 2015)

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The document has high ambitions for making a better world, a "rescue plan for people and planet" (UN 2015), albeit not legally binding. Even though one of the primary goals is to end poverty and hunger, the 2030 Agenda states that all goals and targets are of equal importance and have equal priority in implementation efforts. The 2030 Agenda is underpinned by democratic principles and emphasises that vulnerable groups, for example children and youth, must be empowered (UN 2015). This child-centeredness is also addressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989). Thus, the 2030 Agenda and the UNCRC sometimes overlap. Unlike the former Millennium Development Goals, which targeted only the global south, the 2030 Agenda is truly global and includes the global north which should also have high ambitions for working towards the SDGs (UN 2015). However, in 2023, the halfway mark to the target year of 2030, it was concluded that so far there have been both setbacks and reversals, and the UN has called for an acceleration to reach the ambitious goals.

Figure 1. The 17 SDGs at the core of the 2030 Agenda.



One of the contributing factors mentioned in the 2030 Agenda is sport, because it promotes tolerance, respect, and the empowerment of women and young people (UN 2015). Sport contributes to good health, education, and social inclusion; thus, it is beneficial on both the individual and community level. However, neither music nor culture (as an aesthetic form of expression) are mentioned in the context, even though the 2030 Agenda states that all humans should be able to enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives, and that children and youth must be provided with an environment where their rights and capabilities are nurtured. Like many others, however, I would argue that these aspects can and should be connected to music education.

There have been efforts to connect culture and the SDGs. For example, a report by the international non-profit Center for Music Ecosystems (2023) has connected music to all 17 SDGs, while the Swedish Arts Council (Kulturrådet 2022) has reported on how their work

connects to the 2030 Agenda. However, these reports are focussed on artistic activities and cultural experiences, not music education for children. The Swedish Arts Council does give financial contributions to support projects, for example when art and music schools collaborate with compulsory schools, but does not frame it as working towards the 17 SDGs.

Sweden's art and music schools

Sweden's art and music schools were established in the 1940s to give children the opportunity to learn a musical instrument or to sing, regardless of social or economic background (Kulturrådet 2022). In Sweden, municipalities (*kommuner*) are self-governed local authorities and 286 out of these 290 municipalities offer art and music tuition that is mainly funded from local authority budgets (Kulturrådet 2022). Pupils pay only a fraction of the actual tuition costs, which differs between local authorities: 14 per cent of art and music schools are free; 10 per cent have a fee of SEK 1,000–1,500 per term; and the most expensive local authority is Täby, where the tuition fee is SEK 1,700 per term (Myrstener 2022). Since tuition is publicly funded, there is political pressure to increase participation, reflecting the democratic ambition of all children's right to cultural expression and a meaningful leisure time stipulated by the UNCRC (1989), which in Sweden became law in 2020. The UNCRC specifies, for example, that the best interest of the child must be considered in all decisions about the child (Article 3). The child shall have the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting the child (Article 12). The convention also stipulates that all children have the right to participate in cultural activities and meaningful, recreational leisure activities (Article 31), which is highly relevant for art and music schools.

In spite of the art and music schools' efforts to promote diversity, there is still a disproportionate under-representation of children from marginalised urban areas (Kulturrådet 2022). To address this inequality, in 2015 the Swedish government appointed an official commission of inquiry to draw up proposals for a national strategy for more inclusive art and music schools (Kulturdepartementet 2015). The inquiry's report (SOU 2016:69) proposed, among other suggestions for greater inclusiveness, a change from traditional one-to-one teaching to group teaching. Group teaching was also suggested as a way of shortening queues for places at art and music schools and of reducing fees (SOU 2016:69).

Social dimensions of music making

Music is social and communicative (MacDonald et al. 2012). It creates an immediate relationship between performer and listener and between performers (Burnard 2015; Trondalen 2023). Even though music has a social dimension, instrumental teaching in art and music schools has traditionally been offered as one-to-one lessons (SOU 2016:69). The increasing interest in group tuition as method – both in Sweden and globally – is often referred to by its advocates as a pedagogical tool; group tuition's social dimension takes advantage of the positive effects for learning (Hallam 2010). Children are also said to enjoy doing things together (SOU 2016:69).

Music making is said to lead participants to become more tolerant, accepting, and socially ethical (Hallam 2010). It is also argued that musical activities build reciprocity, thus strengthening peer acceptance (Ratliff 2021). Burnard (2015) finds that group music making can create a sense of inclusion, because everyone contributes to the collective musical result.

Social justice in music education

Music education researchers argue that because of music education's social dimension it has the potential to convey democratic values to pupils, fostering socially responsible future citizens (for example, Burnard 2015; Cooke 2015; Horsley & Woodford 2015; Jorgensen 2015; Karlsen 2014). Social justice, however, is a concept that has many definitions and is

often mentioned in discussions of class, ethnicity, and gender equality. The skewed population of after-school music programmes, where children from marginalised urban areas are under-represented, has in recent years been a focus not only for Swedish research on art and music schools, but also internationally. Obstacles to children's equal participation are primarily a lack of financial resources, a lack of knowledge about the activity, a feeling that the activity is not for them, and difficulties for pupils to travel to (distant) locations for lessons (Benedict et al. 2015; Westerlund et al. 2018).

One effort to reduce the skewed population attending art and music schools has been the implementation of the 'visionary global movement' El Sistema in programmes which in Sweden are usually run by art and music schools (El Sistema n.d.). The basic principle of El Sistema is that all learning takes place in group settings and the goal is to develop musical and extra-musical skills and abilities in children from marginalised areas. Historically, music education has had a problematic relationship with social justice. Music has been viewed as intellectually and morally beneficial for, for example, marginalised children: music education would enrich their lives and lead to children becoming civilised citizens (McCarthy 2015). Research shows that El Sistema in Gothenburg presents a picture where music is linked to sound moral values; by offering music education to those previously not reached by it, their lives are expected to change in an obviously good way (Kuuse et al. 2016). As an example, Bergman, Lindgren and Sæther (2016) cite one teacher who states that if the children learn to bow in the same direction, they do not go out and fight afterwards. Music teaching is seen more as a method for social work and behavioural change. But, according to Bates (2016), offering the dominant culture as a way to defeat poverty serves first and foremost as a justification of dominance and thus can have the opposite effect, consolidating inequalities. Targeted efforts, such as El Sistema in Sweden, may thus have negative, unintended effects, strengthening socially unjust structures.

According to Borchert (2012) and Bull (2016), the El Sistema programme has distinctly neoliberal overtones, emphasising everyone's individual responsibility for success in life through discipline and hard work. Equally distributed resources should, in a neoliberal perspective, allow everyone to reach the same goal. With the eagerness to target vulnerable social groups through music education comes the risk of a rhetoric of salvation. The members of the community concerned are excluded from decision-making; supposedly, they do not understand what is in their best interests (Borchert 2012). Additionally, it may be downright unethical to define a demarcated area as deficient or marginalised (Creech et al. 2013).

The difficult question of how to enact social justice in music education is better addressed to music student teachers already in higher education. However, there is no clear, unanimous picture of what social justice is and how it should be implemented in the curriculum. In Salvador and Kelly-McHale's survey study (2017), 10–15 per cent of American music teacher educators rejected the need to address social justice in their courses, either because they did not consider it their job or they thought it was pointless and would only eat into the time for what they believed was more important content, while 29 per cent of the music teacher educators said they lacked knowledge to cover social justice in their music education courses (Salvador & Kelly-McHale 2017).

Theoretical framework

Biesta's theoretical philosophy of education (2017) and how it affects teachers' expanding professionalism (Westerlund & Gaunt 2021) serves to direct the focus of the present study. Biesta (2017) argues for a teaching that is emancipatory and leads to democratic education. Additionally, the teachers who are to perform this democratic mission must expand their professionalism to include a democratic ambition (Westerlund & Gaunt 2021), and, in the

case of music education, not only transfer and convey musical and instrumental knowledge. This is not to say that teachers have no ambitions to provide a democratic education, but rather that teachers are responsible for acting as role models of democratic citizenship, which makes the implications of instrumental music teachers' expanding professionalism a key point to discuss, along with what social responsibility might bring to the practice.

Biesta (2017) argues that the primary task for the teacher is to help the pupil's personal development, and that education, as a project of formation in the broadest sense, should lead to the acceptance of others through constant dialogue. The ideal forms of collective living do not strive for consensus, but accept the presence of disagreement, and by extension he argues that education should evoke a desire to exist in the world in a 'grown-up' way, meaning a non-ego approach to the world that leaves room for other living beings, accepting that their desires may not be yours and they may not respond in the way you would like them to.

The discussion about equality in music education has concentrated on equal access (for example, Jääskeläinen & López-Íñiguez 2017). Equality in education is usually connected to the idea that everyone (individuals or groups of people) is given the same resources or opportunities, while equity recognises that there are different needs. Achieving equity requires targeted efforts to reach an equal outcome (MPH 2020), but even when resources are allocated according to the principles of equity, this may not mitigate the inequalities derived from historical power relations and social structures, leaving these structures unchallenged (Spruce 2017).

Method

The 2030 Agenda's policy document was subjected to a qualitative content analysis, a systematic and flexible method (Schreier 2014), which is designed to be analytical but not rigid (Krueger & Casey 2015). Selection criteria were stipulated beforehand, based on their applicability in instrumental group music education for children – thus excluding targets which could be relevant for singing (for example, making music with lyrics with the possibility of addressing all 17 SDGs), or artistic, community work. Table 1 shows the SDG targets deemed relevant.

Table 1. The 17 SDG targets with a direct bearing on education.

SDG	SDG Target	Description
SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well- being for all at all ages.	3.4	By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and promote mental health and well-being.
SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.	4.1	By 2030, ensure all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
	4.2	By 2030, ensure all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
	4.5	By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations

	4.7	By 2030, ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
	4.a	Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all
SDG 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	5.1	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
	5.5	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
	5.c	Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels
SDG 10 Reduce inequalities within and among countries.	10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.	11.a	Support positive economic, social, and environmental links between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas by strengthening national and regional planning.

Sustainable small-group instrumental teaching

In this section, sustainability in small-group instrumental teaching will be discussed in terms of the 2030 Agenda's SDGs. Five SDGs were found to be especially relevant for small-group instrumental teaching.

SDG 3 Good health and well-being

Making music has many potential health effects (Burnard & Dragovic 2015; DeNora 2007; Lindblad et al. 2007; Skånland 2013; Theorell 2009). It can promote sound mental health and well-being (SDG Target 3.4) and reduce stress, both through the music making itself and through its social context. When it comes to promoting well-being, group teaching may be an even more useful tool than one-to-one teaching. Feeling a sense of belonging in a group means that the pupil feels accepted, respected, included, and supported by others (Goodenow & Grady 1993).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO n.d.), well-being is a positive state that encompasses quality of life and a sense of meaning and purpose. Children's perceived mental health and well-being are strongly connected to their feeling of inclusion or exclusion in society (UNICEF 2023). Providing resources in the form of music education could reduce the health risks that come from living with a lack of resources. However, music and music education may not be solely good. Music may lead to reduced health and well-being; it can induce or exacerbate negative emotions or behaviour and auditory impairment (Chen 2023). Children who struggle with learning an instrument or experience tension

and discomfort when playing are more likely to stop (Kaladjev 2000; McPherson 2005), which can lead to a feeling of failure and negatively impact the child's well-being. Muscular tension and discomfort obviously affect children's well-being negatively. In more advanced settings, competition and pressure can lead to stress and anxiety; high expectations and the demands of performance may have a detrimental effect on children's mental well-being.

SDG 4 Quality education

Under Agenda 2030, gender disparities in education must be eliminated by 2030 and all levels of education must be accessible for all. SDG Target 4.7 emphasises all learners' right to acquire adequate knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development. UNICEF (2023) states that education is one of the most important factors in breaking social exclusion among children. Music education should thus convey both musical skill and knowledge and democratic values for a sustainable lifestyle.

Music education has the potential to contribute to SDG 4. Playing a musical instrument could promote stamina, foster creativity, and transfer self-assurance to other areas of life, which could affect outcomes in school. Hallam (2010) finds that social benefits such as making friends in a music group may increase an individual's self-esteem, which could lead to intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy. Group teaching, as opposed to individual teaching, could thus potentially enhance learning and strengthen motivation.

There is, however, a risk of overestimating the potential of music education to increase overall academic achievements. There may be other reasons for the correlation between children playing an instrument and their successful school performance: it could be the result of inherited characteristics, home environment, socioeconomic status, or certain personality traits (Hattie & Yates 2014; Klingberg 2011). Music education risks being regarded merely as method for supplementary teaching for primary school. The intrinsic value of music may disappear.

SDG 5 Gender equality

Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls can be discussed in an art and music schools' context in multiple ways. Gender equality in music education could affect and transform gender equality throughout society. Art and music schools are in a unique position to address issues such as the historical male dominance in composing and performing music.

Although Sweden is one of the most gender-equal countries in the world (World Economic Forum 2023), there are still improvements to be made in its art and music schools (Kulturrådet 2022). Gender inequality remains a problem in Western music education and not enough is being done to address the issue (Zimmerman et al. 2022). Doubleday (2008) argues that musical instruments are gendered because of tradition and social context – and not only in Western countries – and that stereotypes dictate which instruments girls and boys ought to play, with the flute often mentioned as a female instrument, while low brass is considered male (Conway 2000), affecting children's choices. Gender constructs in the music classroom, reproducing gender values and norms, hinder identities from being shaped and reshaped (Zimmerman et al. 2022).

SDG 10 Reduced inequalities

Like all countries, Sweden is struggling with segregation and the growing gaps between socioeconomic groups. SDG Target 10.2 states that social inclusion must be prioritised, irrespective of age, sex, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. When pupils are able to express themselves and wield influence, they sense the potential for changing their circumstances, that society cares for them, and that they are socially included.

Music can thus be a tool to amplify marginalised voices. It is also possible to engage pupils in projects that address social justice issues. Since any art and music school is an educational institution, it can reduce inequality by providing an accessible and democratic education. Targeted efforts to ensure equal access to art and music schools is fundamental.

Targeting groups that rarely attend extra-curricular music education could be unintentionally stigmatising, however, reinforcing their oppressed situation with the rhetoric of salvation. There is also a risk of oversimplification: there are multiple reasons for social exclusion and the main factor is unlikely to be a historical lack of music education.

SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities

Cultural activities can help build a stronger sense of community and engagement in the local geographical area. Targeted efforts to reach communities who rarely attend art and music schools activities could help achieve this. Equally, though, there is a risk that targeting certain communities makes them negatively distinctive groups. There is also a risk of a top–down approach, where the community's needs are disregarded. Additionally, targeting specific urban areas that are labelled as marginalised does not address inequalities within urban areas that are considered rich. It could also be questioned whether real integration occurs if these targeted efforts are limited to specifically demarcated geographical areas where children only meet and socialise with children with similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

The downsides

The SDG targets are strongly interrelated and interact reciprocally. There is the potential for achieving the SDGs through music education (Table 1), but an awareness of the unintended side effects is important (Table 2). The SDGs can be a double-edged sword.

Table 2. The ramifications of SDGs for small-group instrumental teaching.

SDG	Potential benefits	Potential risks or limitations
SDG 3 Good health and well-being	Mindfully playing an instrument could ***reduce stress***. Feeling a ***sense of belonging*** in a music group could enhance pupils' ***wellbeing***.	Risk of ***hearing impairment***, the more musicians the louder the volume. ***Physical tensions*** or ***difficulties*** learning an instrument may cause pupils to quit, which could harm their well-being due to ***feelings of failure*** if not successful.
SDG 4 Quality education	Engaging in after school music programmes could have a transfer effect to compulsory school subjects, leading to ***empowerment*** such as building ***resilience*** and ***confidence***.	Risk of an ***instrumental view*** of instrumental music education, losing its intrinsic value. Risk of ***overestimating*** music education's potential impact.
SDG 5 Gender equality	Boys and girls cooperate on ***equal terms*** when playing together.	Risk of reproducing musical instruments' inherently ***gendered connotations*** and the ***skewed gender participation*** ratio in arts schools in general and impacting which subject boys and girls choose based on tradition.

SDG 10 Reduced inequalities	Amplify marginalised voices and ***promote inclusion***.	Risk of ***overestimating*** music education's potential impact and ***simplifying*** the multifactorial causes of marginalisation. Risk of a ***rhetoric of salvation*** and ***stigmatisation***.
SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities	Promote ***community engagement*** through targeted after school music programmes. Build a stronger sense of ***community***.	Risk of certain communities becoming ***negatively distinctive***. Risk of a ***top–down*** approach, where the community's needs are disregarded.

Discussion

Turning to the potential of small-group instrumental teaching, the democratic education philosophy according to Biesta (2017, 2021) and expanding professionalism according to Westerlund and Gaunt (2021) offer fresh ways of thinking about music teachers' social responsibility in terms of the 2030 Agenda. The question remains of how best to balance good intentions and potential effects and side effects.

The potential of small-group teaching

This article's focus on small-group instrumental teaching is based on the notion that this form of teaching has the potential to emphasise human rights and equality and to convey democratic values, so contributing to the global commitment of the 2030 Agenda. This democratic potential could be enhanced by teachers expanding their professionalism to include social responsibility and political ambitions to reduce inequality.

The hierarchical relationship between adult teachers and young pupils may be reduced when multiple pupils are taught simultaneously, creating a sense of safety for the children, which in many ways makes group teaching more democratic than individual teaching. To act democratically, teacher–pupil interaction should be grounded in mutual respect, and pupils should contribute to the shaping of music lessons. Musical democracy entails pupils listening to one another and adapting to the group. This is very much in line with Biesta's philosophy: education should ultimately result in global citizens who approach the world with respect and acceptance of every living being. Since every child has different learning abilities, teachers must balance the pace of progression to offer all pupils attainable, meaningful teaching. If children quit because they cannot keep up with the group, there will probably be negative consequences if they feel as if they have failed. One of the immanent risks of group teaching is of course the reduced possibility of individualising the teaching.

Children participating in an instrumental music group learn that everyone (regardless of gender or ethnicity) is equally important for a successful musical result. They learn to accept one another's different abilities while working towards a musical goal, creating a sense of belonging. Teachers who act democratically in their teaching convey democratic values; their understanding of social justice may influence didactic, pedagogical decisions (Spruce 2017).

Music teachers' social responsibility

A changing society and contemporary challenges mean that the idea of professionalism must expand to include an emphasis on professional ethics and code of conduct, and greater sensitivity to social and civic responsibility, accountability, and purpose (Cribb & Gewirtz

2015; Westerlund & Gaunt 2021). Much, if not all, of the responsibility of creating a democratic ethos in music education falls to teachers. However, the new challenge of taking on its socially responsible dimensions may be unsettling for teaching practice (Westerlund & Gaunt 2021), at least for professionals who are not inherently interested in social issues, but think of themselves as musicians or music teachers first. According to Sloboda (2015), most people who become music teachers do so for the love of music, not for a love for social justice, but since UNCRC (1989) is enshrined in the Swedish constitution, art and music schools teachers are required to take on this social and moral responsibility. That said, music educators can hardly be expected to pursue democratic teaching unless they have some sense of what democracy might mean to them, to their pupils, and to the society in which they operate. Teachers' ideas of social justice and democratic teaching can be developed through critical reflection. Central here is music teacher education, which can play a significant role in the transition to a more socially responsible instrumental music education.

Balancing good intentions and potential outcomes

Music and the arts, according to Bergman and Lindgren (2014), can never be politically neutral, because they are always anchored in a social or cultural context. Even classical music has normative connotations of what the 'fine arts' might be. Music cannot be assumed to be universally good; it is often used as a powerful political propaganda tool or medium (DeNora 2004; Gaunt et al. 2021) by anti-democratic forces.

What the literature identifies as the potential risks of El Sistema can spark critical reflection on the programmes or efforts to address social change through music education. Music education's potential for social change may be overestimated – expectations must be kept in check. There is also a risk of simply viewing music education programmes as beneficial for an entire social group, evaluating the overall picture such as the number of children reached by the targeted effort, but downplaying the impact on the individual child.

The democratic, inclusive potential of instrumental music education can be achieved only through equal access and equal output. The questions of the redistribution of resources, equality, and equity thus emerge. Today there are still no obstacles to attending an arts school; there are equal opportunities for all children in Sweden. However, due to the skewed recruitment and differing economic, cultural, and social conditions in society, there is a need for specifically targeted efforts and affordable – and equal – tuition fees. The cost discrepancies between local authorities are an issue that needs to be addressed, since this can impact democracy. However, it is uncertain that implementing the same tuition fee for all art and music schools will address the issue of skewed recruitment; there may be underlying social and cultural reasons for choosing not to partake in art and music schools activities, which cannot be addressed by only economic measures. Equality may not always be synonymous with equity.

Conclusion

This article sets out the links between small-group instrumental teaching and the 2030 Agenda's 17 SDGs. It is important to make the connections visible, because by definition the 2030 Agenda should permeate society, including art and music schools. Policies such as the 2030 Agenda stake out desirable courses of action. Critical reflection on the possible effects and side effects confirms the potential of small-group instrumental teaching to enhance quality of life and increase equality.

The identified risks cannot be easily eliminated with one simple solution, though. Local circumstances must be considered. The 2030 Agenda is not legally binding, which could result in vague, imprecise work towards meeting its goals. The UNCRC (1989), which is

enshrined in the Swedish constitution, emphasises children's right to express themselves. In art and music schools, this aim entails a focus on children's co-determination. The 2030 Agenda, however, is more holistic and comprehensive than the UNCRC in its democratic ambitions, covering all parts of human life. Therefore, it is important to actively work on several levels – research, policymaking, teacher education – to implement the 2030 Agenda in art and music schools. Highlighting the relevant aspects of the 2030 Agenda's 17 SDGs for small-group instrumental teaching calls for responsibility and accountability, but it remains essential if art and music schools are to reflect and defend democratic values and norms. ■

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Abstrakti

Agenda 2030: Ruotsin taide- ja musiikkikoulujen mahdollisuudet saavuttaa 17 kestävän kehityksen tavoitetta

Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan pienryhmässä annettavan instrumenttiopetuksen vaikutuksia musiikkikasvatukseen suhteessa kestävän kehityksen Agenda 2030:een ja erityisesti sen 17 kestävän kehityksen tavoitteeseen, joissa korostetaan ihmisoikeuksia, tasa-arvoa ja demokratiaa. Agenda 2030 ja pienryhmässä annettava instrumenttiopetus Ruotsin taide- ja musiikkikouluissa voivat mahdollisesti liittyä toisiinsa. Tutkimustuloksia voidaan soveltaa myös kansainvälisesti.

Kvalitatiivisen sisällönanalyysimenetelmän avulla valittiin SDG:ien olennaiset näkökohdat. Biestan (2017) demokraattisen opetuksen filosofia toimi linssinä, jonka kautta tarkasteltiin SDG:ien mahdollista yhteyttä soiton pienryhmäopetukseen. Westerlundin ja Gauntin (2021) esittämän laajentuvan ammatillisuuden teoreettisen käsitteen avulla käsiteltiin musiikinopettajien vastuuta sovelletusta demokratiasta käytännössään.

Keskeinen havainto on, että musiikkikasvatuksella on potentiaalia auttaa saavuttamaan kestävän kehityksen tavoitteita monin tavoin, ensisijaisesti lisäämällä terveyttä ja hyvinvointia (SDG 3), vähentämällä eriarvoisuutta (SDG 5, 10, 11) ja tarjoamalla helposti saatavilla olevaa, laadukasta koulutusta (SDG 4). On kuitenkin tärkeää olla tietoinen paitsi musiikkikasvatukseen liittyvistä mahdollisuuksista myös rajoituksista ja mahdollisista riskeistä. Kriittinen pohdinta on välttämätöntä. ■

Asiasanat: Agenda 2030, ammatillisuuden laajentaminen, ryhmäopetus, sosiaalinen vastuu, Ruotsin taide- ja musiikkikoulut

Abstract

This article considers the implications for music education of small-group instrumental teaching in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and specifically its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasise human rights, equality, and democracy. There is a potential connection between the 2030 Agenda and small-group instrumental teaching in Sweden's art and music schools. The research findings may also be applicable internationally.

Using a qualitative content analysis method, relevant aspects of the SDGs were selected. Biesta's philosophy (2017) of democratic teaching served as a lens through which to view the SDGs' potential connection to small-group instrumental teaching. The theoretical concept of expanding professionalism posited by Westerlund and Gaunt (2021) is used to address music teachers' responsibility for applied democracy in their practice.

The key finding is that music education has the potential to help achieve the SDGs in multiple ways, primarily by increasing health and well-being (SDG 3), reducing inequality (SDG 5, 10, 11), and providing accessible, high-quality education (SDG 4). However, it is important to be aware of not only the possibilities that come with music education, but also the limitations and potential risks. Critical reflection is essential. ■

Keywords: 2030 Agenda, expanding professionalism, group teaching, social responsibility, Swedish art and music schools