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Reviving Traditional Children's Games on the Slopes of Mount Arjuno: Heritage-Based Learning with the Sapen Nusantara Community

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ABSTRACT
Background: Children in Kelurahan Ledug, on the slopes of Mount Arjuno, grow up with open land and a community that still remembers its games, yet the games are rarely played: screen use has displaced outdoor play, and the organisation that kept them alive worked without a fixed budget or agreement with schools.
Purpose of the Study: To describe how a service-learning programme organised around heritage-based learning and Kolb's experiential cycle returned traditional games to children aged 7 to 12, and to establish what the evidence can support.
Methods: A qualitative-descriptive single-case account of mentoring that combined service-learning with Kolb's experiential learning cycle, carried out with Komunitas Kehati Sapen Nusantara in four phases: preparation, joint planning with the partner's facilitators, implementation culminating in a public festival, and evaluation. Data came from participant observation, photographs and video, activity records, an interview with the partner's founder and a parent questionnaire, triangulated, member-checked, and analysed thematically.
Results: The mentoring turned a remembered heritage back into a collective occasion. The partner moved from lending its park to co-designing and co-reviewing the programme; six games were revived with children, parents and residents; children played rule-governed group games in which older players taught younger ones; and the community kept the equipment, trained facilitators and a proposal for a monthly play session. Heritage-based learning worked as an experiential cycle inside a collective occasion, and its durability depends on making that occasion recur. These changes were observed rather than measured against a baseline.

Keywords
Traditional Games; Heritage-Based Learning; Experiential Learning; Service-Learning; Community Empowerment

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Introduction

Over the past two decades the place of play in childhood has shifted from the yard to the screen. The *Digital 2025 Global Overview Report*, compiled by DataReportal with We Are Social and Meltwater from GWI survey data on internet users aged 16 to 64, records that internet users in Indonesia spend an average of 7 hours 22 minutes online each day, above the global average of 6 hours 38 minutes, and that 98.7 percent of them go online with a mobile phone (Kemp, 2025a). The most recent country report, *Digital 2026: Indonesia*, published in November 2025 under a changed publication cycle, counts 230 million internet users, or 80.5 percent of the population (Kemp, 2025b). These are figures for adolescents and adults rather than for primary-school children, and they are used here only as context. Ignacio et al. (2025) describe the same shift in the Philippines, where games that once organised childhood and sustained social interaction, community ties, and physical activity have given way to individualised digital entertainment. For intangible heritage the consequence is precise rather than rhetorical: a game is transmitted by being played, so when play stops, transmission stops with it, and what remains is memory without practice.

Research on Indonesian traditional games has documented both the values they carry and the mechanisms by which those values are learned. Fitri et al. (2020) place traditional games within cultural heritage that requires protection, and read them as media that build togetherness and solidarity. Damayani et al. (2019) found that the values embedded in Sundanese games shape children's character, including honesty, leadership, cooperation, care for the environment, and cleanliness. Purba et al. (2024) reach a similar conclusion for Javanese *dolanan*, whose values of honesty, mutual aid, and cooperation they regard as necessary counterweights to foreign cultural influence, while Hidayati (2020) treats the games explicitly as a vehicle for character education and for the preservation of local wisdom. Andriati et al. (2025) moved from values to measurement: in a participatory ethnographic study of Kalimantan games, they reported gains of 33 percent in social cooperation and peer coordination, 43 percent in balance and perseverance, and 35 percent in numeracy and cultural pride. Nur and Wisnu Wijaya (2021) add a practical observation that matters for community programmes: traditional games are easy to learn and to modify, they carry sentimental value for parents, and they encode a local identity that distinguishes one district from another.

Heritage-based learning is used here in a specific sense. It denotes learning in which a living practice is at once the object, the medium and the setting of instruction: what is learned is not information about *dolanan* but the competence to play it and to hand it on; those who teach are the adults who still hold that competence, not a curriculum; the setting is the place where the practice lives, an open yard or a biodiversity park; and the continuity intended is repetition of the practice after the programme ends. This definition follows the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which defines intangible cultural heritage as practices and knowledge that communities recognise as part of their heritage, transmitted from generation to generation and constantly recreated, and which counts transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, among the measures of safeguarding (Article 2) (UNESCO, 2003). A traditional game fits that definition as a social practice whose existence depends on being played. The definition therefore places the study inside the discourse of intangible cultural heritage, which locates safeguarding in the continued practice of communities rather than in the documentation of their practices, and it separates heritage-based learning from heritage education organised around knowledge about an object, as in museum or classroom interpretation (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022; Tang et al., 2024).

Most of the evidence on traditional games comes from school settings, and that setting shapes what the evidence can show. Andriati et al. (2025) introduced Kalimantan games into early childhood classrooms and traced holistic development through a participatory ethnography;

Hidayati (2020) examined Indonesian games as a vehicle for character education in school; Çinar and Hassani (2026) tested the effect of traditional games on physical literacy among school-aged children. The pattern is not confined to Java. Besides the Kalimantan classrooms studied by Andriati et al., Purba et al. (2024) located the transmission of *dolanan* in Javanese families living in Binjai, North Sumatra, and Nur and Wisnu Wijaya (2021) built disaster education around traditional games in the Krakatau area of the Sunda Strait. Across these settings the evidence follows the institution that hosts the games: the school yields measured outcomes, the family yields values, and the disaster-education programme yields a curriculum. Community-service accounts exist too, Maulida et al. (2023), for instance, report character education through traditional games in a community programme, but they tend to record activities rather than analyse the occasion that makes repetition possible. Three things change when the site is community space rather than a classroom: the agent of transmission shifts from a teacher with a curriculum slot to a community organisation with a festival; the unit of participation shifts from an individual learner to a household and a neighbourhood; and the risk shifts from weak learning outcomes to the absence of any recurring occasion. Those shifts are what this article examines, and they explain why the outcomes reported below are collective and processual rather than individual and measured.

The site is Kelurahan Ledug, Kecamatan Prigen, Kabupaten Pasuruan, on the highland slopes of Mount Arjuno. The area is characterised by plantation land, mainly clove, and by open space that is still generous by urban standards, an environment that gives children room to move and to play outside. Social capital is also intact: family ties, traditions of mutual aid, and close relations with religious institutions remain part of daily life. In this area stands Taman Keanekaragaman Hayati Sapen Nusantara, hereafter Taman Kehati, a biodiversity park managed by Komunitas Kehati Sapen Nusantara, hereafter the Sapen Nusantara community, and connected to Lembaga Masyarakat Desa Hutan (LMDH) Bumi Lestari Mulyorejo. The park functions as an open learning space that combines environmental education with community activity, which is what made it a plausible host for a programme about play.

The partner is not a newly formed body. Komunitas Kehati Sapen Nusantara grew out of a group of young people who were first Taruna LMDH and later became a community that manages the park; the name Sapen refers to a forest block in the area rather than to an administrative village. According to its founder, the community has long run traditional game sessions with elementary schools, madrasah ibtidaiyah, madrasah tsanawiyah, junior secondary schools, and even a school for students with disabilities. Those sessions ran on limited capacity, without a standing budget, and without any formal cooperation agreement with the schools involved.

The founder frames traditional games through three functions, and the framing explains why the programme was designed as repeated exposure rather than as a single event. First, the games are understood as a patriotic movement that cultivates attachment to the country. Second, they educate for togetherness and teamwork on the basis of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, since almost every traditional game is played in groups. Third, they mark the nation's identity and distinguish Indonesia from other nations. In this account the obstacle to preservation is not a lack of interest: interest exists, but the container for it does not, because a collective game cannot be played alone and therefore needs an occasion, a schedule, or an institution to convene it. In the founder's words, recorded at the initial meeting: “There are many who are interested. What is missing is the facility, the container, because no traditional game can be played individually; it has to be in a group.” Asked why children no longer know the games, he answered: “Because no one introduces them.”

Policy at the district level has recognised the same heritage. At the ceremony marking the 1094th anniversary of Kabupaten Pasuruan on 18 September 2023, hundreds of elementary school pupils performed eleven traditional games before the regent and vice regent, from ular naga and dakon to egrang batok, engklek, lompat tali, and a giant klompen; the chair of the district's community sports committee at the time expressed the hope that the games would not remain a

ceremonial spectacle but would be practised in the neighbourhoods where children live, so that they could draw children away from device dependence (Pemerintah Kabupaten Pasuruan, 2023). That hope had not been realised at community level. In an initial observation carried out by the mentoring team with the founder of the partner organisation, traditional games were found to be rarely played in everyday life, while access to devices had become easier; the same observation identified three requirements for any intervention: sustained mentoring, available play equipment, and a safe place to play.

Taken together, these conditions defined the problem in three priorities. First, children's knowledge of and skill in traditional games is low, because the games no longer have a channel of inheritance: children meet devices earlier than they meet the games of their own neighbourhood. Second, dependence on devices is high and no scheduled alternative exists, so leisure time is largely filled by screens while outdoor play has no regular pattern. Third, no structured learning model connects traditional games, environmental conservation education, and religious values in a single sequence that a community organisation can run on its own. This formulation rests on field observation, informal interviews, and discussion with the partner rather than on a large-scale baseline survey; the parent questionnaire was administered only once, at the culmination of the programme, and it is therefore treated in this article as a portrait of conditions at the time of the programme, not as a pre-test.

The programme set itself three objectives: to obtain a picture of children's initial knowledge, skill, and interest in traditional games together with their everyday device habits; to design and deliver a service-learning strategy built on experiential learning, realised through direct play in open space and in the biodiversity park, reflection on values with religious figures and facilitators, understanding of the games as heritage tied to the living environment, and the making of equipment and teaching of peers; and to describe the outcomes of that process together with a plan for continuity agreed with the partner. The social change expected from the activity operates at three levels: children gain a repertoire of play and a reason to value it, the community gains a recurring occasion and trained facilitators, and local policy gains a tested model that can be attached to school extracurricular programmes or to a district calendar. The contribution of the article is a documented account of that model and an honest account of the evidence it does and does not produce. The account ends in a proposition about how a game is transmitted, which is stated in the Discussion together with the evidence that would refute it.

Method

The article is a qualitative-descriptive account of a single case. The activity used service-learning combined with Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb & Kolb, 2022). Service-learning was chosen because it joins two interests in one design: a service to the community, here the return of traditional games to children's daily life, and a meaningful learning experience for the participants. Experiential learning was chosen because it treats experience as the source of knowledge rather than casting children as passive recipients of information. Chan (2012) showed through a qualitative study that the four components of Kolb's cycle do the work of transforming experience in a community project, while Morris (2020) argues in a systematic review and revision of the model that concrete experience is educative only when it is context-rich, when it demands inquiry into a real problem, and when critical reflection mediates it. Gallop et al. (2023) add that community service-learning produces different outcomes from conventional practica precisely because the community, not the classroom, sets part of the task. These three findings shaped the design: the experience was placed in the children's own environment, the reflection was structured rather than left to chance, and the agenda was negotiated with the partner.

The subjects of the mentoring were children aged 7 to 12 in Kelurahan Ledug who attend the elementary schools and madrasah ibtidaiyah around Taman Kehati, together with their parents or guardians, and the facilitators of the Sapen Nusantara community. Children were invited through school networks and the community's neighbourhood ties. The mentoring team, two lecturers working with five to seven of the partner's facilitators, ran the programme between October and December 2026, with Taman Kehati as its base. Religious figures, the kelurahan administration and residents took part as supporting actors.

The mentoring moved through four phases, shown in Figure 1. In the first, preparation and mapping, the mentoring team and the partner's founder observed how children spent their free time, identified the children to be invited, and agreed on roles; the team also recorded an interview with the founder. In the second, planning, the team and the partner's facilitators met in a focus group discussion of twelve people and decided together the sequence of activities, who would accompany the children, which games to revive, and how to divide the work: the partner took charge of participants and equipment, and the team of design and documentation. In the third, implementation, the facilitators accompanied the children through the games while the team supported them, materials were gathered from the surroundings, and the programme culminated in a single public day that combined conservation education, a campaign for healthy living without devices, and a festival of traditional games. In the fourth, evaluation and continuity, the team and the partner reviewed the programme together and discussed what the community would continue on its own.

The cycle was designed as four steps to be repeated for each game. In concrete experience, children play the game directly, with a facilitator explaining the rules and joining in. In reflective observation, the facilitator gathers the children after a round to talk about what happened, such as fairness, cheating or helping a teammate, and a local religious figure links what they say to values such as honesty (*shidiq*) and fellowship (*ukhuwah*). In abstract conceptualisation, children are helped to see the game as heritage that survives only when it is passed on, and to connect it with health and care for the environment. In active experimentation, children make or repair equipment from local materials and teach the game to younger children. The design was participatory and contextual: content was not derived from the formal curriculum but composed with the partner from local potential, including bamboo, wood, and rope, and the partner's role extended beyond the provision of a site to the facilitation of sessions, the accompaniment of children, and the choice of games that fit local custom.

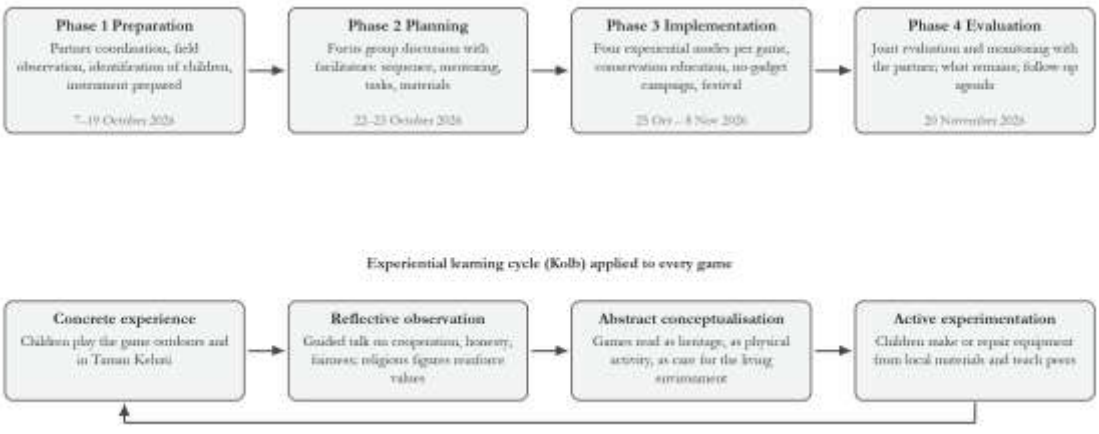


Figure 1. Programme design: four phases and the experiential cycle applied to each game. Source: drawn by the mentoring team from the programme records.

Data were gathered in five ways: participant observation during the activities, photographs and video, the narrative records kept for each activity, an interview with the partner's founder, and

a questionnaire for parents or guardians. The questionnaire was built for this programme rather than borrowed. Its fifteen closed items cover device use, outdoor play, recognition and frequency of play of the four core games (Gledekan, Gobak Sodor, Egrang Bambu and Cublak-Cublak Suweng), the child's interest, the family's practice of teaching games, the perceived benefit for character, the availability of safe play space, and parental support, with one column for additional notes.

Qualitative material from the activity records, observation notes and the interview was analysed thematically following the procedure of Miles et al. (2014): collection, reduction and coding, display of themes, and drawing of conclusions. Interview quotations were edited from the automatic transcription and translated from Indonesian without changing their meaning. Triangulation compared the activity records, the photographic record, and the interview, and member checking was carried out by confirming the account of each activity with the partner at the evaluation forum. Because no measurement was taken before the programme, the changes reported in the Result are those observed during and at the end of the mentoring, not effects estimated against a baseline.

Result

From venue to co-designer: building the plan with the community

The first change appeared before any child played. In earlier collaborations the Sapen Nusantara community had lent its park to visiting programmes; in this one its facilitators sat with the mentoring team to decide what the programme would be. The planning forum settled the sequence of activities, the method of accompaniment, the choice of games and the division of labour, and two of its decisions changed the design. The facilitators asked that they, not the visiting team, accompany the children in every session, because the children already knew them; and they chose the games from those that residents still remembered and that local materials could support. The partner's founder framed the problem the programme was solving in his own terms: “There are many who are interested. What is missing is the facility, the container, because no traditional game can be played individually; it has to be in a group.”

Mentoring through play: accompanied sessions, local materials and a public occasion

Mentoring was organised around the children's own environment. Facilitators accompanied the children through the games in the open areas of Taman Kehati, and materials were gathered locally rather than bought as finished equipment: bamboo and wood for frames, rope, balls, and household items such as bamboo steamers and winnowing trays. The programme then brought its parts together in one public day, which combined conservation education about the plants of the park, a campaign for healthy living without devices addressed to children and parents together, and the Festival Dolanan Tradisional under the theme *Nguri-uri Kabudayan Jawa lan Mbangun Kebersamaan*. Six games were revived for the festival (Table 1). The budget was half of what the proposal had assumed and the calendar was bound to school days and religious observances, so the mentoring team gave priority to accompanied play, local materials, conservation education, the campaign and the festival, and reduced the number of separate guided sessions.

Table 1: Games revived at the festival, the values and skills engaged, and the equipment used

Game or competition	Values and skills engaged	Equipment
Naga-nagaan (ula-ularan)	Cooperation, group cohesion, rhythm of collective movement	Rope and line formation
Cublak-Cublak Suweng	Concentration, recognition of a Javanese children's song, honesty	No special equipment
Ball throwing with a sarong	Coordination between participants, group cohesion	Ball and sarong
Dampar Kaki	Balance, agility, mutual support	Properties of bamboo and wood
Nail into a bottle	Patience, hand–eye coordination, cooperation	Nail and bottle
Eating crackers from a steamer	Shared enjoyment, sportsmanship	Bamboo steamer and crackers

The design of the games was deliberate rather than decorative. Naga-nagaan and ball throwing with a sarong require participants to move as one unit, so a child who plays selfishly breaks the game for everyone; Cublak-Cublak Suweng requires concentration and the recovery of a children's song that many participants had not sung before; Dampar Kaki demands balance and trust in a partner; the nail and cracker competitions reward patience, coordination, and good humour in defeat. Read against the values catalogued in earlier studies of Javanese and Sundanese games, the festival staged honesty, cooperation, perseverance, and togetherness in a form children experienced rather than heard about.



Figure 2. A child attempts to drop a nail into a bottle during the festival, watched by residents and facilitators.

Changes observed among children, families and the community

Three changes in how children played were observed during the mentoring. First, children stayed with the sequence: the festival ran as a series of segments, and the same children moved from the conservation session through one game to the next rather than leaving after a single race. Second, children played collective games under rules without an adult enforcing them, and older children began to organise younger ones, placing them in the line, explaining turns, and holding the sarong for a smaller child rather than competing with him (Figure 3). Third, children who had not known Cublak-Cublak Suweng learned its song within the session and sang it while playing. These are the behaviours the games were chosen to produce, and they are the first signs of the

older-to-younger transmission on which the survival of a game depends.



Figure 3. Group play in the open area of Taman Kehati: children passing a ball with a sarong.

Families changed their role as well. Parents and guardians came as participants rather than as spectators: they stayed through the festival, completed the questionnaire on site, and residents helped with equipment and acted as marshals. In the community, the change was institutional. The partner, which had lent its park to earlier programmes, hosted the evaluation forum together with the mentoring team, and at that forum proposed to continue with a monthly play session run by its own facilitators. The founder named the obstacle that the forum still had to overcome: schools had accepted the idea of a traditional-games activity in principle but could not budget it. Table 2 sets out what remained with the community at the end of the mentoring, who holds each item, and what remains to be done.

Table 2: What remained with the community after the mentoring: materials, capacities and commitments

Type	Item	Form	Owner
Material	Play equipment	Games made from bamboo, wood, rope and household materials	Sapen Nusantara community, at Taman Kehati
Capacity	Facilitators	Five to seven facilitators who know the sequence	Sapen Nusantara community
Capacity	Monitoring instrument	Fifteen-item parent questionnaire, usable as a baseline	Mentoring team
Commitment	Regular play session	Monthly session run by trained facilitators at Taman Kehati	Sapen Nusantara community
Commitment	School activity and equipment	Games placed in schools for use at break	Partner, with the schools
Commitment	District calendar	Annual district event with a named owner	No owner yet; district agencies and sports bodies

The changes reported here are those that could be seen while the mentoring ran and at its close. They show what the community gained in practice, capacity and intention; they do not show how far each child's knowledge or skill improved, which would require a measurement before the

mentoring and a record per child, and they do not show whether children kept playing after the festival. Where the partner reports that children from earlier sessions, now in senior secondary school, still recall the games, that is testimony from a practitioner, not a measurement.

Discussion

Heritage-based learning as the organising frame

The programme treated traditional games as heritage to be learned rather than as content to be announced, and that choice connects it to the literature on heritage education. Achille and Fiorillo (2022) argue that teaching and learning about cultural heritage succeeds when it engages learners in experience, professional training, and experimental activity rather than confining them to information about heritage; Tang et al. (2024) found that an intangible cultural heritage curriculum built on experiential learning theory improved students' understanding of that heritage. The festival reported here is an application of the same principle at community level: the unit of learning was not a description of Cublak-Cublak Suweng but the act of playing it, singing it, losing at it, and then teaching it. What makes the case worth reporting is the site: heritage learning normally takes place in a classroom with a teacher, whereas here it took place in a biodiversity park with a community organisation as the host, and the conserving institution and the transmitting institution were the same body.

Read against Kolb's cycle as revised by Morris (2020), the programme realises the four modes with unequal weight, and the records allow that judgement to be partly quantified. The proposal planned eight days of guided play, two for each core game, and twelve sessions of guided value reflection of about fifteen minutes each, led by a local religious figure. The record shows one session of game learning and reflection, with no note of its duration or of who led it, followed by the festival. Concrete experience is therefore the best-evidenced mode: the festival photographs show children playing six games in open space. Active experimentation is documented in part, through the procurement of materials and the festival, though the making of equipment by children and the teaching of peers are not separately recorded. Reflective observation is the weakest-evidenced mode: one session is logged against twelve planned, and at the festival reflection took place only in the intervals between games. Abstract conceptualisation rests on the conservation session and the festival theme, which were delivered but not timed. The judgement of unequal weight is thus grounded in a count of planned against recorded sessions, while the finer ranking among the modes remains the mentoring team's reading of the festival record. The imbalance is instructive rather than accidental: when a programme is compressed by budget and calendar, the modes that suffer first are those that require unhurried time with a guide, namely reflection and conceptualisation. Chan (2012) and Morris (2020) both locate the transformative work of the cycle in reflection rather than in activity, which suggests that a community programme of this kind should protect reflection time before it protects the number of games staged.

The partner's diagnosis changed the problem the programme was solving. On the partner's account, interest in traditional games is abundant; what is missing is a container, because almost every game is collective and cannot be played alone. That diagnosis agrees with the literature, which treats Indonesian traditional games as inherently social forms (Fitri et al., 2020; Hidayati, 2020). It also explains why the intervention took the form of a festival rather than a campaign: a campaign addresses ignorance, whereas a festival addresses the absence of an occasion. Gallop et al. (2023) distinguish community service-learning from conventional practica by the agency of the community in defining the task. This case shows what that agency produces: the sequence settled with facilitators, the games chosen from those residents know, materials bought from local suppliers, the final review hosted by the partner; Chan (2012) reports a similar strengthening of ownership. The corollary is less comfortable. A festival is a container with a date, and unless the

occasion recurs, the container empties again.

The programme's theory of change is a proposition rather than a finding: a game survives when an older player and a younger player meet in the same occasion often enough for the practice to be remembered and to be wanted again. The proposition draws on work on the intergenerational transmission of traditional skills (Poleć et al., 2024) and on the observation that parents who played the games can teach them and value them sentimentally (Nur & Wisnu Wijaya, 2021). Three observations from the programme are consistent with it. Children who had not sung Cublak-Cublak Suweng learned the song within a session; older children instructed younger ones without being asked; and the partner reports that pupils who joined earlier sessions, now in senior secondary school, still recall specific matches. One observation is not consistent with it: no follow-up recorded whether any child played again in the weeks after the festival, so the proposition stays untested where it matters most, which is repetition. The partner's practice of one to two hours of practice before any competition suggests that repetition is what turns interest into habit, but this programme neither scheduled nor measured it.

The proposition can be refuted, and stating how makes clear what the next cycle must record. It would be falsified if children who attend a recurring occasion, for example a monthly session held for one school semester, play the games outside the occasion no more often than comparable children who do not attend; if, in such sessions, older children do not teach younger ones unless an adult directs them; or if the games turn out to persist in the neighbourhood without any convened occasion at all. Testing it therefore needs three records that this programme did not keep: an attendance sheet at every session, a short report from parents on play outside the sessions at the start and at the end of the semester, and an observation note on who teaches whom.

It would be easy to read this study as finding less than Andriati et al. (2025) or Çinar and Hassani (2026), who report gains in cooperation, balance and physical literacy. The difference is one of design rather than of outcome: those studies measured children before and after an intervention, whereas this programme recorded what was delivered and what was observed while it ran. A post-only design can establish reach, participation and the quality of the occasion; it cannot establish change. The games staged here map onto the same domains, as Naga-nagaan and ball throwing with a sarong train coordination and cooperation, Dampar Kaki trains balance and the nail competition trains hand–eye coordination, so the programme plausibly produced effects of the kind those studies measured, but plausibility is not evidence and is not reported as such. What this case adds is different in kind: evidence that a community organisation can convene the occasion at all, and that the occasion, not the game alone, is the unit that has to be organised.

Implications for practice

Four implications follow for community organisations and for universities that work with them, and each is tied to a row of Table 2 so that the reader can see whether it builds on an existing capacity or on a commitment not yet secured. First, make the occasion recurring before making it large: a monthly session at Taman Kehati, run by the facilitators trained in the planning forum, is more likely to sustain transmission than an annual festival; this draws on a capacity already in place (Table 2, Facilitators) but depends on a commitment not yet agreed (Table 2, Regular play session). Second, put equipment where children already spend time, so that games can be played at break rather than only at events; the partner's proposal to place traditional game equipment in schools is the most inexpensive form of continuity available, and it rests on equipment that exists (Table 2, Play equipment) and on a commitment accepted only in principle (Table 2, School activity and equipment). Third, treat competition as a trigger rather than as an endpoint, following the partner's practice of scheduled practice sessions before any match. Fourth, design the evaluation with the delivery: a one-page skill checklist per child, completed at the first and last session, and an attendance sheet at every event, cost almost nothing and would have converted this account into an evaluation of effect; the instrument for a baseline already exists (Table 2, Monitoring

instrument). A designated documentation officer for each session protects the record from the pressures of the day.

Implications for policy

The policy discussion that follows is a recommendation grounded in one case, not a causal sequence that the data establish. Three events in this programme bear on it, and each can be dated. A community organisation convened the games on 8 November 2026 and hosted the review on 20 November 2026, where the monthly session was proposed, which shows that the capacity exists outside schools. The schools that accepted the idea of an extracurricular activity in principle could not budget it under efficiency measures, as the partner's founder reported in the interview of 7 October 2026; the acceptance itself predates the programme and its date was not recorded, which shows where the sequence breaks. The district had already staged traditional games at scale on a ceremonial occasion on 18 September 2023, which shows that public recognition is available but has not been attached to a recurring occasion. On that reading the recommendation is to convert recognition into a calendar: a named owner, a fixed month and a small set of games, with community organisations as delivering partners rather than recipients of assistance. The partner proposed a concrete first step in the same interview: of some fifty games, to agree on ten and place them in the district calendar before expanding. The 2003 UNESCO Convention places community participation at the centre of safeguarding (UNESCO, 2003), and this case shows what that principle looks like applied literally. Whether such a calendar improves transmission is a question this study cannot answer; it can only report that what was missing was frequency, and that frequency is a policy variable.

Transferability

Two elements of this design depend on the Sapen Nusantara context and would not travel unchanged. The first is the site: an open biodiversity park with a manager willing to host, materials at hand and children living within walking distance is not available everywhere. The second is the partner's accumulated standing with schools, which made recruitment possible without formal agreements. What travels more easily is the sequence: a planning forum with the people who will actually run the sessions; four experiential modes repeated for every game, with reflection protected rather than left to the end; equipment made from what the locality provides; and a public occasion as the culmination. A university working elsewhere can adopt that sequence with a different partner, provided it accepts the same discipline: that the community defines the problem, and that the evaluation is designed before the first session rather than after the last.

Limitations

The limitations of this account are methodological and are stated plainly. No measurement was taken before the programme began, so no change can be attributed to it; the parent questionnaire was administered once, on the day of the festival, and its returns had not been tabulated at the time of writing, so it cannot serve as a baseline or as an outcome measure; no checklist recorded individual children's mastery of the four core games; and attendance lists were not compiled, so the number of participants cannot be reported. Of the twelve guided reflection sessions planned, one is logged and none has notes, so the reflective part of the design is the least evidenced. The instrument itself was not validated, which limits the weight that any future use of it can carry. The design is a single case with one partner, which limits transferability, and the account of long-term recall rests on the partner's testimony. These limits do not invalidate the documentation of delivery, which is complete for eight activities and corroborated by photographs and by member checking, but they do bound the claims that can be made.

Conclusion

The mentoring turned a remembered heritage back into a collective occasion, and that is its main result. The programme set out to establish a picture of children's relation to traditional games, to deliver a service-learning strategy built on experiential learning, and to describe the outcomes of that process together with an agreed plan for continuity. On the first, the observation and the interview showed that interest in the games was abundant while the collective occasion for playing them had disappeared. On the second, the strategy was delivered with the community rather than for it: the partner moved from lending its park to co-designing and co-reviewing the programme, six games were revived with children, parents and residents, and the experiential sequence was realised most fully as play and least fully as guided reflection. On the third, the changes that emerged were social rather than individual: children played rule-governed group games in which older players taught younger ones, parents took part rather than watched, and the community kept the equipment, trained facilitators and a proposal for a monthly play session. These changes were observed during the mentoring rather than measured against a baseline.

The theoretical proposition the case supports is narrow and worth stating plainly. Heritage-based learning of this kind operates as an experiential cycle inside a collective occasion: the game supplies the concrete experience, guided conversation supplies reflection, the festival theme and the conservation session supply conceptualisation, and the making of equipment and teaching of peers supply active experimentation. When the cycle is compressed, the guided modes thin first, and what remains is skilled play without an articulated reason to preserve it. Its durability therefore depends on making the occasion recur. The proposition would be refuted if children who attend a recurring occasion play the games no more often outside it than children who do not.

Three recommendations follow, each with an actor and a point in time. For the Sapen Nusantara community, the priority is frequency: a monthly session at Taman Kehati run by the facilitators who took part in the planning forum, beginning in the next school semester, with equipment placed where children already spend their days. For the programme team, the priority is evaluation designed together with delivery: a baseline administered before the first session of the next cycle, a one-page skill checklist per child, a record of each reflection session, and an attendance sheet at every event, none of which requires additional budget. For the district education and culture office, the priority is a calendar rather than a ceremony: a fixed month and a named owner for a small set of games, with community organisations as delivering partners, to be settled when the coming year's event calendar is set. What remains after this programme is small and real: equipment made from local materials, facilitators who know the sequence, a park that has hosted the games, an instrument that can serve as a baseline, and a community that has stated in its own words what it intends to do next.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funding body had no role in the design of the activity, in the collection and interpretation of documentation, or in the decision to publish this article.

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