

Sustainable Development Recast for Posterity: Fostering Global Peace, Harmony, Love and Happiness through Art, Music and Sports

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Abstract

This paper critically discusses how the ideal of Sustainable Development can be redefined towards global peace, harmony, love and happiness. The paper argues that with the world facing challenges such as conflicts and wars, there is need to recast Sustainable Development by embracing more appropriate approaches towards achieving this ideal for posterity. In particular, the paper observes that art, music and sports provide novel and innovative solutions that accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development. The paper discusses how art, music and sports can be effectively harnessed all over the world towards fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness for Sustainable Development, now and in the future.

1.0 Introduction

Sustainable Development has emerged as a vital ideal all over the world in the pursuit of global peace and harmony. Sustainable Development refers to development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs¹. In particular, it has been observed that Sustainable Development focuses on promoting environmental protection and conservation, economic development and social equity towards ensuring human progress and prosperity while simultaneously tackling harmful environmental trade-offs that historically accompany socio-economic growth². According to the United Nations, Sustainable Development envisions how we must live today if we want to ensure a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs³. Sustainable Development can therefore be described as both an ideal and principle geared towards meeting human development goals and needs while at the same time ensuring the ability of nature to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depends⁴.

The United Nations *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*⁵ provides a framework for achieving the global ideal of Sustainable Development through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which provide

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¹ World Commission on Environment and Development., 'Our Common Future.' Oxford, (Oxford University Press, 1987)

² Fitzmaurice. M., 'The Principle of Sustainable Development in International Development Law.' *International Sustainable Development Law.*, Vol I

³ United Nations., 'Sustainable Development' Available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2023/08/what-is-sustainable-development/> (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

⁴ Mensah. J., 'Sustainable Development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review' *Cogent Social Sciences*, Volume 5, Issue 1

⁵ United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at

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an integrated approach that balances the social, economic and environmental facets of development⁶. It has been observed that attaining the SDGs is vital in ensuring a peaceful, prosperous, harmonious and sustainable world for the benefit of present and future generations⁷. In particular, it has been pointed out that fostering global peace and harmony is a prerequisite for Sustainable Development. For example, without peace and harmony, societies and nations are often plagued by conflict, violence, and instability, which can hinder Sustainable Development and result in the loss of lives and resources⁸. Nations and societies that are plagued with violence, conflicts, wars and insecurity often suffer from high levels of poverty and underdevelopment⁹. For instance, in conflict-ridden situations, development operations are disrupted due to the unreliable social services resulting in the prevalence of social problems such as poverty, hunger and inequality¹⁰.

With the world facing socio-economic challenges including poverty, rising inequalities within and among nations, gender inequalities, unemployment, global health threats and conflicts, the pursuit of Sustainable Development continues to be undermined¹¹. Global wars and conflicts are undermining the attainment of peace, harmony, love and happiness with negative impacts on Sustainable Development for both people and planet¹². Consequently, fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness is a prerequisite for Sustainable Development.

This paper critically discusses how the ideal of Sustainable Development can be redefined towards global peace, harmony, love and happiness. The paper argues that with the world facing challenges such as conflicts and wars, there is need to recast Sustainable Development by embracing more appropriate approaches towards achieving this ideal for posterity. In particular, the paper observes that art, music and sports provide novel and innovative solutions that accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development. The paper discusses how art, music and sports can be effectively harnessed all over the world towards fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness for Sustainable Development, now and in the future.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ United Nations., 'Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions' Available at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/> (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

⁹ United Nations Development Programme., 'Sustainable Peace for Sustainable Development - A Global Challenge that Calls for Collective Action.' Available at [https://www.undp.org/rwanda/blog/sustainable-peace-sustainable-development-global-challenge-calls-collective-action#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20\(SDGs\)%2C%20agreed%20to%20by%20all,for%20peace%20and%20strong%20institutions](https://www.undp.org/rwanda/blog/sustainable-peace-sustainable-development-global-challenge-calls-collective-action#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20(SDGs)%2C%20agreed%20to%20by%20all,for%20peace%20and%20strong%20institutions) (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

¹⁰ The Link Between Peace and Sustainable Development., Available at <https://www.adecesg.com/resources/blog/the-link-between-peace-and-sustainable-development/> (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

¹¹ United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Op Cit

¹² United Nations., 'Fostering Peace and Sustainable Development' Available at <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/fostering-peace-and-sustainable-development> (Accessed on 15/06/2026)

2.0 Role of Art, Music and Sports in the Sustainable Development Discourse

2.1 Art and Sustainable Development

Art, music and sports provide an effective approach towards fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness for Sustainable Development. For instance, art has been described as the soul of society¹³. It has been pointed out that from ancient cave paintings to modern digital art, the impact of art in society is immense¹⁴. Art usually bridges the gap between different cultures and time periods offering a universal language that can foster global peace and harmony¹⁵.

It has been correctly observed that art transcends beyond mere decoration and entertainment and provides one of the deepest ways through which humanity defines itself¹⁶. Art can bring different individuals, communities and nations together providing a source of peace, harmony, love and happiness¹⁷. In addition, art has been described as humanity's first language with ancient communities using drawings, cave paintings, sculptures and symbols to capture and express daily life and rituals before the development of modern languages¹⁸.

Embracing art can therefore be a catalyst towards Sustainable Development. It has been observed that art serves as a universal language through which it is possible to express emotions, advocate for social change, and create beauty in a complex world¹⁹. Throughout human history, art has been a driver of social change by challenging the status quo, giving voice to vulnerable and marginalized groups and sparking debate on critical issues²⁰. For instance, in ancient Egypt, artists used murals to give meaning to life by telling stories of gods, rulers and the afterlife²¹. Further, during the Renaissance period, artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo changed the way people saw the world by sparking debate on key subjects including science while also celebrating beauty of everyday life through their art²². In addition, it has been observed that art was used during the Harlem Renaissance to spark debate on race and identity with black artists, musicians and writers giving voice to a community that had been discriminated and marginalized for centuries²³.

Art is therefore a transformative tool that can spearhead social change and bring individuals and communities together towards peace, harmony, love and happiness. Art is valued globally not just for its beauty, but also for its social and epistemic importance²⁴. Its capacity to increase self-knowledge,

¹³ Art in Society: Impact of Art in Culture & Community., Available at <https://nancyreyner.com/2024/08/15/art-in-society-the-impact-and-influence-of-art-in-culture-and-community/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ What Is The Importance of Art in Society?., Available at <https://www.superprof.co.uk/blog/the-role-of-art-in-society-today/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Exploring the Role of Art in Society., Available at <https://blog.udallas.edu/tower-thoughts/exploring-the-role-of-art-in-society> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

²⁰ Art in Society: Impact of Art in Culture & Community., Op Cit

²¹ What Is The Importance of Art in Society?., Op Cit

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Sherman. A., & Morrissey. C., 'What Is Art Good For? The Socio-Epistemic Value of Art' <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5581397/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

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encourage personal growth, bridge cultural and language barriers, drive social change, and challenge prejudices and preconceptions makes art a powerful tool that can drive Sustainable Development²⁵.

2.2 Music and Sustainable Development

Music is another powerful tool that can foster global peace, harmony, love and happiness. It has been observed that music has shaped cultures and societies all over the world for centuries²⁶. Music has been described as an essential feature of all human civilizations with the power to emotionally, morally and culturally affect societies²⁷. Due to its ability to transcend language and cultural barriers, music is being used around the world as a vehicle for social change and bringing communities and nations together²⁸. In particular, it has been observed that in a world marred with wars, conflicts and disagreement, music can foster healing, dismantle boundaries and foster reconciliation towards global peace, harmony, love and happiness²⁹.

Throughout human history, music has played a key role as a source of cultural identity and a driver of social change. For instance, it has been observed that archaeological findings of ancient musical instruments, such as flutes and drums, demonstrate that music was integral to prehistoric cultures³⁰. Further, in ancient civilizations such as ancient Greece, music was considered part of education, culture and philosophy with public music festivals and ceremonies being held as a source of cultural expression, and education on human behavior and societal values³¹. In addition, it has been observed that traditional folk music is deeply rooted in the cultural identity of communities worldwide providing a source of cultural heritage and joy³². Further, national anthems and patriotic songs are powerful symbols of national unity and pride and a call for peace, harmony and love³³. In addition, contemporary music has pushed the traditional boundaries of music and provides a platform for individuals, communities and nations all over the world to connect³⁴.

Due to its ability to capture emotions, communicate ideas and beliefs, music is a potent tool for social change and cultural expression³⁵. Songs have been used to protest injustices and raise awareness on important social issues demonstrating the power of music as a driver of social change³⁶. It has been observed that music brings people from different backgrounds, races, and religions to share a common

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Peralta. L., 'Exploring Music's Influence on Society and Culture' Available at <https://www.savethemusic.org/blog/how-does-music-affect-society/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Sound Heritage: The Role of Music in Shaping Cultural Identity., Available at <https://eastendarts.org/music-and-cultural-identity/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Peralta. L., 'Exploring Music's Influence on Society and Culture' Op Cit

³⁵ The Role and Impact of Music on Individuals, Cultures and Societies., Available at <https://medium.com/@jainvicky1999/the-role-and-impact-of-music-on-individuals-cultures-and-societies-f52943692dfa> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

³⁶ Ibid

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love and happiness through music³⁷. This helps to create a sense of peace, harmony, unity and understanding among individuals, communities and nations.

2.3 Sports and Sustainable Development

Sports play a fundamental role in society. For example, it has been observed that participating in sports can improve the quality of life of individuals and communities through promoting social inclusion, improving health, countering antisocial behavior and raising individual self-esteem and confidence³⁸. Sports are essential play an important role in all countries through economic incentives, improving health, happiness, and inculcating values such as peace, harmony and unity³⁹.

For many decades, sports have been a platform of global peace, harmony, love and happiness. It has been correctly observed that beyond immediate physical health benefits to participants, sports can be a vehicle for well-being, tolerance and a means of raising awareness and lessening the cultural divide among communities and nations⁴⁰. In particular, sport have been attributed to helping form stronger societal bonds and boosting self-esteem for millions of people all over the world⁴¹. Major sports personalities have used sports to raise awareness on key societal challenges including racism, cultural marginalization, war and hunger thus driving positive change towards tackling these challenges⁴².

Sports have the ability to bring people together and drive social justice⁴³. Major global sporting events such as the Olympic games and FIFA world cup have been a driver of global peace, harmony, love and happiness by bringing different individuals, nations and cultures together while also providing significant economic benefits for host nations⁴⁴. It has been observed that sports can be a major influence in social solidarity and representation thus driving peace, unity, tolerance and harmony all over the world⁴⁵. Sports provide opportunities for individuals, communities and nations to come together in shared support of their teams⁴⁶. This unity can greatly impact social cohesion and foster a strong sense of community towards peace, harmony, love and happiness⁴⁷. In the current era of wider participation, inclusivity, and global reach, major sports including football, basketball, athletics, tennis, rugby and cricket can drive social

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Coalter Fred, 'The Social Benefits of Sport: An Overview to Inform the Community Planning Process' SportsScotland Research Report no. 98, available at http://www.sportni.net/sportni/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/the_social_benefits_of_sport_an_overview_to_inform_the_community_planning_process.pdf (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

³⁹ The Benefits of Sports in Africa' available at <https://www.developafrica.org/blog/benefits-sports-africa> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

⁴⁰ World Economic Forum., 'How the power of sport can bring us together and drive social justice' Available at <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2021/01/uniting-the-world-through-sport-what-can-we-learn-from-sport-in-enabling-social-cohesion/> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Sport and its Impacts., Available at <https://www.rgs.org/schools/resources-for-schools/sport-and-its-impacts> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

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change, promote diversity and cultural exchange, and foster tolerance and understanding among individuals, communities and nations towards global peace and harmony⁴⁸.

Harnessing art, music and sports is therefore necessary towards fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness for Sustainable Development.

3.0 Conclusion

In the current era characterized by conflicts, wars, intolerance, racism and racial discrimination, achieving Sustainable Development remains a challenge. Art, music and sports provide a platform to recast Sustainable Development by fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness. By fostering unity, diversity, tolerance, social change and awareness, art, music and sports provide thriving grounds for social inclusion and economic growth towards Sustainable Development⁴⁹. Art, music and sports break down language, cultural and political barriers thus ensuring cohesion, peace, harmony, unity and awareness on global issues⁵⁰. It has been argued that in light of the slow pace being made towards the SDGs, there is need to embrace art, music and sports in order to inculcate positive values, foster hope in face of global challenges and promote global peace, harmony and solidarity towards achieving the SDGs⁵¹. Art, music and sports can drive economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection by increasing awareness on global challenges, influencing positive behaviour, challenging inequalities, fostering global cooperation and advocating for more equitable societies⁵².

Embracing art, music and sports is therefore necessary towards fostering global peace, harmony, love and happiness for Sustainable Development.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development., 'Culture, creative industries and sports' Available at <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/culture-creative-industries-and-sports.html> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Art and the Sustainable Development Goals., Available at <https://african.business/2024/09/arts-culture/art-and-the-sustainable-development-goals> (Accessed on 16/06/2026)

⁵² Ibid

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