

Original article

Heritage education from the university: key to sociocultural transformation in vulnerable communities



**Educación patrimonial desde la universidad: clave para la transformación
sociocultural en comunidades vulnerables**

**Educação patrimonial na universidade: chave para a transformação
sociocultural em comunidades vulneráveis**

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Received: 28/02/2025

Accepted: 10/10/2025

ABSTRACT

Historical heritage, besides being the cultural legacy of the past, is a testament to it. Aware of the values cherished by our homeland and its contribution to strengthening cultural identities, this work was developed with the objective of sharing the results derived from actions undertaken by the University of Sancti Spíritus to contribute to heritage education in vulnerable communities. The

general method applied was dialectical materialism, based on the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, from which the research was conducted from the heart of educational reality, with the aim of transforming it. Other methods used included: historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive, systemic approach, participatory action research, scientific observation, document analysis, in-depth interviews, and in-depth sessions. Concrete results were achieved from the implementation of the TransformArte project, such as the partial sociocultural transformation of the Jesús María neighborhood, the integration of key cultural and educational stakeholders in the area, and the professional development of students in the program. The main conclusions reached highlighted the potential of heritage education at the university level for sociocultural transformation, the improvement of training for professionals who are emotionally sensitive, reflective, and creative in order to bring about transformation in communities with vulnerable populations, and the reaffirmation of their cultural identity.

Keywords: education; culture; identity; heritage; university.

RESUMEN

El patrimonio histórico, además de ser el legado cultural del pasado, es un testimonio del mismo. Conscientes de los valores que atesora la patria chica y de su contribución al fortalecimiento de las identidades culturales se desarrolló este trabajo, con el objetivo de socializar los resultados derivados de las acciones emprendidas desde la Universidad de Sancti Spíritus, para contribuir a la educación patrimonial en comunidades en situación de vulnerabilidad. Se aplicó, como método general, el dialéctico materialista, fundamentado en la teoría marxista-leninista del conocimiento, a partir del cual se efectúa la investigación desde el centro de la realidad educativa, con el objetivo de transformarla. Se utilizaron, además, métodos como: el histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético, inductivo-deductivo, enfoque de sistema, la investigación-acción participativa, la observación científica, análisis de documentos, entrevista en profundidad y sesiones en profundidad. Se alcanzaron resultados concretos desde la puesta en práctica de las acciones del proyecto TransformArte, como la parcial transformación sociocultural del barrio Jesús María, la integración de los principales actores culturales y educacionales de la zona, así como la formación profesional de los estudiantes de la carrera. Las principales conclusiones arribadas tipificaron las potencialidades de la educación patrimonial desde la Universidad para la transformación sociocultural, el

perfeccionamiento en la formación de profesionales afectivamente sensibles, reflexivos y creativos para lograr la transformación en comunidades con población en situación de vulnerabilidad y la reafirmación de su identidad cultural.

Palabras clave: educación; cultura; identidad; patrimonio; universidad.

RESUMO

O patrimônio histórico, além de ser o legado cultural do passado, é um testemunho dele. Conscientes dos valores prezados por nossa pátria e de sua contribuição para o fortalecimento das identidades culturais, este trabalho foi desenvolvido com o objetivo de compartilhar os resultados obtidos a partir de ações realizadas pela Universidade de Sancti Spíritus para contribuir com a educação patrimonial em comunidades vulneráveis. O método geral aplicado foi o materialismo dialético, baseado na teoria marxista-leninista do conhecimento, a partir do qual a pesquisa foi conduzida no âmago da realidade educativa, com o intuito de transformá-la. Outros métodos utilizados incluíram: histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético, indutivo-dedutivo, abordagem sistêmica, pesquisa-ação participativa, observação científica, análise documental, entrevistas em profundidade e sessões em profundidade. Resultados concretos foram alcançados com a implementação do projeto TransformArte, como a transformação sociocultural parcial do bairro Jesús María, a integração de atores-chave culturais e educacionais da região e o desenvolvimento profissional dos alunos do programa. As principais conclusões alcançadas destacaram o potencial da educação patrimonial no nível universitário para a transformação sociocultural, o aprimoramento da formação de profissionais emocionalmente sensíveis, reflexivos e criativos, a fim de promover a transformação em comunidades com populações vulneráveis, e a reafirmação de sua identidade cultural.

Palavras-chave: educação; cultura; identidade; patrimônio; universidade.

INTRODUCTION

As we approach the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, the urgent need to understand, preserve, and share the tangible and intangible values of heritage is evident, as it serves as a fundamental pillar of cultural identities in a globalized, diverse, and hegemonic world. UNESCO, in

its 2030 Agenda, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (United Nations-ECLAC, 2019), has proclaimed the protection of humanity's cultural and natural heritage. The training of education professionals in Cuba is intertwined with the contemporary whirlwind of discoveries, advancements, and proposals brought about by the development of science, technology, and engineering. This necessitates the transformation and refinement of educational models for each field of study to address the urgent needs and demands of society.

The Report of the International Commission on the Futures of Education: Recent Progress states that: "Education must foster solidarity, cooperation and commitment to the common good" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 5).

Future teachers must be trained with a broad, flexible profile, assigning them responsibilities and functions that enable them to act as agents of social transformation within educational institutions and diverse contexts. This training should draw upon the inherent potential of the communities where schools or other professional settings are located. The trend toward continuous improvement should be understood as synonymous with self-improvement, providing future graduates with enhanced preparation that integrates individual and social interests.

These reasons support the need to facilitate, through pedagogical research, pathways, tools, actions, and strategies that enable the improvement of the professional training of the Bachelor of Education degree in Artistic Education, which aspires to place the future graduate at the level of current development, with independence and tools that allow them to become one of the most important transformative agents of the school and the community; coupled with a solid political and ideological preparation and a broad general culture, capable of using art as an instrument of human improvement.

They also contribute to raising the cultural level and promoting different artistic expressions in the school as the most important institution in the community, as well as its link with other cultural and social institutions, through activities, reciprocal visits and implementation of community and sociocultural projects, with emphasis on this research.

The project "Professional Training Through Sociocultural Transformation in the Jesús María Neighborhood: TransformArte contributes positively to the personal and professional growth of students in the Bachelor of Education program, specializing in Art Education. These students become

cultural promoters and mentors in the Jesús María neighborhood, fostering community leadership in its cultural development and promoting the reaffirmation and strengthening of its cultural identity, elements that contribute to the improvement and quality of educational knowledge. From this perspective, heritage education becomes an indispensable means to achieve this. "Education must help us learn to live together in peace, cultivating a deep respect for cultural diversity, heritage, and human rights (UNESCO, 2021, p. 6).

As Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel stated on the 60th anniversary of *Words to Intellectuals*, the ongoing need to train emotionally sensitive, reflective, and creative professionals is a priority for the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and the Federation of University Students (FEU), among others. According to the requirements of the academic evaluation and accreditation system, a project on this topic offers an opportunity to contribute to the region's sustainable development and its impact on the local area, as well as to the knowledge and preservation of heritage, resulting in relevant achievements with significant social impact.

The preceding analysis confirms that the social sciences, and the humanities in particular, are responsible for developing the study of the problems, potentialities, and challenges that make the Cuban social model viable. This model involves the critical and creative capacity of the various actors working to build a better, more prosperous, and self-sustaining society. One of its unmet demands is the comprehensive training of professionals so that they are able to assimilate and discern the brutal avalanche of pseudo-cultural products that reach them through diverse audiovisual and media channels and are shared in socialization spaces within communities.

Since the teachings of Paulo Freire, the topic has gained momentum. Alfieri *et al.* (2022), Romero Reyes (2022), and Almeida *et al.* (2023) emphasize the importance of community education as an alternative for community work from the university. From this perspective, heritage education stands out as a real alternative for work within the community, specifically within the Bachelor of Education, Art Education program at the University of Sancti Spíritus; this is evidenced by the studies of Cuenca López *et al.* (2021), Aranguren González (2022), and I'Anson Gutiérrez *et al.* (2024).

Research exists that demonstrates the current relevance of this topic, although heritage education is not addressed as an alternative to vocational training and the sociocultural transformation of vulnerable neighborhoods, particularly within an institutional project like TransformArte, which takes a holistic approach and aims to unite all community stakeholders. It is urgent to leverage all the

opportunities that the University and Arts Education offer as a viable alternative in this endeavor. Therefore, the objective of this presentation is to share the research findings derived from actions undertaken by the University of Sancti Spíritus to contribute to heritage education in vulnerable communities.

MATERIALS AN METHODS

The study was part of the activities of the project "Professional Training through Sociocultural Transformation in the Jesús María Neighborhood: TransformArte", developed by the José Martí Pérez University of Sancti Spíritus. The project focused on the Jesús María neighborhood, a popular council located within the most historically significant heritage center of the municipality of Sancti Spíritus. Its population is predominantly urban, and the main economic activity is the provision of services, primarily in the areas of commerce and gastronomy. The neighborhood has deeply rooted Afro-Cuban cultural traditions, and the religion practiced by a large part of its population has its origins in our ancestors.

Initially, a prospective study of the Professional Model of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, Artistic Education (2016) was carried out, with the purpose of corroborating its current relevance and its response to the characteristics of the educator profession.

Common elements were presented with the rest of the pedagogical careers in terms of the educational ideal, the characteristics of the profession, the educational institutions, the professional problems and the professional functions.

In the scientific research process, all the procedures of this were developed, as a process of elaborating new knowledge that carries within itself a philosophical level, with which the entire development of science and the human understanding, explanation and interpretation of society is traversed, and with special emphasis on the teaching-learning process, which is in correspondence with the dialectical materialist method.

The methods used in the research are based on the dialectical materialist approach, taking into account that this paradigm allows the application of empirical and theoretical methods to access the object of study.

From the theoretical level:

Historical-logical: in the study of the background and evolution of the conceptions that at a universal and national level support cultural identity, heritage education, vulnerability and the training process in students of the Bachelor of Education, Art Education career, and its contextualization in the area where the research is developed.

Analytical-synthetic: to break down the object of study into its parts and examine their relationships. Specifically, to determine the main theoretical elements in defining the criteria related to identity and cultural heritage within the educational process, as well as current approaches and the identification of specific characteristics in the selected sample.

Inductive-deductive: in the establishment of logical inferences, from the particular to the general, and vice versa; it constitutes the way to determine the regularities of the formation process, the heritage and cultural identity in the students of the Bachelor of Education, Art Education career.

Systemic approach: in the study of the elements to be taken into account for sociocultural transformation, understanding the nature of the phenomenon studied and the articulation of the components and their structural and functional relationships.

From the empirical level:

Participatory action research: provided the delimitation and collective conception of the actions that contributed to the sociocultural transformation from the training process of the students of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, Art Education, during the lived process.

Scientific observation: It was applied to verify the procedures carried out by the author in the development and result of the actions and the application of the techniques in the community.

Document analysis: to interpret and adopt theoretical positions related to the topic being investigated, based on the analysis of current guiding documents and research results.

In-depth interview: used to obtain information directly from the actions of students and teachers. To compare individual and collective opinions that allowed them to work together for the desired development.

In-depth sessions: conducted with the participants and the research team on the topic, to assess the results of the initial diagnosis and evaluate the progress of the actions implemented, as a result of the participatory action research.

RESULTS

The training of educators presents distinctive characteristics in relation to other specialties; therefore, the educator has to be prepared to take care of new personal and social needs, to know how to face and promote initiatives in the face of new contradictions.

This is why teacher training programs must cultivate in students aspiring to be educators a strong sense of individual and social responsibility. Following the triumph of the Revolution, significant advancements in education have focused on promoting and improving teacher training at all levels within the Cuban National Education System.

Currently, the continuing education system begins at the undergraduate level, with the aim of enabling graduates to work at the foundational level of their profession. In the field of education, there is a recognized need to continue improving the quality and rigor of the teaching and learning process, as well as to train the necessary teaching staff to meet the needs of educational institutions at all levels and to strengthen the role of the teacher in the classroom, so that they can be responsible for the full and comprehensive development of the adolescents and young adults entrusted to them by society. This is established in the Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution.

The above demands focusing the training of professionals in the university context as a creative process of understanding and disseminating heritage in general, as well as the formation and development of values that allow a harmonious interaction between human beings and their heritage values.

As a result of the theoretical study of the subject matter and the potential for its realization in this research, the historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive methods, and systems approach allowed the establishment of the educational response called by several scholars of the subject as heritage education; in addition to coinciding with the criterion of Dr. Erich Rodríguez Vallejo in understanding heritage education as a permanent, systematic, interdisciplinary and

contextualized pedagogical process, aimed at the knowledge of heritage, at education in values that reflect a high level of awareness towards its sustainable use, as well as at the defense of identity.

It fosters an effective contribution to the understanding of heritage, especially for its main representatives at the global, regional, and local levels. Furthermore, it allows for a deeper exploration of the concept of cultural identity and facilitates values-based education consistent with raising awareness of the long-term sustainability of heritage. According to Rodríguez Vallejo *et al.* (2022), this approach is beneficial for achieving an effective contribution to the understanding of heritage, particularly for its main representatives at the global, regional, and local levels.

These principles highlight the need to view cultural heritage as a source of wealth, opening new avenues for addressing the relationships between culture, tourism, commerce, and so on. It is within this complex and diverse context that the analysis, assessment, and restoration of historic centers are most relevant. In the specific case of this research, which focuses on the island of Cuba and the city of Sancti Spíritus, two of the first towns founded by the Spanish upon their arrival on the island are located: Santísima Trinidad, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988, and Villa del Espíritu Santo, a National Monument. Both cities possess a rich and unique tangible and intangible heritage, and are aware of the values they hold and their contribution to strengthening cultural identities in their 51 years since their founding.

UNESCO, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (United Nations-ECLAC, 2019), established: "Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage". Specifically, in Article 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it emphasizes that the protection and promotion of the world's cultural and natural heritage leads to cities being inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, and that an effective contribution to heritage knowledge must be achieved, while also enabling education in values consistent with raising awareness of the long-term sustainability of heritage.

Historical heritage, besides being the cultural legacy of the past, is a testament to it. Therefore, it is our duty to strive for the greatest objectivity in its interpretation, bringing it closer to the concept of a source than to that of a monument or artistic object. The selection of what, because it is considered heritage, must be safeguarded is inherent in the very concept of heritage as the set of assets, both tangible and intangible, accumulated over time, which are considered valuable to individuals or society and, therefore, deserving of preservation and transmission to future generations.

Cuba is part of the World Heritage Center established by UNESCO, which manages sites declared tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and has developed laws for the protection of cultural and natural heritage; with a sustainable tourism activity that respects the environment, society and culture.

Historic centers in metropolitan areas lead to the necessary recovery and productive reuse of cultural heritage; within the framework of strengthening tourist, symbolic and cultural centers, it is necessary to overcome merely architectural approaches.

The analysis of the career's regulatory documents, in-depth interviews with professors and students, as well as the in-depth sessions carried out at various times during the participatory action research, made it possible to verify that for the improvement of the professional training of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, Art Education, it is necessary to examine the Professional Model Study Plan E of this career, which responds to the characteristics of the educator's profession, and presents common elements with the rest of the pedagogical careers in terms of the educational ideal, the characteristics of the profession, the educational institutions, the professional problems and the professional pedagogical functions.

This analysis considered the following guiding ideas: the unity between education and instruction, the link between study and work, and the dialectical unity of theory and practice. Higher education must rethink the training process for its future professionals, as they constitute its main human resource. It is emphasized that this training has the following essential characteristics: social impact, a humanistic orientation, and a transformative and innovative nature.

Future teachers must be trained with a broad and flexible profile, assigning them responsibilities and functions that enable them to act as agents of change in educational institutions and diverse contexts. Professional development should be understood as synonymous with self-improvement, providing future graduates with better preparation, coupled with the integration of individual and social interests.

The training process is consciously stipulated and based on scientific principles, to achieve the comprehensive preparation of university students, which is embodied in a solid scientific, technical, humanistic training and high ideological, political, ethical and aesthetic values.

When addressing the specifics and importance of this issue, Díaz-Canel, speaking at the 14th International Congress of Higher Education, University 2024, stated that the main challenge for the Ministry of Higher Education in Cuba is the process of training well-rounded, competent professionals committed to the Revolution, with an innovative spirit and strong political and ideological convictions. For professionals to contribute to the country's development through committed participation, they must be revolutionary; moreover, they must be prepared to handle pedagogical processes and leadership roles.

In this sense, the training of education professionals at the university level, particularly within the field of Arts Education, is aimed at ensuring the necessary improvement in the quality of teaching. It can be stated that the fundamental way to achieve this is through the systematic and ongoing engagement of future professionals with training environments, where students must develop diverse activities focused on solving increasingly complex professional problems.

The current training of professionals need the adoption of diverse perspectives that allow for better preparation and thus address the major challenges facing Cuban Higher Education, among which the training of comprehensive and competent professionals who respond to the demands of graduates stand out.

Graduates of the Bachelor of Education program, specializing in Art Education, have the social responsibility of contributing to the resolution of the most common and widespread problems inherent in the pedagogical process within educational institutions and in the teaching and learning process of Art Education, particularly at the lower and upper secondary levels. This subject is taught with the aim of promoting the holistic development of students' personalities.

The functions of an education professional constitute the outward expression of the inherent qualities of the teaching profession, which are manifested in their professional practice. These professional functions include teaching methodology, educational guidance, and research and professional development. These functions are reflected in the educator's behavior and are not independent of one another; rather, they form a unified action characterized by close relationship and interdependence.

By strengthening the role of the arts education and heritage education professional, the professional model aims to shape the future teacher's appropriate approach. Its design must allow for continuous

and comprehensive training. One of the pathways to achieving the desired levels is the Main Integrative Discipline of Research-Based Professional Training, which incorporates content from all disciplines in the curriculum, as well as the practical implementation of the professional's modes of action, distributed throughout the different years of the program. This discipline embodies the relationship between theory and practice and the development of professional skills. It integrates academic, professional, and research components, along with university extension as a core process of higher education.

The contents of this discipline are worked on from the theoretical, methodological, practical and investigative aspects, from the first year, which allows one to penetrate the essence of the object of the profession, the object of work; that is, the educational process and the developmental teaching-learning process of Art Education.

She becomes a pillar that harmoniously unites knowledge systems, in which heritage education must be an integral part. The discipline lays the foundation for creatively addressing professional tasks based on guiding principles for action, enabling students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to reproduce or apply them to familiar or novel situations, from ethical and professional perspectives.

In order to contribute to the improvement of the role of the Art Education professional, the Main Integrative Discipline: Research-Based Work Training must coherently complement the functions of the education professional, revealing the importance of educational guidance and research-improvement, for the integration of the results of the project: The training of the professional from the sociocultural transformation in the Jesús María neighborhood. TransformArte.

Since the implementation of the Main Integrative Discipline of Research-Based Work Training, the relevant results of the project, related to the improvement of the research component of the degree program, have been ensured. Furthermore, the impact of the discipline of Cultural Promotion and Educational Research Methodology will be evident, in close relation to the year's educational project; all of this is aimed at strengthening the professional's role as a promoter, researcher, and guide to meet the cultural needs of children, adolescents, and young adults in the school and community environment.

The Art Education professional must promote local, national, and universal art and heritage as a reflection of reality and a manifestation of social consciousness, and its link with the country's cultural policy, in order to preserve and disseminate heritage and cultural identity, to transform the neighborhood, the community, contribute to aesthetic education, to the formation of the individual's cultural identity, and to the professional's role in the sociocultural transformation of communities in vulnerable situations.

In Cuba, the community currently occupies a privileged place of national interest, based on the importance given to the individual and to different social groups within the community; the potential of this space to respond to what is now called self-sustaining and self-managed development, where the local level plays a significant role. This demands, after profound transformations and the training of professionals, rigorous education that allows for a scientific and comprehensive interpretation of reality and, simultaneously, prepares them to coordinate, promote, or suggest development initiatives, projects, or programs that produce timely changes in the psychosocial and sociocultural spheres.

Community is a multidimensional phenomenon involving geographic, sociological, economic, natural, territorial, heritage, cultural, and social elements that must be understood, respected, and integrated to make the locality an efficient and effective social organism, both materially and spiritually. It is comprised of groups of people who share a territory, with common cultural traits, behaviors, feelings, and levels of organization that allow them to interact as a network of social relationships where the sense of belonging, identification, and rootedness acquire paramount importance. It is the space where social processes occur in diverse settings and contexts associated with the most everyday aspects of life and survival.

The community, then, can be considered a privileged site for the processes of adaptation and progress within a society. In this sense, one of its main challenges in the field of cultural development is the creation of actions that foster creative processes, not limited to the consumption of fine arts, but extended into the spaces of everyday life, enabling the pursuit of a better life.

On the other hand, community-based work is surprising, challenging, and compels a rethinking of the actions of those who influence the community, primarily due to the complexity of current Cuban reality. In the case of the new Cuban development model, oriented toward a multi-actor socioeconomic approach, considering vulnerable communities is of particular interest for the design

of targeted policies. In this regard, sociologist Espina defines vulnerability as a situation in which individuals and households find themselves in a critical condition regarding their ability to meet their needs, with very little capacity to cope with changes and unforeseen events.

Communities, however small, are the places where people feel the deepest connection to and love for their heritage. Vulnerability is not the same as poverty; it doesn't mean a lack of resources or needs, but rather defenselessness, insecurity, and exposure to risks, crises, and stress, situations that can arise. Given this context, sociocultural work, especially in vulnerable communities, becomes a primary concern of the Cuban social project, which considers the human being as its central element.

The term vulnerability is very broad and sometimes ambiguous, so in the context of this work, it has two explanatory components.

On the one hand: the insecurity and defenselessness experienced by communities, families and individuals in their living conditions, as a result of the impact caused by some type of traumatic socio-economic event.

Furthermore, the management of resources and the strategies used by communities, families, and individuals to cope with the effects of this event have been examined. Numerous valuable experiences have emerged, most of them focused on meeting immediate needs or proposing transformation and development within the sphere of cultural expression.

Similarly, political and mass organizations have undertaken the task of promoting community social work based essentially on the challenge posed by a social transformation of the magnitude of the Cuban Revolution.

This situation is compounded by the necessary intensification of the country's economic, political, and social development, the continued pursuit of knowledge, together with education and the development of national identity values, such as patriotism, dignity, and human solidarity, among others; which demands that the school, as a center of great importance in the community, constantly and creatively renew itself so that all children, adolescents, and young people develop their individual potential for the expected permanent personal, social, and professional growth.

The education professional is responsible for contributing to the ideological development of children and youth, ensuring that students have a leading role in all school and extracurricular activities, so that they become people capable of keeping pace with the times, paying special attention to the development of values and attitudes, promoting independence, responsibility, flexibility, self-criticism, self-directed and self-regulated learning, and social commitment.

It must be cultured, use school spaces and settings for the education of children, adolescents and young people, educate through the content of the subjects and incorporate technologies into the educational process, interact with the family and the system of social influences of the community for the best education of its students.

Therefore, professionals working within the community must prepare groups of people to participate in controlling and transforming their daily lives, to become active participants in decision-making regarding policies and strategies that guide cultural actions and enable them to be more than just consumers of goods and services, but rather to foster collective creativity and promote civic participation. In other words, they must empower individuals to work towards development and improve their way of life and living conditions, as well as the environment; all of which will lead to an increase in the standard and quality of life for its members, with particular attention to subjective elements.

This professional understands community work as a way to address the problems that most affect the population, and preventative work as a means of confronting criminal activity. Coordination and integration of the activities, efforts, and resources of the various agencies, organizations, and institutions in the area are also crucial to achieving the most important objectives for the community. This allows for greater coherence in their actions, which contributes to enhancing results through increased effectiveness.

Education has a relevant role to play in the participation of all its members, given that Cuba implements policies for the integral transformation of vulnerable communities that, beyond modifying environments and providing social assistance, advocate for changing life projects to the extent that they strengthen individual capacities.

Based on the initial approach to the topic, the leading role of professionals in sociocultural transformation processes within vulnerable communities was determined. This role stems from

understanding the needs of these communities and the possibilities for addressing them endogenously, providing not only physical or external changes but, more importantly, contributing to transformations in the ways of feeling, thinking, and acting of the inhabitants of these places who so desperately need it. Exchanges were held with the following participants: the Faculty of Humanities of the José Martí Pérez University of Sancti Spíritus, the Municipal Directorate of Culture and Art, the Provincial Council of the UNEAC (National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba), the Office of the City Historian of Sancti Spíritus, and the Municipal Directorate of Education.

Also with the beneficiaries of the project, including teachers and students of the Bachelor's Degree in Education, Art Education, students from schools in vulnerable communities of the Jesús María neighborhood, community leaders and the general population of Sancti Spíritus, in order to raise awareness of the project's objective and agree on the commitments they assume in relation to its results.

In all cases, the project was well-received, and commitment and responsibility were evident in the actions undertaken by each participant to put the project into practice. The community assessment of the sample, comprised of children, adolescents, young adults, and the general population living in a vulnerable community in the Jesús María neighborhood, helps to determine the main strengths and needs of this social and cultural context and to identify recurring patterns. Among these, the following stand out as strengths: the willingness to participate in the designed activities, and the community's endogenous cultural potential (writers, musicians, folk artists, educational, cultural, and religious institutions with experience in disseminating their activities, among others).

Regarding its shortcomings, the most important is the lack of a unifying entity to organize the actions that, until now, have been carried out in a dispersed manner, sometimes improvised and without the necessary coherent and logical integration of all the elements that make up the community.

DISCUSSION

The results are inextricably linked to the actions carried out by the José Martí Pérez University and the Department of Artistic Education in the Jesús María neighborhood.

Actions to support and promote sociocultural transformation through the training of professionals in the Bachelor of Education degree, Art Education

Community outreach efforts aim to strengthen the social fabric and foster collective development, specifically through heritage education. These efforts include facilitating workshops and training to acquire new skills, offering personalized advice and guidance, creating meeting spaces to encourage community interaction, developing collaborations with active community participation, and strengthening support networks by establishing alliances with other organizations. The goal is to empower individuals and promote a more cohesive and resilient community.

It also allows for the improvement of the training of affectively sensitive, reflective and creative professionals to achieve sociocultural transformation in communities with vulnerable populations from their spheres of action:

- Design of a brochure that provides guidance on the use of art, literature and cultural institutions that are part of the community, as well as audiovisual and digital media to enhance the training of the professional from the sociocultural transformation in communities with vulnerable populations.
- Interacting socially in the contexts: school, family and community, adding audiovisual media and social networks, based on the proposal of alternatives for the improvement in the training of the professional from the sociocultural transformation and its contribution to local cultural development.
- Special morning assemblies were held on symbolic dates.
- Community intervention in squares, parks, streets and sidewalks of the Jesús María neighborhood, together with the brigade of Art Instructors of the province.
- Days dedicated to art and heritage, on the occasion of the town's anniversary, took place:
 - Singing to my city: presentation of trios, choirs, theater shows.
- Together with the City Conservator's Office, various cultural and heritage events were promoted, such as:
 - Loyal among us (dedicated to Eusebio Leal Spengler).
 - My inheritance is knocking at the door.
 - Open-air museums.

- Presentation of videos in conjunction with the project of the City Conservator's Office: "Archaeology for all".
- Visits to archaeological research sites in progress in the locality, such as the Jesus of Nazareth church.
- A pedagogical strategy was implemented to evaluate the feasibility of actions aimed at improving professional training through sociocultural transformation and the reaffirmation of cultural identity in vulnerable communities.

In an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, the educational and cultural dimension can act as a source of opportunity for development and human growth, countering the dehumanization and fragmentation of human beings. It is essential to reinstate the role of personal example set by all members of the community, so that they may become role models, fostering a desire to learn, to do, and to be.

This immense challenge falls to education, as the driving force behind the comprehensive development of all individuals in the society being built, and in particular to graduates of pedagogical careers, which implies the development of increasingly creative and well-rounded personalities in perfect harmony with their sociocultural environment, at the local, national or universal level.

Learning spaces and times are constantly expanding, and schools and universities are no longer the only avenues to knowledge, although they remain the ideal institutions that can ensure equitable access and distribution, offering quality opportunities for all. Among the many complex spaces for accessing knowledge are now the home, the community, audiovisual media, and social networks, which are playing an increasingly proactive role in shaping -or misshaping- students in academic, cultural, social, political, and ethical spheres.

For this reason, the formation of a subject is understood as the result of the education received, evidenced in an active position in their learning and development, as well as in the positive attitude they demonstrate in fundamental aspects of their life, including family, study, work and homeland, among others.

Encouraging support and transformation, from within, for the inhabitants of vulnerable communities and its most immediate result: sociocultural change in this process through art, must be a

consequence of and in line with the cultural and social reality that surrounds the subject and will accompany him for a very long time.

These arguments, like those of Segreo Mariño *et al.* (2023), highlight the role of universities, which must provide a relevant response not only to future professionals but also to educators themselves. This means moving from an organization with a tendency towards standardization to a flexible organization, constantly evolving and, above all, capable of offering rapid responses to society. This aligns with Veitía Arrieta *et al.* (2023) in viewing heritage education as geared towards shaping people's behavior for the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of heritage assets. Through the continuous improvement of education, a well-prepared professional is required, one who is politically, pedagogically, and didactically sound, with mastery of the content of teaching and learning, capable of flexible and innovative educational work that links general objectives in student training. This professional should contribute to improving living conditions and, in general, creating better conditions for meeting the needs of the population and their families. Martín Romero (2019), when referring to the role of the professional in vulnerable communities, considers that it is not only work for the community, nor in the community; it is a process of transformation from the community: dreamed, planned, led and evaluated by the community itself, to achieve a better quality of life for its population and conquer new goals.

Authors from diverse backgrounds have focused their attention on the humanistic education of current generations and have advocated the idea that love, example, and curiosity are key to achieving this goal. Lidia Turner Martí and Balbina Pita Céspedes, in their work *Pedagogy of Tenderness* (2019), detail how to address this issue, promoting the recognition of differences, the capacity to understand and tolerate, to dialogue and reach agreements, to dream and laugh, to face adversity and learn from defeats and failures, as well as from successes and triumphs. Tenderness is affection for what we do and who we are; it is the desire to transform ourselves and become ever greater and better.

Therefore, tenderness is also demanding, committed, responsible, rigorous, diligent, systematic, dedicated, and constructive criticism. In a world characterized by rapid change, where it is necessary to affirm human and ethical values while remaining receptive to all that is positive and valuable that humankind has created to make life more beautiful and harmonious, culture and love are the example and expression of that common treasure of humanity, for which all human beings are responsible.

All of this was evident in the analysis of the curriculum E for the Bachelor of Education degree in Art Education. This made it possible to reveal the theoretical foundations (philosophical, based on the historical-cultural approach, education in and for diversity, and the quality of education for development and developmental learning) that are consistent with the continuous improvement of student training in a flexible and innovative manner, in accordance with the particularities of the school and its community environment.

The study presented the Main Integrative Discipline of Investigative Labor Training as one of the ways to strengthen the role of the Art Education professional, as a guiding basis, from knowledge; which allowed students to be protagonists in educational and community settings successfully.

The support actions contributed to the socio-cultural transformation in the vulnerable Jesús María neighborhood, to heritage education, to the improvement in the training of affectively sensitive professionals and to the reaffirmation of their cultural identity, both of the inhabitants of the community and of the students.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

Authors' contribution

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.



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