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## THE ROLE OF AIESEC INDONESIA IN THE SPREAD OF INDONESIAN CULTURE IN 2022-2025

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### ABSTRACT

The crossing of Indonesian culture is an effort to introduce, maintain, and promote national cultural richness to the international community by adjusting to the dynamics of post-pandemic global interaction. In this period, cultural cross-cultural activities include various forms of implementation, both through festivals and cultural exchanges that are direct and through the use of digital platforms and cross-sector collaboration. In this framework, the role of non-state actors, including international youth organizations, is one of the supporting elements in strengthening Indonesia's positive image at the global level. This study analyzes the role of AIESEC as a non-state actor in the cross-cultural crossing of Indonesia in 2022–2025 through AIESEC's global programs. The research uses the international organization theory of Clive Archer (2001), which views the role of non-state actors as instruments, arenas, and actors, as well as the existence that gains legitimacy in the international system. The method used is descriptive qualitative with primary and secondary data collection through interviews, activity reports, official publications, and online sources. The results of the study show that AIESEC plays an active role in crossing Indonesian culture. Referring to Clive Archer, AIESEC functions as an instrument that channels Indonesian cultural values and practices through exchange activities; as an arena that provides a space for cross-cultural interaction between international and national youth; and as an independent actor who autonomously designs programs and builds global networks without relying on the state. These three functions show that AIESEC also supports the expansion of Indonesia's cultural reach and the strengthening of a positive image at the international level.

**Key Word:** Indonesian Cultural Crossing, Role of International Organizations, Non-State Actors, AIESEC Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization marked by increasing connectivity between nations, cultural dissemination activities are an important part in building relations between countries and between communities. Global interaction is no longer limited to the political and economic realms, but also involves social and cultural dimensions that develop through the exchange of knowledge, values, and cultural practices. Within this framework, cultural dissemination emphasizes that education and cultural activities play an important role in introducing and defending national cultural heritage at the international level. One of the strategic forms of public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy, which according to Waller (2009) serves to introduce a country's identity, values, and cultural heritage to the international community with the aim of building mutual understanding and strengthening harmonious and sustainable relations (Waller, 2009). Cultural diplomacy not only emphasizes the promotion of culture, but also encourages the spread of culture, where the cultural elements of a nation can be understood, adapted, and appreciated by other societies through peaceful social interactions. Through activities such as student exchanges, art festivals, culinary promotions, and collaboration between communities, the state can foster social closeness and cross-cultural understanding without resorting to political pressure or military force (Mark, 2010).

In the development of contemporary international relations, the role of non-state actors is increasingly prominent and strategic. Diplomacy is no longer a monopoly of the government and state institutions alone, but also involves various parties such as non-governmental organizations, diaspora communities, global media, the private sector, and youth organizations. These actors play an important role in shaping international public opinion, establishing cross-border networks, and introducing national values and culture through a more direct, informal, and participatory approach (Riordan, 2005).

AIESEC (*Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales*), as an international youth organization, can be seen as one of the non-state actors that plays a role in supporting the practice of cultural diplomacy (AIESEC Indonesia, 2025). AIESEC is a youth-based non-profit organization that was established in 1948, in response to the need for cross-cultural understanding after World War II. Founded by a group of students from Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, AIESEC initially aimed to strengthen relations between countries through student exchanges in Europe (AIESEC, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic that has hit the world since 2020 has had a significant impact on mobility between countries and the implementation of international cultural exchange activities. As a global youth organization whose main activities rely on direct interaction and cross-border movement, AIESEC also faces major obstacles. In the period 2020 to 2021, all face-to-face programs of AIESEC Indonesia, including *Global Volunteer* and *Global Talent*, were forced to be temporarily suspended as a form of adjustment to the policy of international travel restrictions and the implementation of health protocols, both national and global (AIESEC Indonesia, 2025). Entering 2022, with the easing of the pandemic and the reopening of international borders, AIESEC began to gradually reactivate physical programs. The in-person cultural exchange activities are fully run again from 2023 to 2025, including sending and receiving participants from various countries in social and educational projects. Programs such as *Global Volunteer* and *Global Talent* are a vehicle for Indonesian youth to introduce local culture, social values, and community practices to foreign participants through direct involvement in community activities (AIESECIndonesia, 2025).

Although the role of the state has been dominant in introducing Indonesian culture in the international arena, the spread of culture is now also carried out by various non-state actors who have global networks and capacities. One of them is AIESEC, an international youth organization that actively facilitates cultural exchanges and cross-

border social projects. However, studies that highlight AIESEC's contribution in the context of the spread of Indonesian culture are still limited, especially in the post-pandemic period of 2022–2025 when cultural interaction patterns undergo digital and social transformation. Through an international relations perspective that focuses on non-state actors, this study seeks to examine how AIESEC plays a role in introducing Indonesian cultural values and identity to the global community through youth-based activities. Understanding the role of AIESEC as a non-state organization is expected to provide new insights into participatory, non-formal, and cross-border forms of cultural dissemination, as well as encourage more strategic collaboration between the government and civil society in strengthening Indonesia's cultural position in the global world.

## **Theory and Concept**

### **The Role of International Organizations**

According to Clive Archer (2001), non-state actors include international non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, civil society groups, and transnational communities that have the capacity to influence relations between countries through the agendas, values, and global networks they build (Archer, 2001). In contrast to state actors who operate formally through diplomatic policies and agreements, non-state actors have greater flexibility, a more participatory approach, and direct reach to cross-cultural societies.

International organizations play an important role in the modern international relations order, not only as instruments of member states, but also as actors that have their own capacity, influence, and function in shaping global dynamics. Clive Archer (1992) defines an international organization as a body created through agreements between countries or groups, which has a fixed institutional structure and aims to achieve common goals at the international level. This theory places international organizations as entities that not only facilitate cooperation between countries, but also as active actors that can carry out diplomatic, social, cultural, and economic functions outside of the formal role of the state. According to Archer, international organizations have several main characteristics, are formed on the basis of agreements, have a stable institutional structure, and aim to carry out certain functions.

The development of international relations not only involves state actors, but also increasingly opens up space for non-state actors to participate in shaping global dynamics. One of the non-state actors that plays a significant role is international organizations, both intergovernmental (IGO) and non-governmental (INGO). To understand this role, Clive Archer (2001) stated that international organizations play three main roles in the international system, namely as instruments, arenas, and actors. This theory is basically used to understand how international organizations function in the dynamics of relations between countries and other global actors (Archer, 2001). Using this framework, this study places AIESEC as one of the non-state actors that can play a role in the spread of Indonesian culture, especially through the function of international organizations as actors who are able to act independently and influence cross-cultural interactions.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis. The goal is to deeply understand the role of AIESEC as a non-state international organization in the spread of Indonesian culture in the 2022–2025 period. This approach is descriptive-exploratory, which aims to describe and analyze the contribution of AIESEC in carrying out cultural diffusion through youth exchanges, intercultural interactions, and social activities at the community level. This qualitative method was chosen because it is able to capture the complexity of AIESEC's role as a non-state actor in bridging cultural relations and expanding the influence of Indonesian culture that is informal but strategic.

This study establishes clear and structured focus boundaries in several dimensions. This research also focuses on AIESEC's contribution in the implementation of cultural dissemination through youth exchange programs and cross-cultural activities, which target local communities in various regions of Indonesia. This study examines how AIESEC carries out its function in introducing and promoting Indonesian culture to the international world through direct interaction between local youth and foreign participants, within the framework of educational, social, and participatory activities. The main focus is directed at understanding the shape of AIESEC's role as a non-state international actor, as described in the theory of the role of international organizations by Clive Archer.

This research relies on two data sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The primary source was obtained through direct interviews with parties involved in the implementation of the AIESEC Indonesia program, namely Zulfikar Suardi (*Head of Product for Youth AIESEC Indonesia 2024-2025*), Bachtiar Nur Alam (*Manager of Product for Youth AIESEC Indonesia 2025*), and Eliana Angela Kurniawan (*Head of Product for Youth & Partnership Development AIESEC Indonesia 2024*). The primary source in this study was chosen because it is directly related to the implementation of programs and cultural dissemination strategies run by AIESEC Indonesia. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through the review of official organizational documents, such as the AIESEC *Blue Book 2022* and realized exchange participants data for the 2022–2025 period from *EXPA's internal platform*, as well as academic literature in the form of books, journals, and scientific publications that discuss cultural diplomacy and the role of non-state actors. In addition, this research also utilizes national and international media news and analysis, including *Good News from Indonesia*, *IDN Times*, *CNN Indonesia*, *Kompas.com*, *BBC Indonesia*, and AIESEC's official social media pages. All of these data were used to strengthen the interview findings and provide a more comprehensive analytical context in identifying patterns of linkages between AIESEC's strategy and its role in the spread of Indonesian culture in the 2022–2025 period.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. AIESEC as a *Non-State Actor* in the Spread of Indonesian Culture**

Archer emphasized that an organization can be called an international actor if they have a sustainable institutional structure, are able to make decisions independently of the state, are involved in cross-border interactions, and have the capacity to influence the behavior or perception of other actors (Archer, 2001; Rittberger & Zangl, 2006). AIESEC as a global youth organization, fulfills the first characteristics with the existence of a multilayer structure that is stable and sustainable. Globally, AIESEC has a multi-layered structure that includes *AIESEC International (AI)*, *Member Committees (MCs)* in each country, and *Local Committees (LCs)* at the university or city level. In Indonesia, the existence of twenty-seven active LCs with annual leadership changes, a standardized management system, and an internal evaluation mechanism demonstrates consistent institutional sustainability (Suardi, 2025). This standard is in line with Archer's argument that an institutionalized structure is the main foundation of an organization to be considered an international actor. The characteristics of having the ability to make decisions independently can be seen from how AIESEC manages programs and policy directions (Archer, 2001). Although AIESEC Indonesia collaborates with universities, governments, and external partners, decisions regarding exchange programs, national priorities, and internal policies are determined through organizational mechanisms, not through state instructions (Angela, 2025). This is in accordance with the concept of transnational autonomy described by Keohane and Nye (1972), in which non-governmental organizations have an independent space to regulate their interactions

within international networks. The third characteristic, involvement in cross-border interactions, can be clearly seen by how AIESEC is spread across more than 120 countries. With this extensive network, the organization sends and accepts exchange participants from various countries through the Global Volunteer, Global Talent, and CEEDership programs. In addition, AIESEC Indonesia's participation in regional and global conferences such as the Asia Pacific Conference, International Congress, and International Presidents Meeting shows the existence of active and sustainable transnational relations (Suardi, 2025). Then, the last characteristic, having the capacity to influence other actors can be seen through AIESEC's global volunteer program. The existence of youth or community exchanges carried out through Incoming Global Volunteers and Outgoing Global Volunteers is a means of forming cultural perceptions by gaining an understanding of the traditions and life of the local community. This exchange of experiences creates a process of cultural dissemination that takes place in a participatory and hands-on experience-based manner (Angela, 2025). Within the framework of Archer's theory, AIESEC's ability to influence perception through such non-formal mechanisms demonstrates one of the important functions of non-state actors in the dynamics of international relations.

Thus, it can be said that AIESEC Indonesia as a non-state actor has a strategic role in the dissemination of Indonesian culture through a youth-based participatory approach. Through various exchange programs and cross-border forums, AIESEC can create spaces for interaction that strengthen intercultural understanding and enhance Indonesia's positive image in the eyes of the world.

The spread of Indonesian culture is the result of social interaction and cultural exchange that fosters awareness and appreciation of cultural heritage without coercion, in accordance with the view of Waller (2009) in the context of cultural dissemination, not just cultural diplomacy (S&Gewati, 2024).

AIESEC, as an international youth organization, has a relevant role in the context of cultural dissemination due to its focus on cross-cultural exchanges and youth leadership development. In Indonesia, AIESEC is not only oriented towards youth capacity building, but also organizes voluntary programs that place international participants in direct interaction with local communities, a mechanism that opens up space for the dissemination of Indonesian and foreign cultural values and experiences (Tanwar, Yosafat, & Akbar, 2022). The official letter is a tangible form of administrative action, namely the use of bureaucratic authority in a formal format to convey political messages. Although this letter is not a legal decree revoking permits or issuing an explicit prohibition order, its delivery through official local government mechanisms gives administrative legitimacy to the political stance taken. This suggests that within the framework of paradiplomacy, subnational actors can use legitimate administrative instruments to express their political positions on specific global issues.

### **The Role of AIESEC as an *Instrument* for the Spread of Indonesian Culture**

The role as an instrument in the dissemination of culture refers to the function of an actor as a medium that facilitates the introduction of certain cultural values, practices, or expressions to the international community (Archer, 2001).

AIESEC runs various international youth exchange programs that open up space for foreign participants to live in Indonesia and interact directly with the local community. These activities include language teaching, community activity mentoring, participation in cultural events, as well as involvement in social practices that reflect local values. Through daily interactions and life experiences with the community, international participants gained a more contextual and authentic cultural understanding of the lives of the Indonesian people.

In August 2024, AIESEC Indonesia and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) signed an official cooperation agreement numbered 001/ID/IGV/VIII/2024 in the context of the implementation of *the On the Map* project, which is part of the *Incoming Global Volunteer* (IGV) program. This project is designed to support the 8th SDGs, which are decent work and economic growth (Angela, 2025). Through a community-based approach, *On the Map* focuses on sustainable tourism development by encouraging the empowerment of local communities to be able to initiate tourism activities rooted in the cultural values and natural potential of their respective regions.

IGV is a program that brings participants from various countries to Indonesia to be directly involved in social projects that have an impact on local communities. This program provides a space for international youth to explore Indonesia's rich culture, contribute to relevant social issues, and build meaningful interactions with local communities (AIESEC, 2024). Through these interactions, the participants not only developed a perspective of global leadership and collaboration, but also indirectly became agents of spreading Indonesia's positive image at the international level. This program also carries the slogan "*Indonesia Calling: Welcome to Indonesia, where we celebrate diversity and prioritize quality in developing leadership through cross-cultural exchanges*", which affirms AIESEC's commitment to promoting Indonesia's cultural diversity while building leadership through intercultural exchanges (Alam, 2025).

Overall, AIESEC Indonesia acts as a bridge for non-state culture through various IGV projects including the *On the Map* program implemented with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. Through a community-based project in Sinar Resmi Village, the organization presents a participatory model of cultural dissemination, where international participants not only get to know Indonesian culture firsthand, but also engage in community empowerment activities. AIESEC Indonesia has successfully introduced culture and social conditions to 312 *exchange participants* from 2022-2025 who come from various countries. The interactions formed between participants and local communities produce authentic and meaningful cultural experiences, strengthening Indonesia's image as an open, inclusive, and sustainable nation (Agbai, Agbai, & Oko-Jaja, 2024). With a collaborative and grassroots-oriented approach, AIESEC proves that cultural dissemination can not only be run by the state, but also effectively by non-state actors oriented towards cross-generational and cross-national collaboration.

In exhibition activities, AIESEC Indonesia has *Global Volunteer activities*, there is a series of separate activities known as *Global Village*. *Global Village* is an international cultural festival organized by AIESEC. This event features approximately 30 international cultures from various parts of the world, including local Indonesian culture, which is presented through dances, performances, traditional food and clothing exhibitions, and various other interesting performances. The introduction of this culture is a medium to dive deeper into each culture displayed. This event also raises awareness of tolerance for differences that exist among people.

Activities *Global Village* initiated by AIESEC serves as an effective means of spreading Indonesian culture through direct interaction between cross-border communities. Through this activity, Indonesian youth play the role of citizen diplomats (*citizen diplomats*) which actively introduces the nation's cultural identity to the international community. Unlike the formal approach taken by the government, the presentation of culture in *Global Village* takes place organically and participatory, thus creating a closer and more memorable experience for participants. (Siti, 2025)

In addition to through exhibition festivals *Global Village*, in April 2025, AIESEC Indonesia will host the Asia Pacific regional conference in Bali, so in the series of conferences they have inserted an agenda *Nusantara Cultural Night* which also

collaborates with local Bali MSMEs. On this occasion, the Indonesian delegation consistently introduced the richness of national culture through various elements, including traditional food dishes (such as typical cakes and market snacks), traditional children's games (congklak, gasing, etc.), and regional clothing, but also communicated national values, traditions, and narratives to international audiences. AIESEC Indonesia practices art as an instrument of cultural diplomacy through (Alam, 2025) *Nusantara Cultural Night* documented at the Asia Pacific regional conference in April 2025 in Bali. The activity featured traditional Balinese dances, gamelan performances, Balinese script writing, and *Batik Crafting*, all of which are designed as interactive experiences for international delegates. Through direct participation, foreign participants not only became spectators, but also experienced and practiced traditional Indonesian arts in real life.

The role as an instrument in the spread of culture refers to the function of an actor as a tool or media used to convey the cultural values of a country to the international community. In this case, AIESEC acts as a channel used by Indonesia and the government to introduce its culture directly to the world.

Thus, AIESEC plays an instrument that expands the reach of the dissemination of Indonesian culture through non-formal channels. However, critically it is worth noting that in a position as an instrument, organizations like AIESEC are prone to dependence on state agendas. AIESEC's involvement in supporting the spread of culture has the potential to reduce its organizational independence because the activities carried out can be directed or perceived as an extension of foreign policy interests. This situation poses a dilemma between maintaining the autonomy of the organization as a non-state international actor and the need to remain relevant in supporting the strategy of spreading Indonesian culture. This is because AIESEC is an NGO and not an official government institution so that the cultural narrative brought by its members is individual and can differ from one participant to another. This is in line with Riordan's view, that the spread of culture through non-state actors tends to be fragmented and has the potential to produce cultural representations that are not always in line with the national identity strategy that the state wants to convey. (Riordan, 2005)

### **AIESEC's Role as *an Arena* for the Spread of Indonesian Culture**

The role as an arena refers to the function of AIESEC as a space or forum that brings together actors from various cultural backgrounds to exchange experiences, knowledge, and values. In this context, AIESEC is a platform that encourages direct intercultural interaction through regional and global conferences and discussion forums.

These conferences are strategic forums for participants from various cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds to meet, discuss, and share views on global issues, leadership, and cultural values. In this context, AIESEC acts as an arena for cultural dissemination, because it creates a space where cultural exchange occurs naturally through non-formal activities such as cultural *booths*, cultural *nights*, and thought exchange sessions involving cross-cultural life experiences (Zarawaki, 2025). For AIESEC Indonesia, participation in these conferences provides an opportunity to introduce Indonesian culture to the global community (Suardi, 2025). Indonesian delegates often bring elements of local culture, such as traditional clothing, typical food, regional dances, and Indonesian language in these international forums. Thus, Indonesian culture is present not only as an identity, but as a message conveyed through inclusive and equal social interaction. In addition, the organization of regional or national conferences by AIESEC Indonesia itself, which often invites or becomes delegates from other countries, also acts as a domestic arena that opens access for the international community to experience Indonesian culture directly. This strengthens Indonesia's position as a country that is open to multicultural collaboration and prioritizes the value of tolerance in global society.

In the APC 2025 series, AIESEC Indonesia held various cultural events such as *Nusantara Cultural Night and Global Village*, where participants from different countries were invited to get to know firsthand the diversity of Indonesian culture ranging from traditional dance performances, art exhibitions, to cultural workshops. In addition to introducing the culture of the archipelago to international youth, this event also serves as a space for the exchange of traditions between countries, strengthens cross-cultural networks, and fosters inclusive global leadership (Zarawaki, 2025). The participation of young leaders from various countries in this event expands the reach of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy and strengthens Indonesia's image as a friendly, inclusive, and rich nation of cultural identity. Through activities such as APC, AIESEC Indonesia concretely contributes to creating a positive perception of Indonesia, building international networks, and expanding the influence of cultural dissemination. This is a long-term investment for the spread of Indonesian culture, by strengthening the bonds of friendship between nations.

The arena of cross-cultural interaction through global education programs, one of which is *World's Largest Lesson (WLL)*, which is a global initiative in collaboration with UNICEF and Project Everyone to introduce the SDGs to students in different countries (Project Everyone & UNICEF, 2020). The implementation of WLL by AIESEC Indonesia presents an intercultural meeting space in the educational environment through interactive learning activities involving international volunteers. In the framework of most AIESEC Indonesia conferences, this forum uses this forum to integrate aspects of education and social advocacy, for example through the implementation of *World's Largest Lesson (WLL) 2025* involving 1,620 students in three secondary schools in Bali.

The holding of *the Youth Speak Forum* organized by AIESEC Indonesia is one of the strategic initiatives in strengthening the role of youth as non-state actors in the dissemination of Indonesian values and culture at the national level. This forum is part of AIESEC's global movement that aims to provide a space for the younger generation to voice their views and actively participate in strategic issues, especially those related to the SDGs.

The 2024 forum carries the theme "*Eco-Finance: Discovering Youth-led Green Economy Potential to Make a Positive Impact on Society*," which was initiated jointly by the Nusantara Capital Authority (IKN) and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia. This collaboration shows the synergy between AIESEC as a non-state actor and government institutions in strengthening the sustainability agenda and spreading the nation's positive values. Through various interactive sessions, such as a case study themed *Eco-Friendly Tourism Initiative*, participants were invited to analyze sustainable tourism issues and formulate innovative solutions that pay attention to local environmental, social, and economic aspects. The results of this forum affirm three important points: first, the importance of accurate data and research in supporting sustainable development policies; second, the need for active involvement of local communities to create real social impacts; and third, the ability of the younger generation to offer creative ideas that are applicable to society (Angela, 2025).

Therefore, this analysis confirms that AIESEC's contribution in acting as an arena that supports the expression of social ideas and policies is potential but does not fully meet the standards of credibility and consistency as underlined by Waller in influencing the dissemination and diplomacy of culture. In order to be more impactful, AIESEC needs to strengthen the continuity of the program, establish closer linkages with national policies, and ensure that the ideas put forward are in line with authentic Indonesian cultural practices.

### **The Role of AIESEC Indonesia as *an Actor* in the Spread of Indonesian Culture**

As an independent actor, AIESEC plays the role of a non-state actor who has the initiative and capacity to design and carry out cultural dissemination activities independently. In this case, AIESEC not only runs programs that support Indonesian cultural policies, but also creates separate programs that are in line with the values upheld in the dissemination of Indonesian culture.

In the context of AIESEC Indonesia, AIESEC's GV program functions as a strategic medium for participatory and organic cultural diplomacy and dissemination. Through this program, international participants (EP) live with local communities, interact with Indonesian youth, and engage in daily activities such as language training, introduction to traditions, culinary, and community activities based on local wisdom. This approach creates an authentic cross-cultural experience, where an understanding of Indonesian culture is built through direct interaction, rather than just formal representation. After returning to their home countries, the EPs acted as ambassadors of Indonesian culture indirectly by sharing their experiences on their social networks. AIESEC facilitates two main schemes, namely *Outgoing Global Volunteer* (OGV) which is the sending of Indonesian youth abroad for SDGs-based social projects and *Incoming Global Volunteer* (IGV) which is the acceptance of foreign volunteers in Indonesia. These two programs not only allow for cross-cultural adaptation, but also make youth cultural agents who carry and accept global cultural values.

AIESEC's independence is also reflected through the initiative to integrate the OGV program with Real Work Lectures (KKN) in a number of universities. The GV x KKN model is managed without direct government intervention and presents strategic benefits. First, strengthening the academic dimension of cultural exchange through research collaboration between Indonesian students and international participants. Second, expanding the global education network and opening up a path for sustainable cultural dissemination. Third, increasing the legitimacy of the program through a more authentic scientific approach and cultural experience (Suardi, 2025). This independence allows AIESEC to move more adaptive than diplomacy mechanisms or formal state structures, while creating alternative paths for cultural dissemination based on cross-cultural exchange and interaction.

As a global youth organization, AIESEC Indonesia has proven its role as a non-state actor in the dissemination of Indonesian culture through various cross-border exchange and collaboration programs. The OGV program, which involves 24 LCs in Indonesia and partnerships with more than 10 countries, has dispatched 332 Indonesian youth in the 2022–2025 period to introduce national cultures in various parts of the world. The program stands out for its ability to respond to global issues with an inclusive approach, encourage organic cross-cultural interactions, and expand networks between countries.

Despite facing challenges in policy synchronization and quality standardization in each region, AIESEC still has strategic potential as a platform for the dissemination of youth-based culture (Suardi, 2025). By maintaining autonomy while establishing informal coordination with the government, AIESEC plays an important role in strengthening international networks, enriching Indonesia's image through the perspective of the younger generation, and supporting the achievement of the SDGs. Thus, AIESEC can be seen as a model of cultural dissemination that is sustainable, participatory, and has a positive impact on strengthening Indonesia's cultural position at the global level (Priambodo, 2015).

Based on this research, AIESEC Indonesia through the OGV and IGV programs has proven its role as an effective independent actor in diplomacy and the spread of Indonesian culture. The analysis shows that these two programs complement each other in building a positive image of Indonesia in the global arena. OGV acts as a means of spreading Indonesian cultural values abroad through Indonesian youth who are

participants, while IGV is a medium for promotion and cultural introduction for foreign volunteers who come directly to Indonesia. The activity reflects the idea of a "two-way street".

The analysis shows that the main strengths of this model lie in AIESEC's global network in approximately 120 countries, the flexibility of programs that are adaptive to local needs, and the approach that directly involves local communities. Participation data shows a significant increase in exchange realization, with OGV reaching 332 participants and IGV 312 participants in 2022-2025. Key challenges include the need to synchronize with the government's diplomacy agenda without reducing organizational autonomy, as well as the need for a more comprehensive long-term impact evaluation system. Through this approach, AIESEC Indonesia not only succeeds in spreading Indonesian culture, but also builds *a reservoir of goodwill* that has the potential to become a strategic asset in supporting Indonesia's foreign policy in the future, in accordance with Waller's (2009) concept of the accumulation of cultural influence as a capital for diplomacy and long-term cultural dissemination (Waller, 2009).

AIESEC Indonesia runs international education programs through various student exchange and internship programs, such as *Global Talent*, *Global Teacher*, and *Global Volunteer*. These programs provide opportunities for participants to gain hands-on learning experience abroad, as well as introduce Indonesian culture to the international community (AIESECIndonesia, 2025). AIESEC Indonesia not only runs the general *Global Exchange* program, but also sends representatives through the CEEDership (*Cultural Envoy for Exchange Development*) program, where AIESEC members (CEEDers) are stationed in local or national branches of AIESEC in various countries. The main goal of this program is to support organizational development and strengthen global networks, but indirectly CEEDer also plays a role as a cultural ambassador that brings Indonesian values and identity in the international arena (Suardi, 2025). If it is associated with the framework of means of exchange according to Waller (2009), CEEDership is a form of non-academic exchange that contributes to cultural diplomacy through direct interaction, cross-border collaboration, and exchange of experiences.

The role of AIESEC members is not limited to internal activities, but also includes involvement as speakers or speakers at other community events. This role demonstrates their capacity as representatives of the organization (*representative*), which serves to communicate AIESEC's values, experiences, and programs to a wider audience. One form of AIESEC being a resource person that also has an impact on cultural spread is when Eliana becomes a resource person at the event *Bali International Student Festival 2024*. This festival, organized by *Indonesia Youth Foundation*, serves as a cross-cultural platform that brings together students from different countries to dialogue, think critically, and innovate against global challenges. The theme of this year's event, "*Acknowledging Unconventionality to Rethink Traditionality*", invites participants to redefine traditions and encourage social innovation in global and local contexts. (Foundation, 2024)

In addition, AIESEC as a whole often holds national and international conferences that give awards to branches or individuals with significant cross-cultural project achievements, such as the *Own the Present* category which pays attention *to the performance of AIESEC Indonesia's exchange programs* (Alam, 2025). Symbolic recognition is also realized through testimonials and official publications on AIESEC websites and social media which provide wider visibility for participants and strengthen Indonesia's cultural image in the global arena. In January 2025, AIESEC Indonesia won a prestigious award, namely *The Winner of Gen 2025 Excellence Award* at the *International Presidents Meeting Global Award 2025* organized by AIESEC International (Indonesia A. i., 2025). This achievement shows that although the award is

within the internal scope of AIESEC, its impact is still relevant to the spread of culture. This is because the award is proof of AIESEC's international recognition for the quality of leadership, cultural exchange management, and AIESEC Indonesia's contribution to global networks (Alam, 2025).

Therefore, when viewed at the *global level*, as an International Organization, AIESEC plays the role of an independent actor that has its own agenda and identity outside the interests of the state. Through its global network in more than 120 countries, AIESEC spreads values such as diversity, inclusivity, and cross-cultural collaboration that at the same time represent Indonesia's open and humanist cultural character. This role reflects Archer's concept of an international organization that acts independently with its own norms and missions, while still influencing the global community's perception of its member countries (Archer, 2001). Critically, AIESEC's involvement through the *framework of the level of analysis* in the study of AIESEC's international relations is at the group level and the global level. This shows that non-state organizations have sufficient capacity in strengthening the position of diplomacy and the spread of Indonesian culture. However, this role also presents the challenge of being independent of creating a cultural narrative that is not always in sync with formal state diplomacy. Because the activities are informal and community-based, the contribution to the spread of Indonesian culture tends to be at the micro level and depends on the quality of interaction built in each project.

## CONCLUSION

This research highlights how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as AIESEC Indonesia play a role in supporting the spread of Indonesian culture. As an independent and cross-border non-state actor, AIESEC is able to leverage its global network, organizational flexibility, and youth-based participatory approach to promote Indonesian cultural identity and values to an international audience. Through the Incoming & Outgoing Global Exchange program, Global Village, as well as international conferences and forums, AIESEC consistently creates an effective interaction space in strengthening and spreading Indonesia's positive image.

Based on the theory of Clive Archer (2001), the role of AIESEC can be explained as follows. First, as an instrument, AIESEC is a channel used by the Indonesian government to convey cultural values through an international youth exchange program, through the Incoming Global Volunntter has received as many as 312 youth from various countries to learn and experience Indonesian culture firsthand. Second, as an arena, AIESEC provides a forum for cross-cultural dialogue through forums, conferences, and collaborative projects that bring together youth from different countries. Third, as an independent actor, AIESEC has shown its capacity to take the initiative, for example through *Outgoing Global Exchange* has sent as many as 403 youth with *Global Volunteers* and *Global Talent/Teachers* from 2022-2025 which allows Indonesian youth to play a direct role in the spread of Indonesian culture in other countries.

Overall, the study concludes that the most prominent role of AIESEC is as an instrument and primarily an independent actor, while its role as an arena is still limited to raising awareness and dialogue spaces without concrete evidence of national cultural policies. Thus, the spread of Indonesian culture is not only run by the state, but can also be expanded through non-state organizations. The main contribution of this research is to fill the gap in studies that still rarely discuss in depth the role of international youth organizations in the spread of Indonesian culture, especially in the post-COVID-19 period which is characterized by digital transformation and changes in patterns of cross-cultural interaction. The implication of these findings is the need for stronger synergy between

the dissemination of government culture and the initiatives of non-state organizations so that the strategy of spreading Indonesian culture can run more optimally in the post-pandemic era of globalization.

The results of this study show that the role of AIESEC Indonesia in the dissemination of culture is in line with the concept put forward by cultural diplomacy by Michael J. Waller (2009). According to Waller, "*Ultimately, the goal of Cultural Diplomacy is to influence a foreign audience and use that influence, which is built up over the long term, as a sort of goodwill reserve to win support for policies.*" In this context, AIESEC programs such as youth exchanges, international conferences, and cultural activities involving local communities have become a means to build a *reservoir of goodwill* for Indonesia. Although the impact is long-term and not always directly visible in policies, the accumulation of cultural interaction facilitated by AIESEC contributes to the formation of a positive image of Indonesia in the eyes of the world. Thus, AIESEC plays a role as one of the non-state actors that expands the space for the dissemination of Indonesian culture through an inclusive, youth-based, *experiential*, and participatory approach.

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