

Keeping Nyambu authentic, natural as ecotourism village

Positive changes have started to take place in Nyambu ecotourism village following efforts by the British Council in partnership with Diageo Indonesia and Yayasan Wisnu to unleash local potential.

Community-based Desa Wisata Ekologis (DWE) Nyambu or Nyambu ecotourism village in Tabanan, Bali is witnessing positive changes as part of the village's journey, with authenticity becoming its increasingly preferred hallmark.

Officially opening its doors to the public in 2016, Nyambu village with its paddy-fields, relief temples and other tourist attractions that local young people surprisingly found through their cultural mapping project three years ago, have started to lure eco-conscious travelers.

Nyambu village with a population of 3,400 people, 30 percent of whom are young people, had yet to realize its huge potential until the ecotourism program was introduced in 2015. The assets, which in the past were useful mainly for locals according to the respective function, are now also meaningful to others, including those from far and wide beyond Bali.

Visitors to the village shared the joy of being in the village, which many eco-conscious people consider a rare but highly respected site thanks to its maintained authenticity in an era marked by a technology driven, rapidly changing environment. "Nyambu is the authentic Bali. Great people in love with their village and their culture and also who love to share the history and values," Simon Verdebout from France told *The Jakarta Post* recently.

Rice field trails, cultural trails and village bicycle tours are among spiritual life-enriching things to do on offer at Nyambu village. "All activities are enjoyable. Simply because we are accompanied by passionate people who love sharing and sharing," said Verdebout who

visited Nyambu with his wife and children in April.

Melinda Instellar, contacted separately, said she came to Nyambu village recently as a traveler who also conducted research on ecotourism for her thesis. "Nyambu has its own appeal. It is a non-mass-oriented tourist destination that can retain its quality and authenticity, allowing visitors to taste the originality of Nyambu village as it is," said Melinda, who enjoyed a rice field trail and a cultural trail.

Meaningful memories

The natural Nyambu home, several of which have spacious gardens with nice shady trees, is also a child-friendly area, at least that's what Soyeonpark Park, a mother of two from Gwangmyeong-si, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea, said.

"My first daughter goes to elementary school this year so I want to show foreign culture and introduce the local Balinese life," said Soyeonpark who, along with her children visited Nyambu in September.

"What if we stayed only at a resort, it could be the same as in Korea. I desire to give my daughters special and meaningful memories," she noted. "My daughters can have another grandma and grandpa in Bali. While we stayed in a homestay, we felt like being at a grandparent's house. Hojung, my daughter, says that the most memorable thing in Bali is Ebujero grandma's house," she added.

"They played freely running across the big beautiful garden and yelling 'ants [...] ants'. She always smiled at them like their real grandma," she said.

Nyambu with its natural and cultural appeal has also enthralled Jinpa Smith, a

freelance journalist from Germany, who also came to the village to find out more about ecotourism in Bali. "I enjoyed the cultural trail as I am a Buddhist and I really enjoy hearing the stories about how Hinduism came to Bali," said Jinpa who visited Nyambu in September.

She went on to say, "Satya [her guide] showed me the stone reliefs and told me the stories — it was very interesting. I also enjoyed seeing the rice fields and the monkey shrine and bathing pool!" she said.

More eco-conscious visitors will pleasurably share their Nyambu village experience, but the intriguing question is how the sought-after ecotourism village could have impacted on the locals.

The British Council's director of education and society Ian Robinson attributed the development of the Nyambu ecotourism village to the change that has taken place following the Social Enterprise (SE) and Active Citizens training program that the British Council and its partners, Diageo Indonesia and Yayasan Wisnu, provided for local young people.

Yayasan Wisnu is an organization that focuses on ecotourism development in Bali. "The program has changed the capability and expectation of local people. It opened the opportunity for them to manage their own potential," he said.

The change has occurred in both the village for the local people and in wider Bali, and with local regent support and interest in the wider area beyond Nyambu.

The British Council has helped create a more secure, prosperous and inclusive society by enabling communities to embrace social and creative entrepreneurship in partnership with local and



Courtesy of British Council

Group discussion: The participants of Active Citizens reflect on their journey on implementing Social Action Projects in their communities during a workshop in Bali.

regional partners, Robinson said.

The United Kingdom has a long history of civil society, cooperative and SE work. "We are committed to sharing our experience, and expertise, developing new models with partner countries," he said.

"We are interested in working with other countries in ways that are mutually beneficial and can help the sector in both Indonesia and the UK develop through partnership and sharing of new models," he added.

Diageo Indonesia's corporate relations director Dendy Borman said the local community had given great support to the program, which "I think is a significant change"

"Nyambu village looks cleaner, which demonstrates the local community's consistent commitment to reduce plastic trash," he said.

Active Citizens training and Social Action Project Showcase has helped enhance local ecotourism village players' confidence in developing Nyambu village into a better ecotourism village.

Along with the British Council, Diageo provides what local human resources need to develop Nyambu ecotourism village, such as funding, networking, best practice reference and feedback.

Training approaches

It started with community-based SE support and competitions to map where they were, after which "we provide

mentoring and capacity building, to SE across Indonesia. Then we took these training approaches and materials and applied them, in a specific community in which Diageo worked," Robinson explained.

Local young people were engaged in implementing the cultural mapping projects as part of their efforts to unlock local potentials, the result of which was the findings related to 57 temples, 22 springs and 61 percent of its 384.7 hectare rice fields, which travellers can now enjoy.

Thanks to the Nyambu ecotourism village development program, local administrations at the regency, provincial and central level have started to pay heed to the village. "An 8 km-long road in the village, for example, has been repaired. Local people have been waiting for this for 15 years," said Denik Purwati, director of Yayasan Wisnu, local partner based in Bali that mentors and support Nyambu to develop the DWE Nyambu.

Nyambu ecotourism village has also provided opportunities for local people, especially those who own homes with extra rooms. "They started to clean and improve the room and submit it to the DWE Nyambu operator that will manage it as a lodging," she said.

To date, 10 rooms are readily available and "the rooms have frequently received guests," she said.

The DWE Nyambu has also had an impact on local

young people as the long-term backbone of the program. "Many of them have restored their self-confidence and love their village more," she said.

In the past, Nyambu people felt ashamed of admitting where they were from but "now they are proud of being people from Nyambu. This can be seen from what local young people say through social media," she said.

What would be the next plan in relation with Nyambu ecotourism village?

"At the minute, we are completing impact evaluation assessments in Nyambu and considering the next steps. We will share the Nyambu experience internationally in the British Council's Active Citizens program globally in February next year."

Participants will learn about the journey that Nyambu is taking. "This is being organized after having had a successful Active Citizen National Showcase in September, with examples from across Indonesia," he said.

The positive changes taking place in Nyambu village can be a good and encouraging start for local ecotourism village development, but another intriguing question is on how to ensure the sustainability of the program.

"Strong commitment from the Nyambu village community is, absolutely, the main factor to make the DWE Nyambu sustainable," Dendy said.

(JP/Sudibyo M. Wiradji)

Carrying out social action projects

Individual capacity, which includes the leadership and courage to take an initiative, is indeed crucial when it comes to tackling social issues because it partly contributes to the implementation of social action projects.

This explains why the British Council in partnership with Diageo Indonesia provided capacity building programs under their Active Citizens initiative to a number of initiators of social action projects, with each having its own organization or community.

Active Citizens is a global program initiated by the British Council that aims at providing social leadership training for communities, which promote intercultural dialogue and social development that is planned and carried out by the community themselves.

Following the training, the communities were given the opportunity to showcase their social action projects at the Active Citizens Social Action Project Showcase in Bali.

Organized by the British Council in partnership with Diageo Indonesia, the September 2018 exhibition is part of Active Citizens agenda that aim to provide an opportunity for the participants to network, establish connections, and to celebrate the journey they have taken part in Active Citizens Program.

The September 2018's showcase, organized by the British Council in partnership with Diageo Indonesia, saw the selected 25 social action projects displayed, with issues addressed ranging from arts and culture, education, disability and inclusivity, eco-tourism, entrepreneurship and the environment.

The social action projects are initiated and carried out by active citizens in their communities from various parts of Indonesia, namely Banda Aceh, Jambi, Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, Surabaya, Moluccas, East Sumatra and Bali.

Initiators of the social action



Courtesy of British Council

Paying attention: A participant of the Active Citizens program speaks to one of visitors during the Social Action Project Showcase in Nyambu, Tabanan, Bali

projects disclosed how they could engage in the project, which, according to them, commonly starts with emerging feelings of concern over a social issue happening around them.

The increased amount of paper trash and poor people's low access to education in Aceh, for example, upset Fahry Purnama and prompted him to initiate Gerakan Sedekah Kertas (Paper Collection Movement) with the name Pesawat Kertas, which is also the name of the community that he established 11 months ago.

"Through the community, I invited people, especially students to collect and give their paper to us," he said. "We process part of the paper into creative products and sell another part of the paper. We use the money collected from the sale of the paper to provide children from the poor families with a scholarship," he said.

Many poor children living in the hinterland have low access to education, he said.

Surprisingly, the people were highly enthusiastic about his idea and to date, "we managed

to collect two tons of paper trash since the project started seven months ago."

Ni Luh Yenni of Desa Wisata Ekologis (DWE) Nyambu community was concerned over the issue of poorly managed plastic trash in the village because of the absence of a plastic trash treatment site.

Not all villages have equal access to trash transportation services, leaving many confused with where to dump the plastic trash, according to Yenni. Her concern over the situation, she said, had driven her and other community members in Nyambu to initiate the implementation of a plastic trash-free project.

"The project will be useful for both Nyambu as an ecotourism village and our daily life," said Yenni.

James Gerson Mansula from Kupang said the people in the area where he lives are facing various social issues but many were not aware, let alone engaged in coping with the issues.

For example, he said, children could not learn well because the number of students attending

a class in schools frequently exceeded the schools' capacity.

This inspired him to launch a social action project relating to education, called SESAK (contemporary school) before he changed the name into *Ume Ilmu* (House of Science), which means learning could be conducted anywhere, including in a house.

James, who started the project in May, delivered the computer and drawing class informally, either in his room or on the terrace of his house.

Meanwhile, Anik Rotul Qori'ah from Pasuruan, East Java said the growing trend in using gadgets by children as a game device, with some becoming addicted, had prompted her to initiate the a social project related to traditional games, called Belajar Permainan Tradisional (Learning Traditional Games).

"The project aims at balancing the habit of playing modern and traditional games among children. The traditional games include traditional sports and nature-based games that enhance children motoric capabilities," she said.

Another community, Omah Perempuan Kreatif Trenggalek, initiated by Umi Sayekti, also provides informal education in response to the social problem in Trenggalek where women have no access to the improvement of knowledge and life skills.

Umi said she was concerned about the problem faced by local housewives, some of whom are widows and have to be the breadwinner.

Many local housewives work as Indonesian migrant workers (TKI) because of difficult access to life skills. That's why, she said, when she ceased to be a migrant worker, "I set up an informal school in which I encouraged the housewives to become economically self-reliant in order to cope with their problems," she said.

Although at the beginning many ridiculed her, she said, she was firm with her initiative. "We shared our skills in cooking, in making cookies or handicrafts that are marketable," she said.

There are, indeed, more stories behind social action projects. Other communities participating in the exhibition included Komunitas Rumah 8 from Ambon, Maluku, Rumah Singgah Noelbaki from Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Komunitas Sampah Berkah from Bandung, Komunitas OASE Atma Jaya, PPAL Wanachahala from Jakarta, Desa Ada Dukuh Penaban from Karangasem, Bali and Komunitas Sahabat Kapas from Karanganyar, Central Java.

Ian Robinson, director of the British Council, said, "All the social action projects displayed represent the achievements of each participant, and tell of their inspiring journeys as active members of society."

"Through this event we see how they are committed to supporting the communities and how they have worked to learn and grow for the benefit of others in Indonesia," he said.

Dendy Borman, director of corporate relations of Diageo Indonesia, said Diageo always supported the efforts to improve Indonesia's sustainability. "We believe that community development and economic empowerment can lead to improving individual capacity, which can be done through providing guidance and training," he said.

"This is also in line with the program that we are currently working on with our partner, the British Council, since the development of the Nyambu ecological tourism village and being carried out more widely throughout Indonesia through the Active Citizens program," he said.

The participants that joined the Active Citizens training program expressed delight at the opportunity, which according to them, was very useful. "We were trained on how to make a good social project and also how to develop it, which is very helpful," said Fahry, founder of Pesawat Kertas Community.

Yenni of DWE Nyambu village community confirmed that the training had boosted her self-confidence and given her the courage to initiate a social action project.

"Thanks to the training, I become more confident with what I am doing. Although making a change is quiet challenging, I can handle it," said Umi of Omah Perempuan Kreatif Trenggalek.

(JP/Sudibyo M. Wiradji)

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