

**Ekoturizm va barqaror rivojlanishga e'tibor qaratish:** Turizm sohasida ekologik jihatdan barqaror yondashuvlarni kengaytirish. Yashil turizmni rivojlantirish va tabiiy resurslarni muhofaza qilishga yo'naltirilgan strategiyalarni ishlab chiqish.

**Turizm infratuzilmasini takomillashtirish:** Transport, mehmonxonalar, madaniy obidalar va boshqa turizm infratuzilmasi obyektlarining sifatini oshirish. Bunda xorijiy tajribalardan foydalanish, yangi investitsiyalarni jalb qilish zarur.

**Kadrlar malakasini oshirish:** Turizm sohasida malakali mutaxassislar tayyorlash uchun ta'lim tizimini takomillashtirish va xalqaro tajribalar asosida yangi dasturlarni ishlab chiqish. Bu, turizm xizmatlarining sifatini oshirishga yordam beradi.

**Turizmni barqaror boshqarish tizimlarini joriy etish:** Turizmni boshqarish bo'yicha innovatsion va samarali tizimlarni ishlab chiqish. Ular yordamida turizmni yanada samarali tarzda rivojlantirish va natijalarga erishish mumkin.

**Xulosa:** Turizmni rivojlantirishda xorijiy tajriba va innovatsiyalarni o'rganish, sohaning barqaror o'sishini ta'minlashga katta hissa qo'shadi. Turizm sohasida ilg'or texnologiyalar, raqamli platformalar, ekologik turizm va yangi boshqaruv tizimlari kabi innovatsion yondashuvlar jahon bo'ylab muvaffaqiyatli qo'llanilib, iqtisodiy o'sishga, yangi ish o'rinlari yaratishga va madaniy aloqalarni mustahkamlashga xizmat qilmoqda. Xususan, raqamli texnologiyalar va ekologik barqarorlikka qaratilgan yondashuvlar turizm sohasining kelajagini shakllantirishda muhim rol o'ynaydi. Xorijiy tajribalardan olingan natijalarni tahlil qilish, o'z mamlakatimizda turizmni rivojlantirishda yangi imkoniyatlarni ochib beradi. Bunday tajribalarni joriy etish nafaqat turizm sohasini yanada barqaror va raqobatdosh qiladi, balki mamlakatning global turizm bozoridagi o'rnini mustahkamlashga yordam beradi.

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#### **UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM VILLAGES (A CASE STUDY IN NGLANGGERAN)**

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**Abstract:** Although social entrepreneurs are key actors in tourism villages and hence play an pivotal role in driving changes and creating relevant and sustainable business models, there remains a gap in understanding how they can influence tourism village sustainability. Accordingly, the research aims to fill the gap by finding/exploring social entrepreneurs' roles in building sustainable tourism villages. A descriptive qualitative approach and a case study design were applied to observe social entrepreneurs in tourism village sustainability. The subject was a case study of social entrepreneurs as the drivers of Nglanggeran tourism village, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a tourism village with global awards as a sustainable tourism village. Data were collected using in-depth interviews with three actors influential in the success of tourist villages and selected using a purposive sampling technique, followed by observation and documentation. Content analysis was carried out to describe findings, allowing for a better understanding of the case studied and producing best practices likely to be adopted by other tourism villages. This research found that the key to sustainable tourism village development depended on the measures made by social entrepreneurs, who should therefore act as strategic planners, marketers, and architects in their tourism villages. Theoretically, the research contributes to developing a social entrepreneur model applicable in the context of tourism villages, and practically, it enriches best practices on how social entrepreneurs account for improving tourism village welfare. Future research is needed by comparing the role of social entrepreneurs in several tourism villages with different characteristics to apprehend what factors affect the success and sustainability of the villages.

**Key words:** Role, Social Entrepreneurs, Sustainable, Tourism Village

**Introductions:** As the progress of a nation is considerably affected by village development, Indonesia impels its rural areas to develop by realizing more than 70,000 autonomous villages through the village fund program in the last five years to achieve the national SDGs (Permatasari et al., 2021). The program covers village proliferation, which allows 60.56% of areas to reduce poverty levels (Faoziyah & Salim, 2020) by elevating/building village head capacity (Indra & Khoirunurrofik, 2022). It also encompasses village fund allocation, which induces inclusive growth as a pro-poor and pro-employment policy (Ernawati, et.al., 2021).

In relation to the village development program, developing tourism villages can propel national economic growth due to the job opportunities they create and the income they generate for locals through relevant activities, e.g., hospitality, guides, and local crafts (Tola et al., 2024; Sanchez & Sánchez, 2018). Additionally, they enhance added value and economic welfare (Fajri et al., 2024).

Developing tourism villages can also come off well with the contributions of social entrepreneurs, whose roles can be implemented through village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) (Muryanti, 2020). Abdullah et al. (2024) demonstrate how building the capacity of social entrepreneurs through technosociopreneurship strategies can improve productivity in community empowerment. As Imanuella et al. (2025) indicate, in their relationship, social entrepreneurship and rural development initiatives bolster each other in various rural development projects and socio-economic change.

In addition, the contribution of creative social entrepreneurs prompts the thriving of tourism villages. They build legitimacy effectively by navigating institutional complexities and pushing social capital at the community level (Wang et al., 2024). Besides, they afford innovative solutions to bring about sustainable tourism models with an auspicious impact on the community and the environment (Mahato et al., 2021; Adnan et al., 2024). To exemplify, entrepreneurial leadership, combined with community involvement, brings on the transformation of Pujon Kidul from an agricultural village to a popular tourist (Adnan et al., 2024). In other words, social entrepreneurs decidedly account for ensuring tourism villages' sustainable competitive advantage and are responsible for exploring and promoting aspects of their distinguished locality (Kusumastuti et al., 2024).

And yet, some tourism villages are still reeling from ill development, partly as a result of knowledge/human resource constraints social entrepreneurs undergo, hampering them from making a good tourism village development plan. Other challenges are also on the ground, e.g., financial deprivation, poor market access, inadequate infrastructure, inflation, a lack of skilled labor, and insecurity (Fiseha & Oyelana, 2019). Additionally, poor education is mainly notable among rural women, who are also grappling with scarce resources limiting their opportunities to develop their abilities comprehensively (Rao et al., 2022).

Furthermore, according to Kumar & Valeri (2022), there is a paucity of consistent facilities and measures for holistic tourism in tourism villages albeit their potential tourism segment. For example, in poorly developed tourism villages, their actors set no orientation/priority concerning relevant marketing activities, which are considered integral in developing tourism villages. It is aligned with Ray (2017) and March (2018), that several tourism villages remain struggling with poor marketing strategies, which hinder their ability to compete and attract tourists. Many tourism village managers continue to be afflicted with digital marketing knowledge gaps which impede their efforts to increase the visibility and attractiveness of their tourism villages (Rodrigues et al., 2021). The limited effective marketing initiatives inevitably inhibit them from optimizing their cultural and natural assets. As manifested by Idziak et al. (2018), tourism village marketing requires professional expertise to adapt local resources to market needs, but considering local communities have none of these skills, they warrant external assistance.

Aside from marketing barriers, village tourism development is retarded by inadequate development of infrastructure and supporting facilities as well as limited human and financial resources (Kusworo, 2023). Mandić et al. (2018) pinpoint that the absence of recreational facilities and other supporting services can confine the acquisition of tourism experiences. Additionally, as pointed out by Mazrekaj (2020), a shortage of vital facilities, such as clean water, waste management, and energy facilities, can have a significant adverse effect on the attractiveness and functionality of tourism villages.

This research will complete the understanding gap by finding/exploring further social entrepreneurs' roles in building sustainable tourism villages since the topic is still insufficiently addressed to this day. We can hence confidently pronounce that this is critical research as it can act as a knowledge base for social entrepreneurs to alter ill-developed villages into well-developed and independent ones. The actors, by referring to this research, can engender new creative/innovative breakthroughs, enabling their villages to adapt and survive amid changing market/tourist preferences.

**Methods: Population and Samples.** A descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design was applied to observe social entrepreneurship in tourism village sustainability. The subject was a case study of social entrepreneurs as the drivers of Nglanggeran Tourism Village, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, a tourism village with global awards as a sustainable tourism village. In-depth interviews were carried out with two local social entrepreneurs as key informants. They were chosen purposively using the snowball technique to identify other interviewees. The criteria for selecting informants were based on the following criteria: (1) Coming with in-depth knowledge of the concerned village's history, culture, and tourism potential, (2) Playing a direct role in social entrepreneurship initiatives in Nglanggeran Tourism Village, and (3) Actively engaging in planning, implementation, or management of sustainable tourism activities in the tourism village.

**Research Tools and Data Collection.** The research area was Nglanggeran Tourism Village, Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The tools were interview forms. The data were primary and secondary. Primary data were collected using in-depth interviews with two key informants as social enterprises of Nglanggeran Tourism Village to obtain information about what actions, contributions, and initiatives they had in achieving a sustainable tourism village. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique, followed by observation and documentation. Secondary data were gathered from journals, websites, social media, and other online sources.

*Data Analysis.* After data were collected, data analysis and reduction, presentation, verification, and conclusion drawing were executed. Content analysis was performed to describe findings, allowing for a better understanding of the case studied and producing best practices likely to be adopted by other tourism villages.

**Results and Discussions:** Results presented us with evidence that the key to sustainable tourism village development hinged on the measures made by social entrepreneurs, who should thus act as strategic planners, marketers, and architects in their tourism village. In other words, they extremely contributed to the tourism industry and positively influenced the community and its sustainability (Belias et al., 2022). It was not surprising then, that social entrepreneurship was now increasingly adopted as a tourism development strategy for its promised positive societal changes.

***Social Entrepreneurs as Strategic Planners:*** Social entrepreneurs played a crucial role as strategic planners, thereby spearheading in Nglanggeran Tourism Village. Among their tasks were mobilizing and transforming the community once environmentally exploitative to a caring one capable of attracting tourists. Their initiatives induced identifying the Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano as the main attraction and developing cultural tourism and a community-based ecotourism area by involving local communities in arts and crafts performances. Additionally, they managed to realize community and Karang Taruna-driven activities in the tourism village, which hence showed the local community's capacity for hosting in their village. Incomes derived from these activities were entirely spent on village development. Another strategy was also developed, i.e., designing creative tour packages (Aquino, 2022), marking social entrepreneurs' willingness to adapt to new things, including the development of digital information technology.

*"Our village collaborates with a range of stakeholders. Currently, Nglanggeran has a new segment of tourists, namely groups of people who desire to learn how to develop a tourism village, researchers, academics, internship students/lecturers, and so on."* (Personal communication with SH in Nglanggeran Tourism Village)

Social entrepreneur actors collaborated with the following stakeholders and delivered the following training and mentoring to promote the capacity of the Nglanggeran community.

1. PKK culinary training and English language training from Universitas Gadjah Mada, Ambarrukmo Tourism College (STIPRAM), and Akademi Pariwisata Indonesia (API).
2. Nglanggeran as an agrotourism area, a fostered village program by PT Pertamina and the Center for Cultural, Regional, and Environmental Research, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
3. A tree planting program by Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN).
4. Tourism management training from Universitas Ahmad Dahlan (UAD).
5. Assistance in empowering the Nglanggeran community by establishing a village-owned enterprise (BUMDes) communication forum from the Institute for Research and Empowerment (IRE).
6. Financial training from Bank Indonesia and STAN.
7. Women's training of eco-spa for therapy and making scrubs from Putri Kedaton.
8. Digitalization training from Pigijo.
9. Driving training from an intern from Colorado, USA.

*"We are building networks and collaborating with all stakeholder elements, covering the government, which is the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. We are committed to optimizing and finishing the Griya Batik and Griya Spa buildings. We (the Nglanggeran Tourism Village management) collaborate with Putri Kedaton and the government, the Industry and Trade Office in Yogyakarta, to develop Griya Spa."* (Personal communication with SH in Nglanggeran tourism village)

***Social Entrepreneurs as Marketers:*** The role of social entrepreneurs as village marketers was essential for attaining the target market (tourists) through offline and online promotions.

*"Nglanggeran has actually been using digital for a long, but the use is still limited, and only Friendster is applied. I pour my hobby, writing, into my blog at [www.kalisongku.wordpress.com](http://www.kalisongku.wordpress.com). In*



*2009, I changed my blog content, focusing more on the process of developing tourism villages, helping Nglanggeran be better known to the vast community. Meanwhile, many won writing competitions addressing village development. As a result, many parties began to pay attention to Nglanggeran. News about Nglanggeran is increasingly consumed by the public widely through the internet. Currently, it (the management) is more active in marketing through social media, such as websites, blogs, Instagram, (and) Facebook.”* (Personal communication with SH in Nglanggeran Tourism Village)

The website also promoted a variety of creative local products and tourism packages. Here, social entrepreneurs' contributions were noticeable, especially in uploading many different creative content and updating information related to Nglanggeran Tourism Village on its website ([www.gunungapipurba.com](http://www.gunungapipurba.com)), blogs ([www.kalisongku.wordpress.com](http://www.kalisongku.wordpress.com) and [www.nglanggeran-patuk.desa.id](http://www.nglanggeran-patuk.desa.id)), Instagram (@GunungApiPurba and @Griya.Cokelat.Nglanggeran), and Facebook (Gunung Api Purba Nglanggeran and Griya Cokelat Nglanggeran).

In addition, with sociopreneurs' initiatives, Nglanggeran Tourism Village actively participated in various tourism exhibitions, Travel Dialogues, and Table Tops. Travel Dialogue was to bring together actors in tourism businesses, covering hotels, restaurants, souvenir centers, and tourism village management, with potential consumers, encompassing travel agencies and schools. Meanwhile, Table Top, a face-to-face forum of tourism activity actors itching to market their products to potential consumers, allowed for a direct interaction between the Nglanggeran Tourism Village management and customers or buyers. Any ensuing transactions could be made directly on the occasion.

***Social Entrepreneurs as Architects:*** Being architects with a vision for the future, social entrepreneurs in Nglanggeran Tourism Village, Yogyakarta, designed tourism village development in a structured and sustainable manner. They made a long-term plan to develop the ancient volcano area as a natural tourism destination, mapped tourist zones, built supporting facilities, and engaged the community in their management. They aimed to develop infrastructure and supporting facilities to build up the quality of tourist services (information centers, roads, jogging tracks, homestays, toilets, hospitality services, and others).

*“For example, the community is self-reliant to elevate supporting facilities, including making handwashing stations, sanitation, making jogging tracks, maintaining communication, conveying village news on social media, and so on.”* (Personal communication with SH in Nglanggeran Tourism Village)

Mapping tourism village development stages: preparation, launch, evaluation, and sustainable improvement phases was a success by virtue of social entrepreneurs' services. In the case of social entrepreneurs in Nglanggeran Tourism Village, the focus was set on both internal development and collaborations with various stakeholders, e.g., the government, private sectors, academicians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), state-owned enterprises (BUMN), and local communities. The collaborations led to synergies supportive of village programs and activities, producing economic and non-economic benefits for the locals.

*“Parties which provide support for development include the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia together with UN-WTO, local governments, universities, research institutions, banking, companies, communities, non-governmental organizations, and travel agencies.”* (Personal communication with AB in Nglanggeran Tourism Village)

The Gunungkidul Tourism Office provided intensive assistance, aimed at enhancing human resources, destination promotion, and active participation in various competitions concerning Nglanggeran Tourism Village. Some measures accompanied the assistance, with the intent to improve internal capacity and village infrastructure. The collaborative measures resulted in notable achievements and awards, i.e., the ASEAN Sustainable Tourism Award in 2017 and UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages in 2021. Acquiring the achievements reflected the success of sustainable tourism development, tangible proof of the effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder collaboration model implemented.

“To get quality tourists, the strategy of the Nglanggeran Tourist Village management is to reduce the number of tourist visits by doubling the entrance fee, from IDR7,000.00 to IDR14,000.00 and currently to IDR15,000.00. It shows the Nglanggeran community's greater awareness of the imperativeness of natural sustainability and cultural values compared to economic interests.” (Personal communication with AB in Nglanggeran Tourism Village)

In other words, social entrepreneurs set their focal points on both economic and social, cultural, and environmental aspects regarding sustainable tourism villages. They built specific visions, made innovations, and carried out transformative leadership. Besides, their services enabled local potential to coalesce with external resources, yielding an ecosystem which boosted economic growth, cultural preservation, and holistic community empowerment. The findings suggested social entrepreneurs' dual roles, which were the main architects/designers and the driving force of tourism village sustainability and independence.

**Conclusions:** Developing a tourism village in a sustainable manner was attainable once the responsible social entrepreneurs showed off their creativity and innovativeness. The current research enriches best practices on how social entrepreneurs account for promoting tourism village welfare. Theoretically, it contributes to developing a social entrepreneurship model applicable in tourism villages. Still, a calling for future research remains, particularly on discussing and comparing the role of social entrepreneurs in several tourism villages with different characteristics to apprehend what factors affect the success and sustainability of the villages.

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