



**Full Length Research Article**

**INNOVATIVE SETTLEMENT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN LABUAN  
BAJO, NUSA TENGGARA TIMUR, INDONESIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Indonesia is the largest island country in the world consisted of more than 30 thousand islands with beautiful sceneries and tourism industry has been developed significantly in the last decade. Indonesian government has established a plan to develop tourism sector at a string of islands (Bali-Nusa Tenggara) in the eastern Java as one of the islands namely Bali has attracted both domestic and overseas visitors. Although the islands are very beautiful and the number of visitor has been increased, the percentage of poor people is higher than the other parts of Indonesia. Furthermore, most of the local people have not got benefit from the tourism industry. Thus this research aims to develop a concept of innovative settlement in order to improve the inhabitant's capacity as well as their living environment as targeted tourism destination. A region, Labuan Bajo in Flores - Manggarai Barat - Nusa Tenggara Timur, is chosen as a sample as this place is well known for its Komodo Island. Komodo is recently included as one of the New Seven Wonders that has been generated more visitors to the island. This qualitative research is conducted through field work in Labuan Bajo- Flores to examine the settlement and the city, as well as to interview key persons from planning board, community leaders, several inhabitants, tourism operators, and tourists. Aside from primary data, secondary data examined include Labuan Bajo master plan, tourism development master plan and Labuan Bajo statistic. The study shows that Labuan Bajo has potentials to become an innovative settlement by developing the community-based tourism.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is the largest island country in the world, consisted of more than 30 thousand islands with beautiful sceneries and tourism industry has been developed significantly in the last decade. More than half decade after its independence, the development was centred in Java Island, the smallest among the five main islands, but the most populated one. In order to accelerate and expand the economic growth, the Indonesian government established a masterplan for the economic development, by supporting each region that has unique characteristics which should be developed according to its potentials. The Indonesian government established a masterplan to develop tourism sector at a string of islands (Bali-Nusa Tenggara) in the eastern Java, whereas one of the islands namely Bali has attracted both domestic and overseas visitors. Although the islands are very beautiful and the number of visitor has been increased, the percentage of poor

people is higher than the other parts of Indonesia. Furthermore, most of the local people have not got benefit from the tourism industry. Human settlement plays an important role in development as it does not only constitutes the built environment, but also economy and social-culture. Thus this research aims to develop a concept of innovative settlement in order to improve the inhabitant's capacity as well as their living environment as targeted tourism destination. A region, Labuan Bajo in Flores - Manggarai Barat - Nusa Tenggara Timur, is chosen as a sample as this place is well known for its Komodo Island. Komodo is recently included as one of the New Seven Wonders that has generate more visitors to the island over the last years.

**Community-Based Tourism Development and Economic Growth Acceleration Program in Indonesia**

The concept of livable city has been discussed since 2006 worldwide. It is believed that livability is the key to sustainable development. Livability is defined as inhabitant's quality of life showed by three main indicators; improving economic, environmental and social well-being, which all is

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gained through equity, participatory and accessibility. According to Cities Alliances (2007) a livable city can manage social, economic and environmental needs. In line with urbanised development worldwide, concept of livable settlement became significantly important to be applied.

Community participation in physical development sector has been improved such as in planning, budgeting, and implementation process in Indonesia. However, to improve their quality of life, the low income group needs more support to be able to survive in market oriented economy. Therefore local economic development is also an important sector to be addressed through improving community capacity and management, providing better access to be involved, empowering and developing community economic organisations/small enterprises, etc. Home-based enterprise in Indonesia has been well developed and well attached in urban and small town development. This means that housing and its neighbourhood improvement will significantly influence economic capacity and development, and vice versa. Economic Growth Acceleration Program is launched by the Indonesian government to push forward economic creation by developing the local economic potential.

Through this program, the government encourages private sector and local community to participate and take action, while government mostly acts as facilitator and policy maker. The program divides Indonesia's development into six economic corridors i.e. i) Sumatera development will be focused on production and processing centre for crop/plantation products and energy demands, ii) Java development will be focused to stimulate national industry and services, iii) Kalimantan development will be focused on production and processing centre for mining and energy demands, iv) Sulawesi development will be focused for centre of production and processing of farming, plantation, fishery, oil and mining, v) Bali-Nusa Tenggara will be developed as tourism gate and national food supply proponent and vi) Papua and Maluku will be developed as centre for crops, fishery, energy and mining development (MP3EI, 2011).

## The Concept of Innovative Settlement and Community-Based Tourism

Tourism contributes 13% of the regional income of Manggarai Barat after agriculture (55%). However statistic (2009) shows the fluctuate numbers of tourist in Manggarai Barat, while the number of domestic tourist is steadily increase. Among 68 tourist destination, 54% of them are natural objects. Manggarai Barat is one area in East Nusa Tenggara, which will be developed as tourism gate. Economic Growth Acceleration Program integrates potencies of all stakeholders in order to minimise welfare discrepancy. Another mean to meet the aim is to improve small towns' capacity so that the program can reach wider community such as farmers, fishermen, small entrepreneurs in less accessible regions. The small town development is conducted through settlement sector. It is done by utilising local potential to improve social welfare of the inhabitant and preserve their environment in sustainable ways. As the capacity of local government is limited, it is hoped that community resource is available to develop well-established economic of small town with excellent infrastructure and well-maintained environment.

### A Case: Labuan Bajo as a small Town

Labuan Bajo is a small town located at the western end of Flores island, part of Manggarai Barat region, Nusa Tenggara. Labuan Bajo is planned as a development unit focused on tourism. It was a fishing village in 1980s but now has developed significantly to be an entry point to the surrounding small islands including Komodo and Rinca Island which are famous for the giant reptile, Komodo and its under-water sceneries. Manggarai Barat covered an area of 9,450 km<sup>2</sup> which only 36% of it is land. More than 80% of land in Manggarai Barat has not been used/developed. The region is inhabited by more than 200 thousand people in 2010 (Bureau of Statistic, 2010).

### Development Planning

Manggarai Barat is a relatively new region, administrated in 2003 (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Manggarai Barat (left) and Labuan Bajo (right)



(Source: Survey Documentation, 2013)

**Figure 2. Houses in Kampung Air Pasar Lama, in Bugis traditional architecture**

Labuan Bajo as the capital centre of the region is the most urbanised area in Manggarai Barat. The area is serviced by electricity, several star-ranked hotels and restaurants, airport, pipe-based clean water, asphalt road, etc. However, improvement is still needed, particularly to provide better access for broader community as well as to improve the service performance in supporting the settlement expansions. As the population increase, statistic shows that the number of adequate housing (made from materials such as wood and bricks) as well as inadequate housing (made from materials such as used plank, cardboard, bamboo) increase. This shows that the number of low income household is growing despite the city's physical development. On the other side population growth also creates more burden for the city; for example only 5.32% of the houses had access to clean water (Statistic, 2009).

### Community-based Tourism

Despite limited infrastructure and services, as the city is relatively new established, tourism industry is planned to be developed as the leading sector in Labuan Bajo. With infrastructure and service limitation and a low GDP, community-based tourism concept is an ideal solution. Development of tourism industry must include and benefit the

communities and on the other hand will encourage community participation in the city development.



(Source: Survey Documentation, 2013)

**Figure 3. Kampung Air Pasar Lama before (a) and after improvement(b) of pathways, 2012**

A survey conducted by Swiss contact in 2011 during holiday in Labuan Bajo shows customer satisfaction of their experiences. The most unsatisfying experiences of the respondent were related with the infrastructure provision and services.





(Source: Survey Documentation, 2013)

**Figure 4. Boat making activity was done below the tilted house**



(Source: Survey Documentation, 2013)

**Figure 5. Waste handling in the settlement**

On the other hand the most exciting experiences were related to the natural beauty and the cultural life (Table 1 and Table 2).

**Table 1. Top 10 Most Disturbing Experience in West Flores (N=79)**

Experience	N
Rubbish, plastic and dirty everywhere	21
Bad road infrastructure	10
Dirty Bathrooms and toilets	9
Prices are too high	7
Flight : not reliable, expensive price	5
Weather, strong current	5
Boat: no life jacket, thin mattress/blanket, dirty	5
Bad service at hotel and restaurant	4
Complicated entrance charges in KNP	4
Poor Information	4

Source: Results of Customer Satisfaction Survey, August 2011, Swisscontact

The survey shows that most of the disturbing experiences can be avoided by improving community awareness (putting waste in the garbage bin, paying more attention on cleanliness, providing better service for customer, etc). On the other hand, the most enjoyable experiences are also mostly depending on the people such as friendliness, their livelihood, environment and culture (i.e. traditional village, food, costume, ceremony, etc).

**Table 2. Top 10 Most Enjoyable Experience in West Flores (N=93)**

Experience	N
Diving and snorkeling	47
Wild Life in Komodo National Park (KNP)	35
Friendly people	28
Beautiful scenery, nature	20
Good Food	5
Visit traditional village	4
Reliable and honest service at hotel	2
To be able to swim with turtle	2
Good service	1
Everything	1

Source: Results of Customer Satisfaction Survey, August 2011, Swisscontact

## DISCUSSION

### Innovative Settlement for Community-Based Tourism

Tourism is developed to increase regional income and domestic income in Manggarai Barat, therefore the local government establish strategic issues on tourism development described in Middle Term Development Plan of Manggarai Barat (2010):

#### Strength

- The only habitat of Komodo (*VaranusKomodoensis*), the unique lizard in the world.
- Beautiful under water and high land sceneries
- Various and unique cultures, combination of traditional/local, Bugis (a famously known as fishermen ethnic from Sulawesi) and Portuguese.

- Has number of accommodation facilities with various grades.

### Opportunity

- Increasing the number of domestic and international tourist (both arrival and the length of stay) in Manggarai Barat
- Various tourist destination are developing
- Services on tourism industry are developing

### Weakness

- Lack of community awareness on the importance of environment for better living
- Lack of waste management
- Lack of tourism management

### Threat

- Increasing risk on local culture sustainability caused by globalisation
- Bad experiences related to the lack of infrastructure and tourism management in Manggarai Barat can decrease the number of tourist arrival in the future

To overcome those issues, tourism sector development should be prioritised to:

- Increasing community participation on every stage of tourism sector development
- Increasing the number of investment (local and foreign) to develop sea-based tourist destination, which prioritises on local (community) participation.
- Increasing the interest on local heritage-based tourism and other local uniqueness such as Komodo through promotion and to improve tourist destination facilities and services.
- Maintaining sustainability of local culture and beautiful sceneries and other natural and cultural-based tourist destination.
- Maintaining and developing infrastructure to support tourism industry.

The concept of innovative settlement is therefore integrating these strategies into the settlement development, and at the same time promoting productivity and environmental quality.

### Kampung Air Pasar Lama Settlement

Kampung Air is located adjacent to the Labuan Bajo's main road at one side and the sea on the other side. The settlement was developed and still inhabited by mostly Bugis ethnic. It is a dense and highly populated area with most of the houses are built from timber or iron sheets in Bugis traditional architecture. Aside from as a living space, houses in Kampung Air Pasar Lama are also used for economic activities such as small shop, small restaurant, boarding house which involve all family members on the activities. As the houses are both lived and an income-generated space, the settlement condition is closely related to the inhabitant's quality of life, particularly their economic stability. Therefore to be able to develop community-based tourism, adequate settlement is a must.

Several projects have been conducted to improve the settlement infrastructure such as pathways, clean water, public toilet, etc (Figure 3). Community empowerment projects were also conducted such as English course for the community, skill course (cooking, mechanic, etc) to improve their income.

To become an innovative settlement, several aspects that need to be improved to develop community-based tourism in Kampung Air Pasar Lama are:

- Communication skill; as community plays an important role, their capability to speak English or other foreign language needs to be improved. There is a free English conversation course conducted in *musholla* (prayer house) or in local community leader's house in the settlement every afternoon but many are still not interested in.
- Knowledge on local culture/stories; as a unique aspect to win the competition among other places.
- Service skills in tourism industry; as tourism operator (travel, souvenir shop, restaurant, hotel, etc).
- Simple management skill to run the business.
- Community awareness on environment sustainability.

### Criteria for Innovative Settlement

The innovative settlement criteria are used to analyze whether the Kampung Air Pasar Lama is eligible for community based tourism development. The criteria include: increasing productivity and environmental value of the settlement. The economic activity in Kampung Air Pasar Lama is very diverse, but mostly in service-related sector, such as souvenir shops, restaurants, boat rental, and boarding house. These activities require good management skills in order to increase productivity. In the case of Kampung Air Pasar Lama, one of the most important skills to develop by the people is communication skill. Mastering the simple English for everyday activities will help increase the number of international tourist that stay in the boarding house to taste the experience of local culture. This local culture includes the everyday activities that are unique to the place, such as boat making and fishing.

Environmental value of the settlement can be enhanced both physically and socially. The unique character of Bugis houses –commonly found in Sulawesi island- gave an identity to the settlement, despite its location in Flores island. It demonstrates the feeling of place attachment of the Bugis people in the area. This will be a good starting point to develop the environmental aspects of the settlement. The support of good infrastructure is also important in ensuring the quality of life such as access to clean water and electricity. One of the environmental problems found in the settlement is on waste management. Although there has been an attempt such as the provision of big garbage bin, the awareness of the community is still lacking. Government event such as 'Sail Komodo' was held to promote the area and increase the awareness of the local people of their potentials.

### Conclusion

Kampung Air Pasar Lama in LabuhanBajo is one example of how the concept of innovative settlement through community

based tourism can be applied in the small city context. The unique features of the house and the community can be developed in supporting the productivity and adding values to the environment. Training and awareness of the community could be developed to achieve a more comprehensive result.

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