



Introducing the Unique Cultures from Gubugklakah and Tengger to International Citizens

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Abstract. Although thousands of tribes, with their unique characters, are scattered throughout the earth of Indonesia, the country remains intact into a single unitary state. This country's wealth is important to be introduced not only to Indonesian people, but also to international citizens. In this community service, we had the opportunity to bring University of Malaya international students to learn about one of the cultures and lives of the people of Gubugklakah and Tengger villages. This activity was done for two days and before the Covid-19 pandemic. They were even invited to live with residents to truly feel how to live in a traditional environment. The international students learned about language, ethnic, religion, way of life and the natural conservation in Indonesia. This is an important and unforgettable experience for anyone who has never touched the beauty of life in a village where the houses are not restricted by locked fences.

Keyword: Culture, Local Wisdom, International Community, Indonesia

Abstrak. Walaupun ribuan suku, dengan karakter yang unik, tersebar di seantero bumi Indonesia, negeri ini tetap utuh menjadi satu negara kesatuan. Inilah yang menjadikan Indonesia spesial dibandingkan dengan negeri yang lain. Kekayaan negara ini penting untuk dikenalkan bukan hanya pada masyarakat Indonesia, tetapi juga pada warga internasional. Pada pengabdian masyarakat ini, kami berkesempatan untuk membawa mahasiswa Universitas Malaya, yang notabene berasal dari beberapa negara berbeda, untuk belajar tentang salah satu budaya dan kehidupan masyarakat Desa Gubugklakah dan Tengger di Jawa Timur. Kegiatan ini dilakukan selama dua hari dan sebelum pandemic Covid-19. Mereka bahkan diajak untuk tinggal bersama warga untuk betul-betul merasakan bagaimana hidup di lingkungan yang tradisional. Mahasiswa internasional tersebut belajar tentang bahasa, suku, agama, cara hidup, dan kelestarian alam Indonesia. Ini merupakan pengalaman penting sekaligus tidak terlupakan bagi siapapun yang selama ini hidup di kota yang serba modern dan yang tidak pernah menyentuh indahnya kehidupan di desa yang antar rumahnya tidak dibatasi pagar yang terkunci

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1. Introduction

We should be proud to be the people of Indonesia. Various communities with diverse cultures live in harmony on this motherland. Traditional houses, ceremonies, scripts, performing arts, literatures, religions, and many more diversity of Indonesian culture spread with harmony from Sabang to Merauke [1]. *Oma Hada* in Nias, *Rumah Ulu* in South Sumatra, *Bangsai Kencono* in Yogyakarta, *Joglo* in Central and East Java, *Tongkana* in Tana Toraja, and *Kambik* in West Papua represent the distinct houses in this country. *Peucicap* in Aceh, *Belangiran* in Lampung, *Dugderan* in Semarang, *Dayak Gawai* in West Kalimantan, *Ngaben* in Bali, and *Sanepen* in Biak are examples of ceremonies in Indonesia. In addition, even with the diversity of scripts and languages, the people of Indonesia are remained unified by one national language, i.e. *Bahasa Indonesia* [2]. We need to preserve this wealth and always introduce it to the wider community.

The introduction of Indonesian cultures is extremely important as the manifestation of our love for this “*lemah ripah lohjinawi*” country. With that, the cultures will always be maintained in people live. A culture is a form of national identity that reflects the uniqueness of each region within it. Because cultures are the national identity, the Indonesian people have to carry out national development based on their identity [3]. Thus, the country's national development is a civilized development. Two important examples of cultures to be introduced are the culture of the people of Gubugklakah and Tengger Villages in East Java.

Gubugklakah Village is located in Puncokusumo District, Malang Regency, East Java Province. Many people do farming and gardening for living with apple as their main commodity. On top of that, this village is one of the main routes leading to a national park, Mount Bromo. Because of the many tourist destinations in Gubugklakah, such as Coban Pelangi, apple tour, and dairy cattle tour, it is not surprising that the village is then known as DWG or *Desa Wisata Gubugklakah* (Gubugklakah Tourism Village) [4]. DWG offers natural, cultural and educational tourism destinations. In terms of religion, the majority of the people of Gubugklakah Village initially believed in Hindu, but as time went, most people are now Moslems.

On the other site, Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park is administratively located within four districts, namely Malang, Probolinggo, Pasuruan, and Lumajang with the area of around 50 thousand hectares. There are sixteen mountains in this national park area, three of which are the most famous ones, i.e. Mount Bromo (altitude 2,329 m), Mount Semeru (altitude 3,676 m), and Mount Batok (altitude 2,470 m). The majority of people in Tengger are Hindu who every year conduct Kasodo ceremony, an offering at the crater of Mount Bromo. The Hindu communities from Tengger do worship in *poten*, *denying*, and *punden*. This uniqueness is the main attraction for tourists [5].

On this occasion of community service, the two regions were selected as the destinations to introduce examples of cultural richness in Indonesia. The selected participants were foreign nationals who were studying at University of Malaya and were undertaking a student mobility program to Universitas Negeri Malang. This activity is important in particular to provide academic experience in relation to the cultures that exist in Indonesia. A series of processes from activity to reflection are given in this present paper.

2. Methods

In principle, the society service was carried out in three stages, (1) preparation, (2) implementation, and (3) evaluation. In the first stage, the team conceived ideas and a series of service designs, starting from the places, facilities and infrastructures, time, targeted participants, and the achievable outcomes. The team held meetings for several times with the University of Malaya, the Headman and the Gubugklakah Village Youth Association. This community service was carried out for two days and took place in the Gubugklakah Village Area and Tengger Area. In the second stage, the community service was carried out based on the preparatory stage. Finally, the evaluation is important to get a reflection on the service activities that have been carried out. The evaluation was done by discussing the implementation of devotion and distributing simple questionnaires to all participants. The organizations involved in this community service were (1) Office of International Affairs (OIA) from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMIPA) Universitas Negeri Malang, (2) OIA from University of Malaya, Malaysia, (3) Youth Association Team and village officials, and (4) Gubugklakah and Tengger communities. This activity also involved active students of FMIPA from Universitas Negeri Malang. The participants were 21 international students from University of Malaya who were taking the student exchange program to FMIPA Universitas Negeri Malang before the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Results and Discussion

On the first day, the main activity was the reception by the village of Gubugklakah officials and the introduction of Indonesian cultures, especially in Gubugklakah. All participants were warmly welcomed in the village hall. The headman together with several representatives of the youth community gave a speech and briefly introduced the history of the village of Gubugklakah, from the initial formation of this village to the present existence. All participants enthusiastically followed the activity of this introduction. The youth team of the community also openly answered all questions raised by the participants. We did not have problems with languages. Although most of the participants from came from English-speaking countries, some of them can speak *Bahasa Melayu* who could understand *Bahasa Indonesia*. The students from Universitas Negeri Malang also helped with the translation for the English-speaking international students.

From the academic aspect, some materials were prepared for more comprehensive information related to cultural diversity in Indonesia. The topic entitled “The Diversity of Cultures in Indonesia” was prepared by Nurul Hidayat and Erni Yulianti, “Apple Farming and Its Industrial Sector” by Husni Wahyu Wijaya, “Understanding the People of Indonesia” by Vivi Novianti, and “The Beauty of Indonesian Local Wisdom” by Desi Rahmadani. All the materials were given shortly in power point formats.

The introduction of natural diversity was conducted by means of visiting an apple orchard in the Gubugklakah Village. This visit was not just for tourism purpose, but also to find out the apple cultivation techniques in such a way that the produced apples have superior qualities. In addition, the participants also interacted directly with the apple farmers and the community who are involved in the apple industry, both in the household to medium business sectors. Therefore, the participants can directly comprehensively learn in full a complete agrarian process, from the process of selecting seeds, planting, to selling products.

After going the apple orchard, all participants were also invited to enjoy *Coban Pelangi*. Again, the aim was not just to enjoy the beauty of the waterfall, but also to get as many information as possible about the habits and beliefs of the people in the village of Gubugklakah about the waterfall. The team representative explained in great detail how the *Coban Pelangi* came from. The participants fully enjoyed the beauty of the colorful curved waterfalls at altitude of 1,400 meters above sea level when exposed to sunlight, as well as the beauty of stories about the legend of this waterfall.

Furthermore, the participants were directly involved in making handicrafts in the form of *batik* sandals. The results of the participants' work are shown in Figure 1. While making the sandals, they were told, by the Youth Association from Gubugklakah, the historical value of *batik* in Indonesia. This activity was very meaningful to them because the sandals they made were set as the souvenirs for them to bring back to their hometowns. The activity was done in the night in the Village hall. With the presence of very classical music from Gubugklakah, the participants felt a very amazing setting to learn a unique culture.



Figure 1. Batik Sandals Made by The Participants.

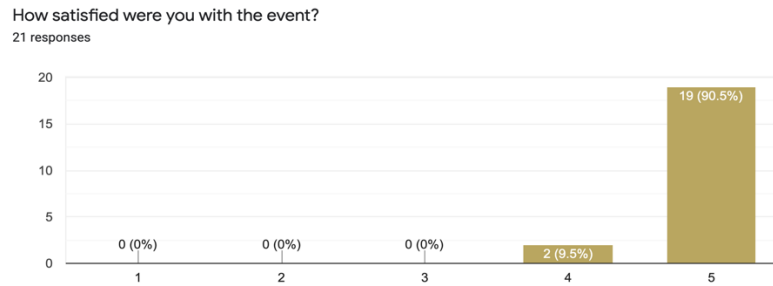


Figure 2. Participants’ Responses on The Event Satisfaction.

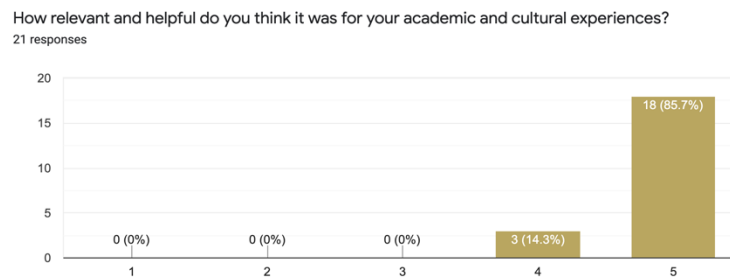


Figure 3. Participants’ Responses on The Academic and Cultural Relevance.

Another unique experience that was just as important in the context of cultural recognition was the experience of interacting directly with the surrounding community. The participants stayed in the houses of residents, joined in cooking with simple wood-burning stoves, eating with modest equipments, and enjoyed the fresh air and clear mind in the village. The participants of this community service personally and communally knew the people of Gubugklakah villagers.

On the last day, prior to closing, the cultural introduction journey continued to the Tengger area and enjoyed the natural beauty of Mount Bromo, complete with the stories of folk legends that accompanied it. The participants learned about the beliefs of the Tengger people who purify Mount Bromo. They also saw the temple directly under the slope of the mountain. They experienced the beauty nature and culture in Tengger.

Figure 2 represents the percentage of participants’ satisfaction with the implementation of the service program. Meanwhile, Figure 3 shows the usefulness of academic activities and cultural recognition. Scales 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively declare a response of completely disagree, disagree, quite disagree, agree, and completely agree with the questions. Both figures show that (1) 90% of participants felt very satisfied with this community service, the rest (2 participants)

answered with “satisfy” response and (2) 18 participants strongly agreed that the society service activities had relevance between academic and cultural aspects, the rest (14%) agreed.

How would you rate these sessions?

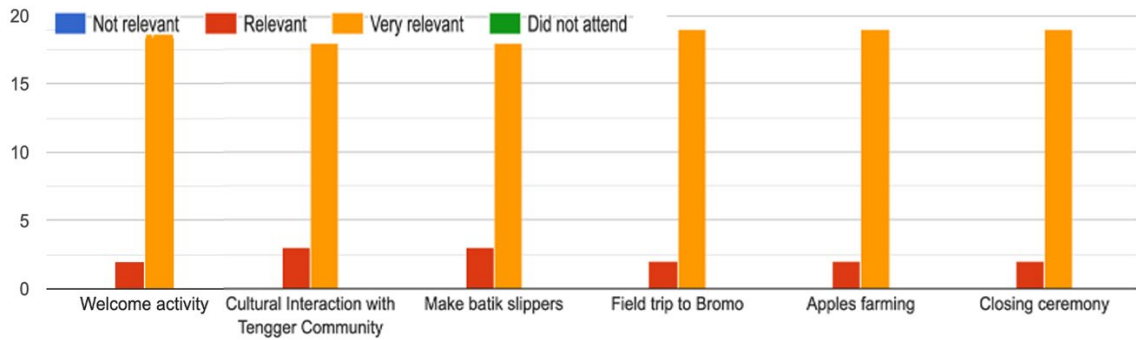


Figure 4. Participants’ Rating on The Activities During The Program.

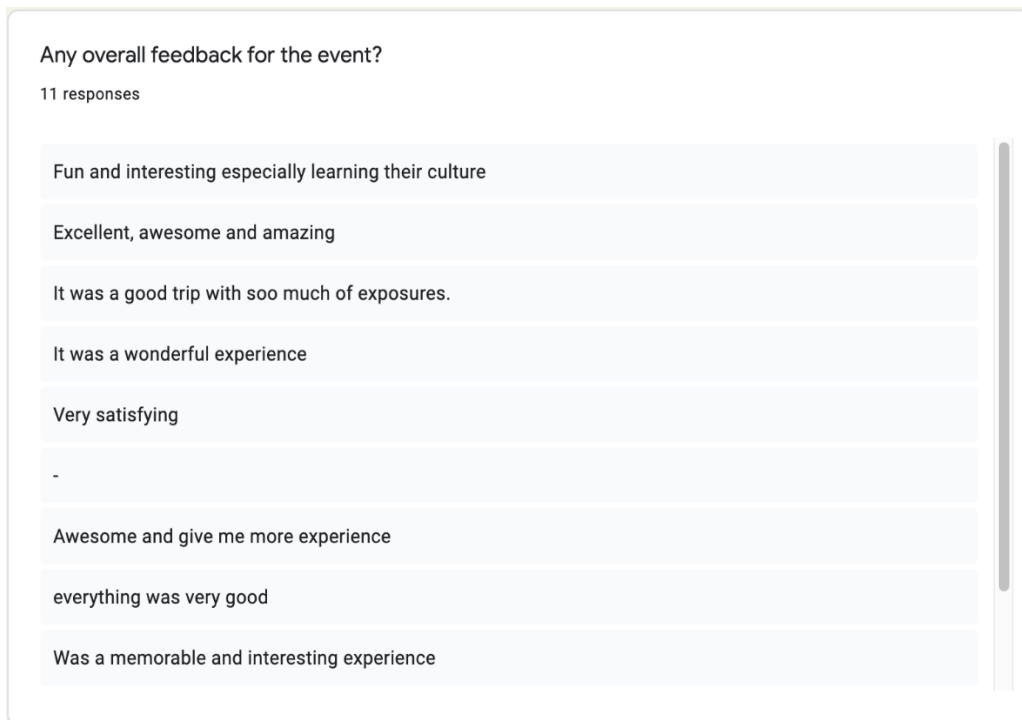


Figure 5. Participants’ Feedbacks on The Overall Event

Figure 4 is the participants’ rating on a series of activities in Gubugklakah and Tengger, from opening to closing. Broadly speaking, all participants felt that the overall activities (opening, cultural interaction with the local community, making *batik* sandals, going to Bromo, picking apples, and closing) were very relevant to their needs. In addition, of the 21 participants, eleven provided feedback on the academic and cultural activities, as shown in Figure 5. All of the feedbacks showed very positive responses. One participant stated that this activity was “fun and

interesting especially learning their culture". Others wrote that "it was a good trip (from Malaysia to Indonesia) with so much of exposures" and "(it) was a memorable and interesting experience".

The apple farming trip was an experience that the participants did not learn in college, moreover they actually studied in natural science-based study programs (Mathematics, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry), not in study programs that were based on economics. With this unique culture, there is potential to develop economic independence in the surrounding communities [7]. In other words, from culture, a society can also be economically independent. When a society has an established economic strength, it will absolutely contribute to the value of service and goods produced by its country.

The cultural tour to *Coban Pelangi* was another great experience. The participants clearly saw that the *Coban Pelangi* is classified as a very natural waterfall because there are not many human hands that make pollution in it. This natural beauty needs to be introduced to a wider communities in various ways, including through digital media technology [8]. For example, with the use digital camera and drone, the beauty of *Coban Pelangi* can be filmed and uploaded to YouTube in a way that it is widely viewed by anyone who connect to internet from all over the world.

In addition, we all in the same opinion that we will not see a handicraft the same way before we make our own, in particular in terms of value and price. Therefore, we provided an opportunity for the participants to make their own *batik* sandals. Despite their studies in Malaysia, these students came from various countries, some even from India and the Middle East. The *batik* sandal is one of the cultural heritages of Javanese ancestors. Each *batik* motif on sandals has its own meaning and gives a personal impression to the owner or maker [9]. They do not find this cultural art in their home country. With this activity, the participants learned a lot about human life.

During the participants stayed in Gubugkalah village, they all interacted, communicated, and exchanged ideas about their cultural experiences. In a situation like this, the participants felt the true meaning of social interaction, an experience and a sense that would not possibly arise only by means of communication via social media which is now trendy in the life of modern society [10]. With this, the participants relearned how to maintain good body language and polite eye contact when speaking to each other. Since the Gubugklakah people speak Javanese language, the participants learned the structure of this special language from Java Island.

We might think segment of our life nowadays are heading to modernization. However, believe it or not, in spite of the millennial era, the Tengger tribes keep holding on their beliefs and traditional culture. The tribes inaugurate the very huge festival, called *Kasodo* ceremony. By visiting and interacting with Tengger people, the participants directly learned about the *Kasodo* ceremony which is held annually by the Tengger community in the middle of the tenth month of the Javanese

calendar. This ritual aims to build unity and preserve culture. With this, they recognized the calendar system that is owned by the Javanese, which so far they may not know about.

The overall responses from the questionnaires illustrate that this community service activity has succeeded in achieving its goal, namely introducing some of the diversity of Indonesian cultures by inviting the participants to directly experience the the way to live and to interact with the people of Gubugklakah and Tengger Villages. Without any shadow of a doubt, we can safely say that, from the participants' viewpoint, it was was an unforgettable experience to them.

4. Conclusion

Indonesian culture, especially the unique life of the people of Gubugklakah and Tengger, has been introduced to international citizens. This service is intended as a form of love for the existence and identity of our country, Indonesia. Devotion participants, who came from different countries, felt the beauty of life in Gubugklakah and Tengger. The concept and practice that Indonesia's national development is based on regional culture can be seen in the realization of the Gubugklakah Tourism Village and Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park. From the results of the reflection on the activity, the participants felt that the academic and cultural aspects were successfully conveyed. More importantly, the experience to feel directly and personally living in the midst of Indonesian society became an important lesson in the lives of the participants, even becoming an unforgettable moment.

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