

Community-Based Ecotourism Development for Sustainability: Lessons From Desa Cinta Kobuni

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Abstract : The focus of this study is to outline the development of Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) in order to achieve sustainability. The CBET in Desa Cinta Kobuni is a result of a collaboration between Kampung Kobuni, Kota Kinabalu City Hall or DBKK (Dewan Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu), and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS). It is located in Inanam, a sub-district of Kota Kinabalu city. The current ecotourism activities are still in the growth stage and mainly focused on cultural tourism products and activities that showcase their traditional food, clothing, language, history, values, beliefs, dance, arts, and crafts. The study's methodological approach is qualitative with narrative inquiry, also known as storytelling. This enables the study to access valuable insight with rich data into the complexity of developing community-based ecotourism. The results show that there are three major impacts on the Desa Cinta Kobuni, which are, 1) the increment of secondary income, 2) the advancement of women's empowerment, and 3) the enhanced sustainability initiatives of the villagers. The experience in developing their first CBET has resulted in the Kota Kinabalu City Hall producing the Framework for Sustainable Community Based Ecotourism that integrates Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) for future CBET development in other parts of the city. The paper concludes that there is a significant positive transformation of the village and the villagers while reaffirming that Community-Based ecotourism (CBET) is a sustainable form of tourism that improves the quality of life of hosts at the tourist destination.

Keywords : community, ecotourism, cultural tourism, sustainability, sustainable development

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