

Sustainable Value Creation Strategy Based on the Narrative of Gunung Padang

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Abstract

A community service activity focused on the socialization of a Sustainable Value Creation Strategy based on the narrative of Gunung Padang was held on September 18, 2025. The initiative aimed to integrate cultural heritage preservation, community welfare enhancement, and creative economy development rooted in local storytelling. Participants included doctoral and undergraduate students, international students from Malaysia and Vietnam, and 30 local residents involved in cultural arts, ultra-micro and micro enterprises, and tourism awareness groups. Key methods included field visits to Gunung Padang, interactive discussions, and visual media presentations. The visual content featured imaginative superhero characters like Wanara and Nyi Anteh, creative posters, and short fictional videos inspired by local narratives—designed to engage youth and international audiences. Discussions explored the history and management of Gunung Padang, challenges in government support, community-led digital initiatives, and the development of narrative-based visual communication. The results revealed strong enthusiasm among residents for sustainable value creation through creative innovation and technology. This activity highlights the importance of collaboration between academic communities and local stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable cultural heritage management

Keywords: Gunung Padang, sustainable value, creative economy, visual communication, community-based tourism

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Gunung Padang megalithic site in Cianjur Regency holds significant importance in the cultural heritage landscape of the Indonesian archipelago. Its vast terraced structure and complex stone arrangements provide evidence of an advanced ancient civilization. Gunung Padang is often cited as one of the largest megalithic sites in Southeast Asia (Natawidjaja et al., 2024). This status makes it a cultural asset that requires strategic management so that its existence is recognized

not only archaeologically but also as a source of developmental value (Akbar, 2022). Brooks et al. (2023) assert that heritage-based tourism can strengthen community development and enhance social welfare. From this perspective, Gunung Padang can serve as a cultural narrative hub with extensive social impact.

Anthropological studies place Gunung Padang as a space where material and symbolic values intersect. Hargyono (2014) describes the site not merely as a pile of stones but also as a representation of spiritual and historical meaning. This complexity allows the formulation of management strategies that view cultural heritage as a multidimensional source of value. Elkington (2013) emphasizes that the triple bottom line concept demands a balance among economic profitability, social sustainability, and environmental preservation. Therefore, Gunung Padang can be regarded as a strategic asset aligned with these sustainability frameworks.

Sustainability approaches require integration of economic and social values. Porter & Kramer, (2011) introduced the concept of creating shared value, which underscores how organizations can generate profits while addressing social issues. This concept is highly relevant for managing Gunung Padang. Through such strategies, the site can be preserved while simultaneously enhancing the local economy. A promising avenue lies in developing creative economy sectors derived from cultural narratives and the site's visual appeal.

The creative economy based on cultural heritage demands innovation in leveraging local identity as a strength. Udayana (2021) demonstrate the significant role of visual communication in maintaining creative economy sustainability in Bali. Similarly, this approach can be applied to Gunung Padang through visual communication designs that highlight megalithic symbols. Yudhanto et al. (2023) add that cultural approaches in visual design can strengthen attractiveness while preserving identity authenticity. Visual communication design thus becomes a bridge between ancient heritage and modern market demands.

Challenges arise when cultural heritage is positioned within the tourism market. The risk of cultural commodification often diminishes authentic value. Priatmoko et al. (2021) emphasize that local community participation is crucial in community-based tourism so that economic benefits are equitably distributed. Other challenges include limited infrastructure and capital required to support creative product development and digital promotion. Kirchherr et al. (2017) found that circular economy models demand innovation in resource utilization. Without collaborative management, creative economy development risks creating new inequalities and environmental degradation.

Sustainable business models can offer direction in addressing these challenges. Bocken et al. (2014) propose archetypes of sustainable business models that emphasize resource efficiency and community empowerment. Geissdoerfer et al. (2020) add that circular business models expand value by reducing waste and enhancing recycling. Applying these principles to Gunung Padang could involve developing environmentally friendly cultural products, digital-based promotion, and tourism systems supporting conservation. Wijayanti et al., (2023) find that community-based tourism models with active local participation improve heritage governance quality.

Recent developments indicate that tourist arrivals in Cianjur Regency continue to increase. The Cianjur Statistics Agency (BPS Kabupaten Cianjur, 2024a) reports significant growth in the tourism sector, including cultural destinations. This growth signals wider economic opportunities for the local communities surrounding the site. However, increased visitation also heightens environmental pressures and requires strategic management.

A sustainable value creation strategy for Gunung Padang can be constructed through the synergy of creative economy initiatives and modern visual communication. Visualizing cultural narratives will allow creative interpretations that preserve historical values. This approach not only expands global access to Gunung Padang's story but also generates additional economic value for local communities. Within this framework, Gunung Padang can be managed as a layered value source integrating cultural preservation, community welfare, and environmental sustainability.

2. METHOD

The primary method employed was a field visit to the Gunung Padang megalithic site. This model was chosen as a bridge between theory and reality. Dewey (1938)) emphasizes that direct experience with the surrounding environment forms the basis for authentic learning. Through on-site engagement, participants gained concrete understanding of concept application beyond theoretical classroom limits.

Besides the field visit, the activity included interactive discussions designed to create an egalitarian dialogical space. Each participant was encouraged to share perspectives, formulate arguments, and respond to ideas. This aligns with Freire's (1970) concept of education as a dialogical process in which all parties co-create knowledge (Phillips, 2014).

The event was complemented with visual exemplars such as images and models. According to Bandura (2009) social learning is reinforced through observation. Visual presentations reduce language and literacy barriers, making information more accessible, especially for international participants with visual learning preferences.

Face-to-face meetings were also integral. Johnson and Johnson (1994) highlight the importance of promotive interaction in cooperative learning. This interaction allows facilitators to comprehend participants' emotional needs through non-verbal cues and cultivate a supportive atmosphere.

Participants also received souvenirs as tokens of appreciation. This approach aligns with Skinner's (1953) reinforcement theory, which states that positive stimuli can be used to strengthen active participation behavior (Skinner, 2014). Such symbolic gifts foster motivation and reinforce commitment to the activity's objectives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity at Gunung Padang was conducted on September 18, 2025. Field observations enabled analysis of the physical condition of the site and the characteristics of the local community. The data collected provided a comprehensive overview of the potential and challenges in implementing a sustainable value creation strategy. This analysis served as a foundation for designing relevant interventions for the local community and cultural site preservation.

Overview of the Community Service Location

Gunung Padang is located in Cianjur Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The site is a vast megalithic terraced complex reflecting an advanced ancient civilization (Hargyono, 2014). The stone structures are arranged meticulously, demonstrating a significant level of technical skill, which provides evidence that the site is not merely a natural formation but a human-made construction. The Gunung Padang Site not only spans the summit of the hill but also features man-made stone structures positioned at four locations extending down to its base. With this layout, the site's total area reaches 25 hectares—nearly 20 times larger than previously estimated (Akbar, 2022).

The physical environment of Gunung Padang consists of hilly terrain with mixed vegetation and limited road access. The surrounding land is predominantly used for agriculture and plantations, reflecting the community's dependence on local natural resources.

The activity was attended by 32 local residents, including cultural activists, ultra-micro and micro-entrepreneurs, tourism awareness groups, and village and district government officials. Their presence allowed direct observation of local socio-economic dynamics, as well as community needs and aspirations. Active participation from residents provided authentic perspectives on the potential for creative economy development and community-based tourism (Brooks et al., 2023).

Geographically, Gunung Padang is situated approximately 885 meters above sea level. The area experiences a tropical climate with moderate rainfall throughout the year. According to BPS Cianjur, the population of villages surrounding Gunung Padang reaches approximately 12,000 people (BPS Kabupaten Cianjur, 2024a). The majority are employed in the agricultural and plantation sectors (approximately 65%), while around 20% engage in micro and ultra-micro enterprises. The remainder work in tourism services, local crafts, and as tour guides. Average household income suffices for basic needs but remains limited for investment or further education (BPS Kabupaten Cianjur, 2024a). This condition calls for a development approach that integrates cultural heritage preservation with community economic improvement (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

The presence of Gunung Padang offers unique opportunities for developing the creative economy, environmental education, and community-based tourism. This approach aligns with the principle of creating shared value, where economic and social sustainability reinforce each other (Elkington, 2013). Active community participation is a decisive factor in maintaining the site's authenticity while improving welfare.

Social, Economic, and Cultural Profile

The community surrounding Gunung Padang has a robust social structure rooted in local traditions. Residents uphold the values of togetherness and mutual cooperation, evident in the management of agricultural land and cultural activities (BPS Kabupaten Cianjur, 2024b). Many families continue traditional farming practices, such as vegetable cultivation and horticultural plantations, which are primary income sources (BPS Kabupaten Cianjur, 2024b). Some community

members capitalize on cultural arts skills to produce handicrafts or local performances, supporting the sustainability of the creative economy (Udayana, 2021).

The community's occupational patterns tend to be diverse, with the informal sector dominating. BPS data indicate that approximately 65% of residents work in agriculture and plantations, 20% are engaged in micro and ultra-micro enterprises, and 15% participate in tourism-related sectors, including as local guides, homestay managers, or souvenir artisans (BPS Cianjur, 2025a). These economic activities impact living standards that are adequate for daily needs but limited for education investment or business expansion (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Local culture plays a vital role in social life. Tourism awareness groups and cultural activists actively preserve traditions, rituals, and local performances as part of the community's identity. These activities not only strengthen social bonds but also enhance the experience value for tourists (Brooks et al., 2023). Community participation in heritage management supports socio-economic sustainability principles by integrating economic benefits with identity and environmental preservation (Elkington, 2013).

The geographical conditions, cultural potential, and social structure constitute key assets for developing a sustainable value creation strategy. Community engagement in agriculture, creative enterprises, and community-based tourism enables adaptive and relevant interventions, reinforcing Gunung Padang's role as a multidimensional value center for locals and visitors alike.

Socialization Activity

The sustainable value creation strategy based on Gunung Padang's narrative was socialized on September 18, 2025, at a community hall and the summit. Thirty-two attendees—including cultural activists, micro-entrepreneurs, tourism groups, and local officials—gained direct experience of the megalithic site and discussed its development potential. This approach integrated theory and field experience according to Dewey's experiential learning principles, where participants learn through direct involvement and reflection on real-world contexts (Dewey, 1938).

The initial phase involved presenting visual characters inspired by Gunung Padang's narrative. These characters included Wanara, a monkey-man figure derived from the Sundanese legend of Ciung Wanara, and Nyi Anteh, a moon goddess adapted from the tale of Nini Anteh. These media were designed to engage youth and international participants and facilitate understanding of

cultural values and symbolism creatively and interactively (Bandura, 2009). Subsequently, a short fictional film based on Gunung Padang's narrative was shown, including animated children's adventures at the site and imaginative Korean drama-style posters depicting youth stories in the Gunung Padang environment. This visual approach broadened participants' access to cultural heritage while stimulating creative imagination, as recommended in visual communication literature (Udayana, 2021).



Figure 1. Souvenir presentation and indoor discussion

Source: PKM doc, 2025

An interactive discussion followed, encouraging active participant engagement. Attendees provided feedback on the visual media, identified potential creative economy developments, and designed community engagement strategies. This interaction aligns with Freire's dialogical education principle, where all parties co-create knowledge (Phillips, 2014). The discussion strengthened community involvement, allowing locals to voice aspirations and build cross-generational and cultural understanding (Brooks et al., 2023).



Figure 2. Imaginative characters for Gunung Padang based on AI

Source: PKM doc, 2025

The second phase involved ascending Gunung Padang's summit, serving as an outdoor socialization medium. This activity gave participants direct experiences of

the site's physical and symbolic conditions. Participants observed the terraced punden structure, tourism pathways, and local interactions with the surrounding environment. These observations enhanced participants' capacity to design sustainable value creation strategies and fostered empathy toward conservation challenges (Porter & Kramer, 2011)

Combining creative visuals, interactive discussions, and field experience effectively enhanced participants' understanding of cultural values, creative economic potential, and environmental preservation. Superhero media and imaginative posters fostered interest among children and youth, while the field experience facilitated contextual comprehension of the community and local ecosystem (Ricci et al., 2024; Bi & Nasir, 2024). This methodology also reinforced local residents' commitment to actively managing Gunung Padang, building community capacity, and raising awareness across stakeholders. Thus, the socialization not only transferred knowledge but also functioned as a catalyst for community-based participation and innovation, in line with shared value creation and the triple bottom line principles (Elkington, 2013)

Interactive Discussion

The discussion during the Gunung Padang socialization was intensive and participatory. Local residents showed high enthusiasm. Nanang Sukmana (coordinator of the tourism awareness group) dan Zaenal Arifin, from the same group, emphasized the need for governmental support to strengthen tourism management capacity and site preservation. The government's role as a primary facilitator in community-based cultural heritage management (Brooks et al., 2023). Independent initiatives through digital promotion and creative content creation, expanding tourism reach and attracting youth and international attention. This strategy findings that community participation is the driving force behind sustainable tourism development (Priatmoko et al., 2021).



Figure 3. Outdoor discussion (Gunung Padang summit)

Source: PKM doc, 2025

Saefuddin (cultural activist) described managing cultural activities utilizing Gunung Padang's local narratives, emphasizing integration between cultural values and the creative economy. Susi Lisnawati, an ultra-micro entrepreneur, require technical assistance and access to capital to improve business capacity. Both emphasized residents' enthusiasm for developing Gunung Padang narrative-based visual communication, including posters, child-friendly animations, and local superhero characters such as Wanara and Nyi Anteh. This popular approach combines local culture and creative media, broadening public access while maintaining cultural relevance (Udayana, 2021)

Muhammad Samsul, a village official, and Hadi Sutrisna, a district expert task, underlined the importance of synergy among stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of policies and programs. The discussion generated recommendations including enhancing community digital capacity, developing narrative-based creative tourism packages, and regulatory coordination. This collaborative approach strengthens cultural value while creating economic opportunities for the local community (Porter & Kramer, 2011).



Figure 4. Selected media coverage of the Gunung Padang PKM activity

Source: PKM doc, 2025

The PKM activity at Gunung Padang received media coverage, with ten media outlets reporting on the event and highlighting its cultural and community engagement significance.

4. CONCLUSION

The socialization activity of the Sustainable Value Creation Strategy Based on the Narrative of Gunung Padang on September 18, 2025, successfully fostered

intensive interaction among academics, students, and local residents. The discussions enabled participants to gain direct experience while engaging in open dialogue. This experience aligns with Dewey's principle of experiential learning, which posits that direct involvement forms the basis of authentic understanding (Dewey, 1938).

Gunung Padang holds strategic potential as a cultural asset as well as a source of economic and social value. Local residents—including tourism awareness groups, ultra-micro entrepreneurs, cultural activists, and village officials—showed high enthusiasm in leveraging the cultural narrative for the development of visual communication and creative products. Emerging initiatives included the creation of posters, animations, local superhero characters such as Wanara and Nyi Anteh, and short fictional videos based on Gunung Padang's narrative.

The discussions also emphasized the need for more structured government support. Residents conveyed that local government capacity limitations pose challenges in site management, funding, and facility provision. This is consistent with findings by Brooks et al., (2023), which highlight the government's role as a key facilitator in community-based cultural heritage management. Resident-led digital initiatives, such as social media promotion and creative content production, provide alternatives to address these limitations. This participatory strategy aligns with community-based tourism principles that underscore the active role of local people as drivers of sustainable tourism development (Priatmoko et al., 2021).

Discussions produced key recommendations: enhance government support, prioritize narrative-based visual media, strengthen stakeholder collaboration, and develop creative economy innovations. Synergy among academics, locals, and officials boosts management, aligning with shared value principles. Gunung Padang should evolve into a cultural, economic, and tourism hub through integrated, tech-driven strategies.

Overall, this socialization activity demonstrated that effective cultural heritage management requires integration of local knowledge, creative innovation, and institutional support. Active community participation forms the fundamental basis of sustainability, while government intervention and academic guidance strengthen management capacity. Implementation of these recommendations is expected to produce an inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable Gunung Padang management model, serving as a reference for cultural heritage-based value creation strategies at the national level.

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