EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOURISM: PENTINGSARI'S JOURNEY FROM VOLCANIC ASH TO VIBRANT PROSPERITY

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Abstract. *Pentingsari Tourism Village, nestled on the slopes of Mount Merapi in Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, exemplifies how a poor rural hamlet can transform into an internationally recognized sustainable tourism destination through community-based development. This abstract highlights Pentingsari's success in community-driven, sustainable tourism development, offering insights into its strategies, impacts, and replicable practices.*

Objectives: *The paper analyzes strategies for developing sustainable tourism at the community level by exploring Pentingsari's journey from poverty and isolation to a thriving tourist village. It specifically looks at how local empowerment, cultural and educational tourism activities, support for micro-enterprises, and resilience planning have contributed to sustainable development and community welfare.*

Methodology: *A qualitative case study approach was adopted to examine the tourism development trajectory of Pentingsari Village. Drawing on a diverse corpus of scholarly literature, institutional reports, and documented practices, the study synthesizes insights through the analytical lenses of community-based tourism (CBT), sustainable rural development, and resilience theory. This framework facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which the local community initiated, structured, and sustained tourism initiatives. Particular attention is given to the strategic modalities and adaptive capacities that contributed to the enduring viability of tourism as a community-led endeavor.*

Key Findings: *Pentingsari's development strategy is rooted in active community participation and empowerment, leveraging local human, natural, and cultural capital. The villagers, led by visionary local leaders, identified unique selling points in their natural environment and rich Javanese cultural heritage (Yogantoro & Raharjana, 2017). They designed interactive, educational tourism programs that immerse visitors in village life – for example, farming activities, learning traditional arts, and live-in homestays. These hands-on experiences provide authentic education and entertainment for tourists while helping to preserve and transmit local knowledge and art forms (Pentingsari Tourism Village, 2024).*

Alongside cultural attractions, Pentingsari fostered local micro-enterprises to ensure economic benefits spread across the community. Villagers developed small businesses producing local specialties – for example, Wedang Rempah (a spiced herbal drink), Merapi honey coffee, batik textiles with wayang suket (grass puppet) motifs, organic mushrooms and tempeh, and various handicrafts – which tourists can sample and purchase, directly supporting community livelihoods. Pentingsari's tourism cooperative organized a homestay network of about 60 units (roughly 170

rooms) owned by villagers, using a fair rotation system to distribute guests so all families earn income (Aji & Faniza, 2024). Similarly, local women's groups rotate catering responsibilities for tour groups – turning domestic skills into revenue and ensuring broad benefit-sharing (Aji & Faniza, 2024). These equitable arrangements exemplify social capital utilization and reinforce community cohesion and self-reliance.

Environmentally, Pentingsari's tourism operates with a strong ecotourism ethic. The community actively safeguards its natural assets through activities like guided river trekking, which highlight conservation and allow guests to experience clean streams firsthand. Agricultural attractions reconnect urban visitors with traditional farming, generating income for farmer-guides. The village's commitment to organic farming and irrigation protects soil and water quality. Tourism is tied to environmental education: visitors are encouraged to respect local ecology, while portions of revenue fund tree planting, waste management, and village clean-ups—creating a cycle of sustainability.

Governance and organization are pivotal. Early participatory planning helped residents recognize Merapi's proximity and their cultural heritage as tourism assets. Supported by the Yogyakarta Tourism Office and university partners, villagers received training in hospitality, guiding, and entrepreneurship—illustrating a "triple helix" collaboration. Despite outside support, Pentingsari's model remains community-driven: its tourism organization manages operations, decisions, and reinvestment. Activities are run "from the community, by the community, for the community," reflecting CBT principles that empower local development.

Socio-economic impacts are significant. Incomes have risen and diversified, helping reduce poverty. By 2016, over 10% of residents worked full-time in tourism, and around 30% combined part-time tourism jobs with farming. From limited access and opportunity, the village grew economically self-sufficient—funding community projects through tourism surpluses. Tourist arrivals surged from a few in the late 2000s to over 21,000 in 2019, and 27,000 in 2023. This growth, sustainably managed, has sparked local entrepreneurship and improved facilities. Social indicators also improved: youth migration declined as local jobs increased; women gained economic roles through homestays and crafts; and the community invested in education and cultural preservation.

Pentingsari's success has earned national and global recognition. It became a model for tourism villages, hosting benchmarking visits from communities and policymakers. UNWTO selected it as a pilot for CBT development, and awards such as the Sustainable Tourism Award (2017), ASEAN honors (2017, 2022, 2023), and Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations (2019) affirmed its excellence (Apriliansyah & Muktaf, 2024; Sutomo et al., 2024). These accolades have increased visibility and positioned village leaders to share insights at forums and conferences.

A final insight is Pentingsari's resilience. The 2010 Mount Merapi eruption halted tourism, damaged infrastructure, and forced a two-week evacuation. Despite limited aid, the village rebounded: NGOs and university partners supported recovery, rebuilding infrastructure and diversifying attractions like lava tours and disaster education. Training drills enhanced preparedness, and shared recovery efforts deepened community cohesion—what one researcher called a "transformation of human and community

factors" (Rindrasih, 2018). Tourism resumed within a year, boosted by media coverage of the village's resilience. Pentingsari now coexists with Merapi's risks as a designated "Disaster-Ready Village," reinforcing a sustainable model that thrives despite adversity.

***Significance:** The case of Pentingsari Tourism Village demonstrates that sustainable*

tourism development in rural areas is both feasible and replicable when led by local communities. Key ingredients of its success include grassroots leadership, a clear vision for mobilizing local assets, inclusive participation, and strategic collaborations. The village's transformation from an impoverished hamlet into an award-winning international destination offers hope that tourism, when ethically and sustainably managed, can become a powerful tool for poverty alleviation and cultural revival (Pratama et al., 2019; Yogantoro & Raharjana, 2017). This study offers insights and lessons to guide policymakers, development practitioners, and rural communities in crafting tourism strategies that prioritize people and planet alongside profit. Pentingsari's experience underscores that community empowerment and sustainability are mutually reinforcing: enabling residents to lead tourism fosters economic gains while safeguarding cultural heritage and preserving the natural environment. In sum, Pentingsari exemplifies a holistic strategy for sustainable tourism—one that balances empowerment, conservation, authenticity, and resilience. Its journey offers a promising model for rural tourism to evolve in more inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable directions.

Keywords: *Sustainable tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Rural Development, Pentingsari Village, Indonesia*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is increasingly recognized as a vehicle for sustainable development, especially in rural areas rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage. However, making tourism sustainable – environmentally friendly, economically beneficial to locals, and socially/culturally appropriate – requires strategic planning and community involvement. This idea is encapsulated in the concept of Community-Based Tourism (CBT), where local communities own and manage tourism enterprises to ensure a significant share of benefits stays within the locality (Purbasari & Manaf, 2018). In Indonesia, the "tourism village" model has been promoted as a means to empower villages to leverage their local potential for tourism as a path to rural development and poverty reduction. Since the late 2000s, government programs provided seed funding, training, and frameworks to develop village-based tourism, aligning with a national agenda of using tourism for rural development. Yogyakarta Special Region, where Pentingsari is located, emerged as a pioneer in this movement; by 2018 it had one of the highest concentrations of tourism villages in the country. Typically, these villages build on agricultural life, traditional arts, and natural landscapes to create unique visitor experiences managed by the local community.

This study explores strategic pathways for developing sustainable tourism through a Community-Based Tourism (CBT) approach, using Pentingsari Tourism Village as the focal case. Located in Umbulharjo, Cangkringan (Sleman Regency), Pentingsari was once a secluded farming hamlet with limited economic prospects. Over the past 15 years, it has transformed into one of Indonesia's leading tourism villages—attracting thousands of annual visitors and gaining international recognition for sustainability (Apriliansyah & Muktaf, 2024; Sutomo et al., 2024). The study's objectives are: (1) to document the village's transformation, highlighting educational and cultural tourism, micro-enterprise growth, inclusive participation, and disaster management; (2) to analyze strategic frameworks and key success factors behind sustainable tourism and empowerment; and

(3) to derive recommendations applicable to other rural tourism contexts.

This research bridges theory and practice through detailed case analysis. Pentingsari

exemplifies real-world sustainable tourism, offering insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to replicate or adapt its model. By tracing its evolution through documented sources, the study reveals the critical role of local initiative and contextual adaptation—often overlooked in top-down planning.

Ultimately, this paper contributes to sustainable tourism discourse by presenting a tangible example of rural communities converting challenges like poverty and disaster risk into inclusive and resilient development. Pentingsari's experience affirms that empowering local stakeholders as stewards and beneficiaries of tourism is an effective strategy for enhancing welfare, preserving heritage, and supporting environmental sustainability.

Sustainable Tourism and Community-Based Approaches

Sustainable tourism, as defined by the World Tourism Organization, "*meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future*." It requires balancing economic, social, and environmental goals. In rural contexts, nature- and culture-based attractions—if managed by local communities—can foster both conservation and community development.

Indonesia has promoted the tourism village (*desa wisata*) model over the past two decades to distribute tourism benefits more equitably. Government programs in the late 2000s offered training, seed funding, and policy support to help rural communities initiate local tourism. Yogyakarta, where Pentingsari is located, became a pioneer; by 2018, it housed one of the highest concentrations of tourism villages nationally. These villages often feature agricultural life, traditional arts, and natural scenery to create authentic visitor experiences.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) enhances this model by advocating substantial community control and equitable benefit sharing. Its principles—democratic decision- making, cultural respect, and reinvestment into public welfare—build social capital (Purbasari & Manaf, 2018). However, success depends on local cohesion, leadership, external collaboration, and sustainable management.

Pentingsari exemplifies effective CBT. Formerly designated as a *desa tertinggal* ("left-behind village") on Merapi's slopes, it possessed fertile land and rich traditions but lacked economic prospects. Between 2006 and 2008, with local leadership and external support, villagers began developing tourism as an alternative livelihood. Sleman Regency officially recognized it as a Tourism Village in 2008, marking a turning point.

From the outset, Pentingsari adopted a "people-centered" strategy. Through community self-assessment, they identified core assets: pristine nature (rice terraces, rivers, cool climate), cultural heritage (traditional crafts, herbal medicine, music), and a motivated population. The establishment of a local tourism management group ensured bottom-up planning. Higher-level support provided structure and incentives, but the village retained control. Unlike top-down models that risk marginalizing locals, Pentingsari's experience shows that CBT principles—when genuinely applied—yield more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.

Case Study: Pentingsari Tourism Village, Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia Village Overview and Transformation

Pentingsari is a small village of roughly 125 households, situated 600 meters above sea level on Merapi's southern slope. The broader hamlet area has a population of about 5,000. Historically dependent on subsistence farming, animal husbandry, and forestry, the village lacked modern infrastructure until the mid-2000s. Change began around 2007–

2008, when community leaders, in collaboration with a local university and government authorities, recognized Pentingsari's natural beauty and cultural authenticity as tourism assets. In early 2008, village meetings led to the decision to develop Pentingsari as a cultural and nature-based tourism destination.

The strategy focused on transforming everyday rural life—plowing fields, preparing herbal drinks—into visitor experiences that elevated local culture and ecology. Community support was strong under the motto "from the community, by the community, for the community," guiding program design and profit-sharing. A tourism board— comprising elders, youth, and women's leaders—was formed to coordinate activities and organize hospitality and guide training. Support through government grants and CSR initiatives helped improve facilities.

By 2010, Pentingsari welcomed domestic and international tourists seeking immersive cultural experiences. Though the late-2010 Merapi eruption briefly halted progress, it spurred further development. By 2015, the village gained national recognition as a model for community-based tourism. Today, upgraded homestays, improved infrastructure, and visible community pride reflect Pentingsari's transformation. Its narrative—from a poor village to a tourism destination through collective effort—continues to inspire similar initiatives across Indonesia.

Educational and Cultural Tourism Activities

Pentingsari's appeal lies in its diverse, interactive cultural and educational experiences. Unlike passive tourism, it immerses guests in village life. Tourists can join farmers during rice planting or harvesting—donning conical hats, plowing with water buffalo, and planting seedlings. Villager-led sessions provide insight into traditional agriculture and rice's significance in Javanese culture. Guests can also fish in local ponds using nets or bare hands, recalling traditional food-gathering practices, especially enjoyable for children.

The village also preserves and shares traditional arts. In *wayang suket* workshops, visitors create puppets from woven grass or straw—an eco-friendly form of *wayang kulit*. Artisans demonstrate the craft and may stage short performances, blending natural creativity with oral storytelling. At *Rumah Gamelan* ("Gamelan House"), guests listen to calming performances and try playing under villagers' guidance. Since few youth now master gamelan, this initiative aids cultural preservation by encouraging young villagers to perform (Apriliansyah & Muktaf, 2024).

Live-in immersion programs offer rich cultural exchange. Guests stay in homestays, following host family routines. A typical three-day package includes morning farming, afternoon cultural workshops, village walks, and evening bonfires with music or storytelling. Urban schoolchildren engage in *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), while international visitors experience familial cross-cultural connection. Hosts receive training for comfort and hygiene, and modest fees ensure equitable benefit sharing.

Pentingsari's tours also promote environmental education. Rivers, gardens, and farms act as outdoor classrooms. Guided walks introduce medicinal plants and *jamu* traditions, such as *jamu kunyit asam* (turmeric–tamarind tonic) made with fresh turmeric, ginger, and tamarind. Guests learn about composting, pesticide-free farming, and water protection. These hands-on activities deepen engagement and reinforce conservation values— aligning tourism with cultural and ecological stewardship.

Supporting Local Micro-Enterprises and Products

From the outset, Pentingsari's tourism strategy emphasized not just attracting visitors but maximizing local economic benefits through micro-enterprise integration. The village

actively encouraged residents to develop products and services for tourists, transforming visitors into direct consumers of local goods and fostering community-wide entrepreneurship.

One notable example is **Wedang Rempah Pentingsari**, a traditional Javanese herbal drink made from ginger, lemongrass, cinnamon, cloves, and palm sugar. A local enterprise commercialized this heritage recipe by packaging dried spice mixes into sachets for tourists. Widely sampled in homestays and the visitor center, *Wedang Rempah* became a popular souvenir and expanded its market beyond the village, offering health benefits and branding Pentingsari around wellness and cultural authenticity.

Merapi Honey Coffee (*Kopi Madu Merapi*) is another innovation. Instead of selling green beans, villagers roast Arabica coffee and blend it with locally sourced honey, producing a smooth, sweetened coffee without refined sugar. Tourists enjoy roasting demonstrations and tastings, often purchasing both honey and coffee as souvenirs. The product reflects sustainable agricultural synergy, as beekeeping improves pollination and coffee agroforestry supports biodiversity.

Women artisans advanced the village's creative identity through *Batik Badong*, a line of textiles using *wayang suket* (grass puppet) motifs. Their products—scarves, bags, garments—merge traditional storytelling with local art. Visitors can join batik-making workshops and observe production firsthand. **Batik Badong** has been showcased regionally, boosting income and empowering female entrepreneurs.

Other enterprises include "**Jamur Gin-Gin**," offering oyster mushrooms and crispy mushroom snacks; organic soybean tempeh producers marketing fried tempeh crackers; and youth- and women-led craft groups creating eco-friendly items from coconut shells and bamboo. Each venture is woven into the tourism experience—tours include tastings, workshops, and souvenir shopping—ensuring that the value chain remains village- centered.

Pentingsari's tourism ecosystem—built on local businesses, products, and services—minimizes economic leakage and maximizes impact. This inclusive model supports sustainable development by diversifying household incomes and fostering community resilience, exemplifying how CBT can drive equitable growth (Sutomo et al., 2024).

External partnerships have further boosted these enterprises. For instance, Pentingsari's collaboration with the state electricity company (PLN) provided electric food dryers to mushroom and coffee businesses, increasing production capacity. A 2024 training program by Bank Indonesia guided entrepreneurs on improved packaging and online marketing to reach broader markets. Such support made micro-enterprises more competitive while remaining rooted in local culture and sustainability. In sum, integrating micro-enterprises into tourism has diversified incomes, spread entrepreneurship across households, and offered tourists a richer experience through authentic local products. It exemplifies how community-based tourism stimulates rural economic development beyond the service sector.

Community Participation and Empowerment Mechanisms

Pentingsari's sustainable tourism model is anchored in inclusive participation and equitable governance. Rather than relying on a select few, the entire village engages in planning and shares the benefits. Mechanisms were deliberately established to foster empowerment and prevent inequalities common in other community projects.

A central strategy is the rotational system for tourism opportunities. With about 60 family-run homestays, guests are evenly distributed (Aji & Faniza, 2024), ensuring all households—regardless of location or amenities—host visitors. Rotation also applies to

catering and guiding services, coordinated by the village tourism board. This system promotes fairness, reduces competition, and maintains quality while minimizing tourism's impact on any single household.

Participatory governance is reinforced through regular community meetings. Villagers co-manage pricing, tour development, and the tourism-generated village fund, which supports road repairs, water access, and scholarships. Forums encourage inclusion: women chair subcommittees, and youth lead digital promotion and creative programs.

Capacity building has been pivotal. Initial leaders mobilized community support, then mentored others and delegated roles. Workshops in accounting, hospitality, languages, and marketing improved service quality and boosted villagers' skills. Marginalized groups—including stay-at-home mothers—became entrepreneurs, while youth found livelihoods within the village, making tourism a platform for inclusion and growth.

Pentingsari also retains control over external partnerships. Collaboration with universities, government agencies, and CSR programs must align with community rules. Tour operators work under village terms, and a policy prohibits external investors from building tourist accommodations—homestays remain locally owned. This autonomy reflects the principle of self-reliance in community-based tourism as outlined by Sutomo et al. (2024). By organizing resources internally and safeguarding decision-making, Pentingsari has built trust, sustained engagement, and ensured tourism reinforces community resilience.

Resilience in the Face of Disaster

A pivotal chapter in Pentingsari's journey was its response to the 2010 eruption of Mount Merapi. As one of the world's most active volcanoes, Merapi routinely disrupts life in surrounding areas. Pentingsari, located in Volcanic Risk Zone II, must evacuate during major eruptive activity. In October 2010, a violent eruption blanketed the village in ash and triggered tremors. While no casualties occurred—thanks to early warnings and preparedness—damage was considerable: ash collapsed a mosque roof, homestays suffered structural cracks, crops were destroyed, and water sources were polluted. The tourism program stalled for six months, with losses estimated at IDR 400 million (~USD 30,000).

Recovery efforts were impressively community-led. With modest outside aid, villagers mobilized through their CBT organization to "build back better." Volunteers from neighboring villages and universities joined cleanup efforts, reflecting *gotong royong* beyond Pentingsari. Homes were repaired, fields replanted, and tourism gradually resumed.

Innovation also emerged. The community created the Merapi Lava Tour, collaborating with jeep operators to offer excursions to affected sites like the *Sisa Hartaku Museum* (My Remaining Treasures Museum). This "disaster tourism" informed visitors about Merapi's geology and recovery stories, with Pentingsari guides adding local insight. Though run off-site, the tour became a valued part of Pentingsari's homestay packages.

Organizational improvements followed. The tourism board developed evacuation protocols, printed safety leaflets for guests, and arranged standby drivers. Emergency drills trained hosts and guides. Recognizing the need to diversify, the village expanded marketing and product sales beyond its borders to sustain income during future disruptions. As Rindrasih (2018) noted, the eruption triggered a "transformation of human and community factors," strengthening adaptive capacity and social cohesion.

By 2012, visitor numbers surpassed pre-eruption levels, boosted by media coverage of

the village's resilience. Pentingsari's experience reaffirmed that disaster preparedness and community agency are vital pillars of sustainable tourism—particularly in hazard- prone regions.

Discussion: Strategic Lessons from Pentingsari

Pentingsari's journey offers strategic insights for advancing sustainable community-based tourism:

Firstly, **Community Empowerment and Leadership** formed the cornerstone of Pentingsari's success. The village empowered locals not just as beneficiaries but as planners and owners of tourism initiatives. Leadership articulated a vision rooted in safeguarding the village's cultural essence, or "soul," while decentralization nurtured emerging leaders. This underscores the imperative of investing in human capital— through training, exchanges, and mentorship—to foster confidence and capacity for tourism development. Pride and ownership, in turn, catalyzed lasting commitment.

Secondly, **Leveraging Local Assets and Authenticity** proved essential in creating a distinctive tourism profile. Pentingsari capitalized on its scenic beauty, agricultural rhythms, and rich cultural heritage. Enhancements to natural elements such as rivers and traditional arts, alongside immersive visitor experiences, elevated its appeal. This highlights the importance for communities to strategically map and innovate around their cultural and ecological capital, enhancing uniqueness while strengthening conservation efforts.

Thirdly, **Inclusive Governance and Benefit-Sharing** played a pivotal role in maintaining social cohesion. Pentingsari employed a cooperative tourism model built on shared decision-making, transparency, and equitable distribution of benefits. Rotating homestay assignments and communal funds exemplified the inclusive spirit. Early establishment of governance mechanisms is crucial for preventing inequity and reinforcing collective trust.

Fourthly, **Micro-Enterprise Integration** amplified economic impact across community layers. Villagers diversified their participation through food production, craft-making, and guiding services. Supported by targeted training and access to micro-financing, these enterprises cultivated entrepreneurship and localized economic circulation. This holistic approach ensured tourism income stayed within the village ecosystem.

Fifthly, **Strategic Partnerships and Networking** enhanced the village's growth trajectory without undermining its autonomy. Pentingsari collaborated with government bodies for legitimacy, academic institutions for ecotourism knowledge, and CSR programs for infrastructure development. The success of these partnerships hinged on clear role delineation and respect for community leadership, offering a blueprint for mutually beneficial collaboration.

Sixthly, **Marketing, Storytelling, and Recognition** fortified Pentingsari's identity and visibility. Its transformation narrative—from adversity to sustainable prosperity—served as the centerpiece of its branding. Through media exposure, accolades (Apriliansyah & Muktaf, 2024), and cultural events, the village effectively communicated its unique appeal: a volcanic backdrop, vibrant culture, and spirit of *gotong royong*. Such storytelling built credibility and attracted value-driven travelers.

Seventhly, **Diversification and Resilience Planning** helped future-proof tourism operations. Pentingsari broadened its offerings across education, culture, adventure, and agriculture, mitigating seasonal vulnerabilities. Agricultural livelihoods provided a buffer during disruptions. Post-2010, the village developed resilience strategies including evacuation protocols and the Lava Tour—an

innovative fusion of risk and attraction. As

a designated "Disaster-Ready Village," it underscored the value of preparedness in building traveler confidence.

Lastly, **Continuous Learning and Adaptation** sustained relevance over time. Across 15 years, the village responded proactively to feedback and global trends—upgrading facilities, reducing plastics, joining the Green Destinations Top 100, and training youth in digital marketing. This iterative approach affirmed that sustainable tourism is not a static achievement but a dynamic process of renewal.

In essence, Pentingsari illustrates a model of tourism that balances people, planet, and profit. Through community empowerment, local asset utilization, equitable governance, partnership cultivation, resilience planning, and continuous learning, Pentingsari has crafted an inclusive, adaptive, and sustainable development path. Other communities can draw inspiration from its approach to shape their own strategies in line with local values and aspirations.

Conclusion

Pentingsari Tourism Village's transformation from a marginalized hamlet into a globally recognized example of sustainable community-based tourism offers a powerful and replicable model. The case affirms that tourism development thrives when locally driven, anchored in community strengths, and supported by strategic partnerships. By holistically addressing economic, social, and environmental dimensions, Pentingsari achieved measurable outcomes: poverty alleviation through new livelihoods, revitalized cultural pride, environmental conservation, and resilience to crises. This integrated approach ensured long-term viability, underscoring the need for balance—not privileging one aspect over another.

Pentingsari exemplifies a "community-as-protagonist" model. Residents were not passive providers but active entrepreneurs and custodians of their venture. Their agency shaped tourism products that were contextually grounded and culturally respectful, fostering strong cohesion. Bottom-up development outperformed typical top-down efforts, nurturing authentic ownership and pride. Contrary to the assumption that tradition must yield to modernity, Pentingsari modernized on its own terms: infrastructure and skills improved while traditional knowledge remained central. Youth viewed heritage as a valuable asset, and women embraced new roles within the community.

For policymakers, Pentingsari offers tangible evidence of the value in supporting community-based tourism. Modest interventions catalyzed sustained growth. To replicate such outcomes, governments should promote enabling environments—capacity-building, micro-credit, village tourism networks, and protective policies. Crucially, interventions must empower communities rather than control them. Pentingsari's autonomy enabled innovation aligned with local values and aspirations.

Ultimately, Pentingsari stands as a beacon of sustainable tourism. Its journey—driven by cultural resilience and strategic foresight—inspires globally. Tourism developed "by the people, for the people" becomes a true catalyst for sustainable development, aligning economic progress with the preservation of nature and heritage. In the shadow of Merapi, Pentingsari proves that with collective will and local wisdom, a small village can shape its own sustainable future.

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