

# **PAKPONG: An EcotourismBased Business Model of a Village Owned Enterprise (BUMDes) for Improving Community Welfare toward the Achievement of the Village SDGs in Denai Lama**

**Luvi Harmayanvi Harahap, Rahmad Sembiring, Annisa Ilmi Faried**

## **Abstract**

This study examines PAKPONG, short for Paket Kampoeng, an integrated tourism package run by the village owned enterprise (BUMDes) behind Paloh Naga Agrotourism in Denai Lama Village, Deli Serdang Regency, and treats it as a doorway into how an ecotourism-based village business keeps welfare circulating among its residents while chasing the Village SDG targets at the same time. PAKPONG is a seven hour package priced at IDR 160,000 per person that strings together a Malay traditional welcome, hands on farming, village cooking, crafts, and performing arts into one journey that hops from venue to venue on an odong-odong shuttle. The research was carried out qualitatively with a single case study design. Data were collected through in depth interviews with seven informants, direct observation, and document tracing, then processed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña and tested through triangulation. The result: five dimensions of business model innovation turn out to work hand in hand, from value creation all the way to sustainability, and they contribute in a very real way to four Village SDG targets, most of all decent work that embraces the elderly and responsible production. Yet one finding nags. This place is skilled at creating but tongue tied at telling the world, so a well crafted product goes almost entirely unmarketed. The fate of community welfare, then, is decided more by fixing governance and marketing than by giving birth to new attractions.

**Keywords:** *business model innovation, community welfare, ecotourism, Village SDGs, village-owned enterprise*

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## Introduction

Denai Lama Village has undergone a remarkable transformation from a relatively isolated rural area into one of the most recognised community-based tourism destinations in North Sumatra.. It used to be known as a remote hamlet far from everywhere, with muddy roads and barely any economic pulse. Then things turned around. On a stretch of paddy fields, the local BUMDes turned rice plots into Paloh Naga Agrotourism, the heart of the Kampoeng Lama Tourism Village whose name is now heard well beyond the province. A story like this is pleasant to hear, but what matters more is the question behind it. How exactly does a village economic institution turn things that look ordinary, paddy fields, home cooking, dances, woven crafts, into economic value that genuinely flows into people's kitchens?

The rules of the game were actually laid out long ago. Law Number 6 of 2014 gave villages the right to manage their own affairs [1], and Government Regulation Number 11 of 2021 made BUMDes a legal entity free to form partnerships [2]. But good rules do not automatically produce a living business. Ridlwan [3] warned early on that a BUMDes only means something if it truly moves the local economy, not merely tops up the village treasury. In reality, plenty of BUMDes stop at the signboard, or busily build facilities and then run out of breath the moment visitors thin out. The trouble, says Chesbrough [4], often lies not in the idea but in the business model that carries the idea to market.

This study enters through a single product, PAKPONG. According to the operator's official document [5], PAKPONG, or Paket Kampoeng, is a seven hour tour package with a price tag of IDR 160,000 per person. That money already covers quite a lot, starting from a Malay style welcome of silat hadang and hempang batang, a welcoming dance, lunch, welcome drinks and snacks, a cooking class complete with instructor and ingredients, traditional games, weaving lessons, a tour of the agrotourism site and the emping melinjo production house, all the way to the odong-odong that carries the group from one spot to the next. Guests start the morning at Sanggar Lingkaran, spend midday going around the Paloh Naga paddies, and close the afternoon at Sanggar Selayar Denai with a Batak dance and everyone joining the Manortor together. The intriguing part is that a package this polished was born not in the glory days, but in the hard times after the pandemic and a fire.

There are three things this paper wants to answer. How does BUMDes business model innovation actually work through PAKPONG. How far does PAKPONG help lift community welfare and the Village SDG targets. And what could make it run aground. The three are deliberately woven into one, so the picture that emerges is whole, not bits and pieces

## Literature Review

Put simply, a business model is the way a business creates value, delivers it to customers, and sets a share aside for itself [6]. Chesbrough [4] adds an important note, that innovating on the business model is just as valuable as innovating on the product, and even harder to copy because it touches the entire way an organization works. To read village tourism, three other lenses are used as well. Pine and Gilmore [7], through the idea of the experience economy, remind us that the most valuable thing is neither goods nor services, but a memorable experience. Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff [8], through the triple helix, show that innovation flourishes when universities, businesses, and government hold hands. Meanwhile, Schaltegger

and colleagues [9] insist that a sustainable business model demands economic, social, and environmental value moving side by side, not devouring one another.

The policy umbrella is called the Village SDGs, which brings the sustainable development goals down to measures close to everyday village life. Four targets touch this study directly, namely a village without poverty, a village without hunger, decent work, and responsible production. Studies in North Sumatra have already recorded that village funds and village economic institutions really can lift welfare, as long as the governance is sound [10], that strengthening small businesses built on local potential helps sustain that change [11], and that the income of small business actors in villages is heavily shaped by the institutional factors around them [12]. Even at a broader level, national economic growth is ultimately rooted in the pulse of micro enterprises at the community level [13], and that is precisely where a village business like a BUMDes takes its place. On community based ecotourism specifically, a study of four villages in Serdang Bedagai, the district right next to Deli Serdang, shows that its success depends heavily on residents' involvement and the educational content it carries [14]. What has not been explored much is how an integrated tourism product is designed as a business model, and then how far it touches the Village SDG targets one by one. That is the gap this paper stands in.

## Methods

This research is qualitative, with a single case study design [15]. That choice was made because what is being chased is not an average number, but an understanding of how and why an innovation works in the real world. The case is the BUMDes managing Paloh Naga Agrotourism in Denai Lama Village, with PAKPONG as the main unit of analysis. Data were collected along three routes that patch one another up. In depth interviews were held with seven informants chosen purposively to represent a range of positions, from decision makers to residents running stalls. Direct observation captured the atmosphere that does not always come out in words. Documentation covered the operator's official 2026 Paket Kampoeng Concept and Activity Itinerary document [5], promotional materials, and the site's official promotional video.

The analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [16], moving back and forth between condensing the data, displaying it, and drawing conclusions. To keep the interpretation from drifting, accounts from different informants were cross checked against one another, then the interview results were set side by side with the observations and documents. Profiles of the seven informants can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Research Informant Profiles

| Code  | Role                                        | Age |
|-------|---------------------------------------------|-----|
| INF-1 | Managing Director of the BUMDes (initiator) | -   |
| INF-2 | Site manager                                | 57  |
| INF-3 | Trader from outside the village             | 38  |
| INF-4 | Farmer group member                         | 68  |
| INF-5 | MSME owner                                  | 67  |
| INF-6 | Young trader and farmer                     | 33  |
| INF-7 | Farmer and trader                           | 60  |

*Source: Primary data, processed by the authors, 2026*

## Result and Discussion

### 4.1. The Anatomy of PAKPONG: Seven Neatly Choreographed Hours

The operator's official document makes one thing plain: PAKPONG is not a package thrown together carelessly. Its seven hours flow like a performance, opening with a traditional welcome and closing with everyone dancing together. The flow is laid out in Table 2.

**Table 2.** PAKPONG Itinerary

| Time        | Activity                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09.00-09.30 | Arrival at Sanggar Lingkaran, welcomed with silat hadang and hempang batang, a Malay welcoming dance, welcome drinks and traditional snacks       |
| 09.30-09.45 | Welcoming remarks, activity briefing, division into groups                                                                                        |
| 09.45-12.00 | Touring Paloh Naga Agrotourism and the emping melinjo production house by odong-odong, joining hands on emping making                             |
| 12.00-13.30 | Lunch of nasi taker with the village's signature ayam ingkung, trying out the gamelan, entertained by Malay dance                                 |
| 13.30-16.00 | Weaving coconut leaves, cooking class, traditional games between groups at Sanggar Selayar Denai, closed with a Batak dance and Manortor together |
| 16.00-16.10 | Closing                                                                                                                                           |

Source: *Paket Kampoeng Concept and Activity Itinerary document, 2026 [5]*

Notice something: guests here are not buying an entrance ticket. What they are buying is one full, memorable day, from being welcomed like honored guests in Malay tradition to going home carrying a story. Even the official tagline says as much, arrive as a traveler, leave with a tale. This is the experience economy [7] in its most concrete form, services as the stage, goods as the props, and what is really being sold is memories.

#### **4.2. Five Innovation Dimensions Working Together**

Behind that tidy flow, the five dimensions of business model innovation [4] work side by side. All of it starts from the founder's view of what this BUMDes exists for. The answer is blunt.

**Researcher:** What was the main purpose of setting up this BUMDes in the first place?

**Informant:** *In the beginning, when we set up this BUMDes, it was never just talk about profit here and there, but about how money could circulate among the people. A BUMDes is something that has to impact the community's economic improvement. (INF-1)*

Circulation, not accumulation. This way of seeing is what sets PAKPONG apart from an ordinary commercial tour package, and it forms the substance of the value creation dimension. The next dimension, value delivery, is felt in the short supply chain. Cooking ingredients are not bought from outside; they are picked from the residents' own gardens and paddies. The researcher confirmed this directly with a farmer group member.

**Researcher:** Is it true that everything sold here comes from plants you grow yourself?

**Informant:** *Yes, that's right. This pecel I make, the peanuts are grown myself. There's cassava, peanuts, planted myself. From the plants we grow, that's what we sell. (INF-4)*

Because groups move from venue to venue on the odong-odong, guest spending spreads along with them, to the sanggar dancers, the women who cook, the weavers, all the way to the emping making group. It does not pile up in one pair of hands. For capturing revenue, there are two tricks that prop each other up, wooden coins and package bundling. The wooden coins are interesting, because on top of being a medium of exchange they also serve as a guardian of trust.

**Researcher:** How does financial transparency actually run here?

**Informant:** *It's transparent, because we always gather and talk about the earnings. Back when we used the wooden coins, the coins were counted right there, how much each person got. So the community is involved, how much came in, it's all open. (INF-6)*

Meanwhile the PAKPONG bundle wraps everything into that single IDR 160,000 price, well above retail tickets, so that once a group arrives, every venue gets its share and the revenue becomes predictable. The collaborative dimension shows in the university's hands reaching down into the village. Residents who had farmed their whole lives suddenly found themselves learning something entirely foreign to them.

**Researcher:** What kind of training have you received, and from whom?

**Informant:** *There were even lecturers from USU, we had training just recently. A lot of it was about greeting, because we're not traders by origin, we're farmers. So the greeting, the attitude, welcoming guests, because we'd never welcomed strangers before. (INF-6)*

This is the triple helix [8] in everyday practice, though it will become clear later that the government leg of that helix is the wobbliest one. The last dimension, sustainability, has one especially fine example: paddies that work twice through rice and tilapia intercropping.

**Researcher:** How does farming work here, is any of it sustainable?

**Informant:** *There's intercropping here, tilapia down below. So the fertilizer comes from the tilapia. (INF-3)*

The rice wins, the fish wins, and chemical fertilizer use goes down because fish waste enriches the soil. One action, three values at once, economic, social, environmental. Exactly what Schaltegger and colleagues [9] mean by a sustainable business model, and in tune as well with the idea of empowering farmers through cultivation side innovation, which places new ways of farming as the road to raising both production and villagers' incomes [17], [18]. A summary of the five dimensions is given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Five Dimensions of Business Model Innovation in PAKPONG

| Dimension      | Form in PAKPONG                                                                                      |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Value Creation | From empowerment to authentic cultural experience; oriented toward circulating money among residents |
| Value Delivery | Short supply chain from residents' farm produce; venue circuit by odong-odong                        |
| Value Capture  | Wooden coins as a medium of exchange and transparency; IDR 160,000 bundling                          |
| Collaborative  | Hospitality training from USU lecturers (triple helix)                                               |
| Sustainability | Rice tilapia intercropping; integration of economic, social, and environmental value                 |

Source: Primary data, processed by the authors, 2026

#### 4.3. Welfare That Can Be Felt and Contributions to the Village SDGs

The impact easiest to spot sits precisely in the days that used to be empty. For residents who spend their weekdays down in the paddies, Sunday, normally a day off, has turned into a day for earning. The benefits even spill over onto the face of the village itself, as a young trader recounted.

**Researcher:** How have the village roads and surroundings changed since this tourism began?

**Informant:** *It used to be so remote people called it the back of beyond, the roads were bad, muddy. Since this tourism came, the road in from the outside villages has been paved, even the road out to Kuala Namu is paved now. (INF-6)*

That counts toward the village without poverty target, though honesty demands admitting the gain is conditional: it holds only as long as visitors keep coming. The most touching contribution is to decent work, because this place embraces people the labor market usually considers finished. Listen to the story of a sixty seven year old MSME owner.

**Researcher:** What benefits do you feel besides the income?

**Informant:** *Extra spending money, because I live alone now, no one provides for me. It's also entertainment, watching people go by. At home I don't get to see people at all. (INF-5)*

For her, selling here is not just about spending money. It is about having a reason to leave the house, meet people, and still feel useful. Decent work in its fullest sense, a matter of dignity, not just wages. For the zero hunger target, the intercropping and the added value of farm produce strengthen household food security. For responsible production, the short supply chain, emping melinjo processed traditionally without additives, and the sanggar studios that keep the arts alive hold the production pattern environmentally friendly while preserving culture at the same time. A similar pattern was once recorded in the small ulos weaving industry in Samosir, which proved that a creative economy built on signature crafts can move a village economy [19]. The summary is in Table 4.

**Table 4.** PAKPONG's Contributions to the Village SDG Targets

| Village SDG Target     | Form of PAKPONG's Contribution                                               |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No Poverty             | Days off become earning days; village roads improved (conditional on visits) |
| Zero Hunger            | Rice tilapia intercropping; value added farm produce                         |
| Decent Work            | Embracing the elderly; an economic space that doubles as a social space      |
| Responsible Production | Short chain; traditional additive free emping; cultural preservation         |

Source: Primary data, processed by the authors, 2026

#### 4.4. The Paradox: Skilled at Creating, Tongue Tied at Telling

Up to this point everything sounds like something to be proud of. But one thing nags, and it happens to be this study's most important finding. PAKPONG, mature as it is, is barely marketed in any serious way. Meanwhile, false news runs faster. An MSME owner recounted what happened after a fire consumed the main stage.

**Researcher:** How was the area doing after that fire?

**Informant:** *When the fire happened, people said the agrotourism site was closed. In fact we never closed. It was spread by people who don't like us. We kept selling, we never once stopped selling. (INF-5)*

That closure rumor was simply left alone, no official rebuttal, and the effect was tangible. Traders who once numbered twenty three are down to seven. Opening days shrank from two days to one day a week. Inside, too, something was off, as the site manager admitted frankly.

**Researcher:** How has your coordination with the BUMDes management been so far?

**Informant:** *For now my coordination with the BUMDes people is not good, not healthy, not enough communication. I'm the site manager, the BUMDes is the chair. (INF-2)*  
What cuts deepest is that residents actually know exactly where the old crowds came from, and they point in that direction without a moment's doubt.

**Researcher:** What are your hopes and suggestions so this place can rise again?

**Informant:** *The hope is that it picks up again. It used to be really viral, that was the social media effect. My suggestion for the management, encourage us more, pay more attention, so it grows again, goes viral again. (INF-6)*

Here the paradox stands naked. The capacity to create is high, proven by the fact that PAKPONG was born right in the middle of a crisis. The capacity to tell is low, proven by the fact that a product that good was left in silence while hoaxes roamed free. In business model language, value created with so much effort is clogged in the channel. Chesbrough [4] warned long ago that however brilliant an idea, its value stays asleep until it is carried to market the right way. A study of food MSMEs in Deli Serdang lands on the same note, that without a seriously worked sales strategy, even the finest product struggles to reach the market [20]. Add to that internal coordination that is not yet healthy and government support that shows up more often at ceremonies, when in fact the quality of public financial management and the direction of regional spending largely decide whether that support ever reaches the ground [21], [22], and it becomes understandable why the welfare residents already enjoy now hangs by a thread. Even the best product loses its meaning if the market does not know it exists, or worse still, hears the wrong story about it.

## Conclusion

PAKPONG shows that a village BUMDes can innovate at the level of the business model, even when times are at their hardest. Five innovation dimensions work in concert, from value creation oriented toward circulating money among residents, value delivery through short chains and moving venues, value capture through wooden coins and bundling, triple helix style collaboration, all the way to sustainability through intercropping. Its contribution to the Village SDGs is real across four targets, strongest in decent work that embraces the elderly and in responsible production.

But all those achievements stand on shaky ground. Skilled at creating yet tongue tied at telling, compounded by internal coordination that is not yet healthy and government support that stays ceremonial, its continuity is now at stake. So the most urgent task is not giving birth to new attractions, but bringing planned digital marketing to life, sorting out governance and communication on the inside, and pushing for government assistance that does not stop at the ribbon-cutting. The implication: tourism village development programs should rethink how much attention goes to creating destinations versus caring for them. Follow up research would do well to test quantitatively the link between marketing intensity and residents' income, so this recommendation can stand on numbers. Because building a tourism village is indeed hard, but keeping it alive turns out to be far harder.

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