

## Empowering Smes Through Digital Marketing At Unesco Global Geopark Belitong, Indonesia

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### **Abstract.**

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, SMEs located in tourism destinations in the form of small islands in Indonesia experienced many problems, including: decreased sales turnover due to reduced number of tourists coming to visit the island, difficulty in raw materials, rising raw material prices and SMEs not understanding how to do digital marketing effectively. Digital skills for SMEs are very important in building a competitive advantage and expanding the market not only in their area. Therefore, a community empower program was initiated to help the SMEs survive through covid19 pandemic, by increasing their capacity on Digital Marketing. The objectives of this program are: (1) to develop community empowerment through Digital Marketing program (2) to increase community skills in digital marketing. Eight months of educational activities were conducted on 20 SMEs from April 2021 to November 2021 at the Unesco Global Geopark Belitong. Using the participatory training method, SMEs were able to understand how to conduct digital marketing. The result of this program, is SMEs start to develop their own digital marketing program, with the help from university students. For future program SMEs express their hope that coaching and upskilling in digital marketing will continue in order to help them increase their market.*

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, SMEs, Covid19-pandemic, Unesco Global Geopark Belitong

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Unesco Global Geopark Belitong as one of the geoparks in Indonesia and a natural tourism destination that has a unique form of unique rocks. In the form of a typical geodiversity. One of the objectives of the geopark is to empower the local community's economy in addition to the introduction and promotion of the concept of earth science. The production of Geoproducts has created new jobs for the local community, the revival of handicrafts and the promotion of local culture, increased income, and can introduce visitors to the cultural and geological characteristics of the geopark.[1] The geopark concept of development is based on aspects of conservation, education, aspects of independent local economic growth by prioritizing the concept of sustainable tourism by actively involving local communities. The local communities are subjects in the geopark development process, in which there are SMEs as existing and important communities in the Belitong geopark. Geopark as a unified and comprehensive system is highly depended on local communities and their benefits. There are several ways which locals can benefit from a geopark such as establishing

local guest houses and restaurants, local tour guiding, geoproductions production and etc. Geoproductions not only can bring income for producers but also could be an excellent way to transfer knowledge and raise awareness about a geopark and its related features.[2].

The potential for nature-based products in the Unesco Global Geopark Belitong, especially in the Province of the Bangka Belitung Islands is abundant, which comes from forest products, plantations, agriculture, fisheries, and mining. The mining sector has been able to contribute quite a lot to around 13 percent of the economy in the Bangka Belitung Islands with tin as the main commodity. In addition to the mining sector, the community's economic activities are dominant in the agricultural, plantation and fishery sectors. As the tourism sector increases since 2015 in Belitong Island and the establishment of an international geopark in 2021, the community livelihood shifted into small enterprises catering to the industry, providing food and beverage, transportation, accommodation, tours, souvenirs and etc. Local SMEs are central to these activities. An example of a geopark social impact in community is the Meteorum Geopark through a community empowerment framework to properly address the social impacts. Most program on geopark focused on the conservation of geological diversity of geoparks although geological diversity is an essential UNESCO criterion for geopark designation. Granted there have been previous works on community development and regional economic benefits, this has primarily been located within impoverished communities. The research presented looked to understand the role of a geopark within a different setting as it can not be adequately understood in relation to previous studies of communal, environmental and economic impacts.

[3] Empowerment is a process of social action which values the active participation of individuals, agencies, and societies [4]. This ideally results in communal control, political effectiveness, improved well being and social justice. [5] A link is created between personal well being and the larger societal situation in which a responsive community is key driver. "Empowerment-oriented interventions enhance wellness while they also aim to ameliorate problems, provide opportunities for participants to develop knowledge and skills, and engage professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative experts. Empowerment is a construct that links many different aspects of sustained and improved livelihoods together. It promotes individual strength and individual competency as a way to create an organic system that is proactive and contributes to effective social policies and social changes [6]. Development of their business needs technological advancement such as Digital Marketing. Digital marketing is a business activity where business actors are good at operating technology so as to enable transactions and processes within the company digitally, this can involve information systems under the control of the company. This already includes all business activities carried out with the help of digital media, so that customers no longer have trouble finding basic needs wherever they are [7]. In digital marketing, it is very possible not to have an offline store. Sellers can use the online space as their shop.

The mechanism, the seller needs to update the stock of goods properly so that buyers can easily find what we are selling. Sellers also need to keep consumers from entering other online stores, by means of competitive offers [8]. This paper presents the activities of empowerment program through enhancing Digital Marketing skills for SMEs in small island in Unesco Global Geopark Belitong. The objectives of empowerment activities is to increase capacities of SMEs in digital marketing

## II. METHODS

The involvement of community participation is the most important component in efforts to grow independence and the empowerment process [9] confirms that the community empowerment model according to them is through the 7D approach which begins by giving appreciation to the potential and achievements of the community as well as the pure values that exist in the community. The 7D approach consists of the following systematic stages: D1 Developing relation, D2 Discovering capacities, D3 Dreaming of community future, D4 Directions of community actions, D5 Designing community actions, D6 Delivering Planned Activities, D7, Documenting Outputs, Outcomes and Learning) [10] Dhamotharan (2009). The location of the program is in the Unesco Global Geopark Belitong, Indonesia.



**Fig 1. Tourism Map of Belitong Island**

The implementation of 7D method used in the empowerment program starts with SMEs communities are involved in designing the training program, and also in the beginning of the program rapid needs assessment was conducted through online platform and meetings with local leaders and SMEs. A questionnaire was handed out to 30 participants of the program to asses their current condition and digital marketing

issues they encounter, also evaluation was conducted during the training and focus group discussion activities.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Training on Digital Marketing and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held with the UPI team and Chairman of the Belitong SME Gallery, Mr. Sulaiman Ichsan, to join in a joint discussion regarding the Belitong SMEs. SMEs participant that has been registered in the program, sell unique product all made in the island with local ingredients. There is an SME that sell coffee chips as a main product since 2018, also SMEs in handycraft that sell souvenir patchwork in the form of bags, goodie bags, wallets, and products in the form of custom dolls made of flannel. The couple dolls featuring Belitong traditional clothes, the unique thing is that there is a barcode on each doll in traditional clothes, which convey more information on the doll traditional clothing.



**Fig 2.** Handmade Doll in Traditional Clothing of Belitong Island

Furthermore, SMEs in Belitong also produce local snacks such as chips and crackers made from fish, squid and shrimp. These chips are also available in several flavors, namely original, barbecue, cheese and *balado*/hot sauce flavor. Black squid chips offer a unique food product, with a sweet taste sprinkled with savory and other unique product is chips made from red fern leaf shoots. An eco-friendly product is also produced by local SMEs Eco Straw made from *purun* grass, Belitong communities have used *purun* grass which used to be made into crafts and mats. Products must refer to the origin in Naturtejo Geopark. Ana Paula Carvalho, from Acha Doce Liquors progressively gained the taste of rehearsing flavours, merging aromas, daring new

alchemy, in the production of her handmade liqueurs. These liquors tell stories of characters and places narrated by alchemy, such as the geoliquors Ore, Gold, Earth Depths whose flavours transports to remote geological memories and mining experiences in the surrounding area. In 2016, during the Portuguese participation in Strasbourg Christmas Market, Acha Doce hot wine, a secret recipe with liquor, was considered the best from the whole fair [11].

From the result of questionnaires distributed to 20 SMEs enlisted to join the digital marketing program, all SMEs already have a business license number (NIB), 60% have MUI Halal certificates and others, then 62.5% SMEs participants use social media as an online product sales platform. They also explained about the advantages felt by every SMEs, namely local raw materials that are not found in other areas, then the benefits of the product, production process, unique packaging and relatively affordable prices. However, on average, every SMEs has the same two obstacles, namely not having the ability to create digital content and there are no managers or employees in managing SMEs accounts even though their sales market is 81.3% of Belitong SMEs already selling products inside and outside the island of Belitong. The average income of SMEs participants according to the poll is 68.8% below 5 million in a month and the rest has reached 6 to 10 million in a month. The result FGD interview with SMEs also states they needed more training and assistance that includes situation analysis and creating digital content that is interesting, informative, communicative, and makes it easier for consumers to buy their product.

The potential of geoculinary in Sembalun District, East Lombok based on recommendation of UNESCO is in Sembalun Lawang Village with the product of organic bread with raw material of potato, strawberry and carrots and in Sembalun Bumbung Village with processed products of fresh food (tomato, potato, onions) to be packed and marketed to hotels and restaurants.[12] The background of the creation of several Belitong SMEs, were explored and five important aspects was identified a local wisdom in a product where the recipe, the production process, the story of the establishment, the story of the product, and the culture. For example, Herbal Tea Flower and Baesuk where both products come from Geopark Mudeung Korea have been certified by Geofood. From the examples that have been presented in the training and fgd activities, SMEs were advised that in order to make information, both posted and verbal, it is necessary to have a story that can be understood by the audience, a message that fits the target market and is emotionally touching so that it has its own charm. To help the SMEs implement their digital marketing program, the university team held a collaboration for the Belitong SMEs with university students who major in digital marketing course. The students will help SMEs to design a simple poster in the social media.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Community empowerment also determines the long-term success of SME development. Community empowerment can be obtained through inculcating public awareness of the importance of developing SMEs. SMEs in Unesco Global Geopark Belitong have a variety of unique products in culinary and handicraft. Promoting these products through digital marketing channels have opened up new market and access to consumers. The SMEs have used digital marketing, but needed more skills in how to implement it successfully, through the empowerment program this need is met. In conclusion, this empowerment program not only provides learning and coaching in digital marketing, but also collaboration between academia, SMEs, government, geopark management and local communities.

#### V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors are grateful to the LPPM-UPI for this program, Badan Pengelola Unesco Global Geopark Belitong and PLUT Belitung for their participation and contribution in this program.

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