

Collaborative Strategies for Community Empowerment: A Narrative Study on Thematic Village Development in Malang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study employs narrative analysis to examine collaborative initiatives supporting the development of thematic communities in Malang City, Indonesia. Drawing on the experiences of government officials, community members, and NGO representatives, the research highlights the importance of participatory governance, community engagement, and the unique features of thematic villages in advancing sustainable local development. Cases such as Kampung Sanan, known for tempeh production, and Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, valued for its cultural and historical significance, illustrate how local innovation and identity can empower communities and boost tourism. Thematic village development aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty), by fostering inclusive economic opportunities. However, challenges such as limited stakeholder engagement, power imbalances, and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups may hinder progress towards Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Ecological sustainability is also central to the approach, especially regarding Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). The findings suggest that effective coordination, strong political support, and inclusive participation are vital to improving quality of life and local income. This study offers practical insights and policy recommendations for strengthening collaborative frameworks that promote sustainable and inclusive thematic village development.

Keywords: *Community Engagement; Participatory Governance; Tourism Development*

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Introduction

Thematic village development has emerged as an innovative approach to rural development, particularly in the Global South. To promote sustainable progress, this framework highlights the importance of democratic governance, community engagement, and the integration of local cultural and historical assets. Recent studies indicate that thematic villages have effectively addressed environmental challenges, fostered social cohesion, and strengthened local economies (Akther & Evans, 2024; Sou, 2019). These studies underscore the relevance of adaptive governance, which encourages stakeholder collaboration and enables local communities to take responsibility for their development (Akther & Evans, 2024). However, the implementation of such principles is often hindered by power imbalances, inadequate stakeholder engagement, and limited resources (Arko, 2019; Okunola, 2024; Sierra & Suárez-Collado, 2021).

Thematic communities represent a viable paradigm for rural transformation, focusing on specific cultural, environmental, or economic themes to reinforce community identity and attract tourism. Sustainability can be enhanced by integrating various development components, including economic viability, environmental stewardship, and social cohesion (Goutte & Sanin, 2024; Roseland, 2000; Winston, 2022). In pursuit of distinctive value propositions that foster community pride and unity while strengthening local economies, several villages in Malang City have adopted thematic strategies such as agro-tourism, cultural heritage, and ecotourism.

Thematic villages serve as a key strategy for enhancing tourism in Malang City while simultaneously empowering local residents. These villages offer unique and appealing destinations that blend local culture, history, and innovation. Successful examples include Kampung Sanan, renowned for its tempeh production, and Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, noted for its historical relevance. These achievements are the outcome of intricate collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government institutions, academia, and local communities.

Thematic communities in Malang are being developed with overarching sustainability goals, particularly focusing on waste management and environmental conservation. Recent studies suggest that initiatives such as recycling and renewable energy projects can significantly improve local environmental conditions while generating economic benefits through community-led waste management (Ariztia & Araneda, 2022; Caldera et al., 2019; Hariram et al., 2023). The 3P (People, Profit, Planet) framework in waste management illustrates how integrated efforts can yield economic, social, and environmental advantages through collaborative community engagement (Hariram et al., 2023).

Empowering communities in Malang through collaborative strategies involves a multifaceted approach that includes sustainable practices, community involvement, and supportive governmental policy. By fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and integrating community-driven initiatives, Malang City can address pressing urban issues and enhance the well-being of its residents.

Thematic village development in Malang City represents a collaborative initiative that supports community empowerment. These villages aim to promote sustainable development and participatory engagement by highlighting distinctive cultural, social, and economic attributes. This approach aligns with the core objectives of community empowerment, which emphasise the active involvement of local populations in shaping development processes that directly affect their lives.

One critical strategy in empowering thematic village residents involves leveraging local resources, particularly through ecotourism. Participatory approaches play a pivotal role in promoting ecotourism in Kampung Bumiaji, where cultural heritage and accessibility attract tourists while supporting the local economy (Priambodo et al., 2022). These participatory efforts enhance social cohesion and economic vitality by promoting local crafts and generating employment. Furthermore, stakeholder involvement and the development of tourism itineraries are essential components of rural tourism recovery strategies that can revitalise village economies (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Rindrasih et al., 2024).

Current research reveals significant gaps in understanding participatory governance and thematic village development in the Global South. While many studies highlight the importance of community participation, comprehensive research remains scarce on the specific factors that facilitate or hinder effective stakeholder collaboration (Bobková, 2020; Font et al., 2018). There is also a lack of research on the role of local governance frameworks in promoting collaborative activities, particularly in the context of adaptive governance and its implications for rural development (Du Plessis, 2017; Zevallos, 2024). Moreover, more rigorous assessments are required to consider the socio-political dynamics influencing participation, especially in regions marked by historical injustices and power imbalances (Goldin, 2013; Walch, 2019). The potential contribution of these initiatives towards broader sustainability objectives has not been thoroughly examined, especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Kemerink et al., 2013; Ryan, 2023).

The establishment of thematic villages in Malang City presents both opportunities and challenges in relation to the SDGs. These initiatives have the potential to contribute to Goal 1 (No Poverty) by enhancing economic opportunities and livelihoods through tourism and community participation (Lee et al., 2023; Pasanchay & Schott, 2021). However, insufficient stakeholder involvement, power imbalances, and the marginalisation of vulnerable groups often undermine programme effectiveness, hindering progress towards Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) (Unanka et al., 2020; Touchton et al., 2021).

Ecological sustainability is also central to the thematic village approach, particularly concerning Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Addressing issues such as environmental degradation, resource depletion, and waste management is crucial to preserving the region's ecological integrity (Yang & Solangi, 2024). To overcome these challenges and advance sustainable development in Malang and similar regions of the Global South, it is vital to embed adaptive governance principles and participatory methodologies.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of thematic village development. Common goals—including enhancing tourism appeal, promoting local economic growth, and improving community well-being—are achieved through multi-stakeholder collaboration. These partnerships involve coordinating actions, exchanging information, sharing resources, and building community capacity (Grootjans et al., 2022; Quaranta et al., 2016). Thus, it is essential to thoroughly understand the dynamics of collaboration and how collaborative actions influence outcomes.

A review of the literature on collaboration reveals that the process may be conceptualised through sequential stages: problem identification, agenda setting, implementation, and evaluation. However, this linear view fails to capture the realities of field-level dynamics. Collaboration is iterative and cyclical, comprising three interrelated elements: principled engagement, shared motivation, and joint capacity for action (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). This suggests that collaboration is neither sequential nor static but instead involves dynamic, ongoing interactions among multiple actors. The Collaborative Governance framework highlights collaborative actions as its central feature. Despite extensive research on collaboration, the specific actions undertaken within collaborative efforts are often overlooked (Thomas & Koontz, 2011). Innes and Booher (2010) argue that collaborative actions are not simply the endpoint of a linear process but are integrally tied to the process itself.

Collaborative partnerships operate at different levels—from basic networks focused on information exchange to advanced cooperation involving resource-sharing and capacity-building (Muluk & Winoto, 2018; Roberts, 2009). The characteristics and degrees of commitment in networking, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration significantly influence partnership effectiveness and success. This study explores the narratives, perspectives, and experiences of key actors involved in thematic village development in Malang City. Using a narrative analysis approach, this research seeks to uncover deeper insights into the collaborative process, the challenges faced, and the outcomes achieved. Interviews will be conducted with academics, government officials, and community members to identify core themes and narrative patterns that reveal the nature of collaboration. The study aims to contribute to a richer understanding of collaboration and how it can be optimised for the future development of sustainable thematic villages.

Research Methods

This study adopts a narrative analysis approach to explore the development of thematic villages in Malang City. Through this method, the narratives, perspectives, and lived experiences of key stakeholders—including community members, administrators, and academics—are critically examined. Narrative analysis enables researchers to uncover how individuals interpret their roles, challenges, and contributions in development processes, offering rich, context-specific insights.

As a qualitative methodology within the social sciences, narrative analysis foregrounds personal accounts as a means of understanding human experience (De Fina,

2021; Khoa et al., 2023). These narratives illuminate how identities and perspectives are shaped, negotiated, and expressed through social interaction and everyday practice (Brown, 2006; Langellier, 1989; McAdams & McLean, 2013). By focusing on individual stories, this approach reveals the underlying meanings and dynamics embedded in community engagement and collaborative governance.

This narrative approach is embedded within a qualitative research design grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which views knowledge as context-dependent and socially constructed through interaction. This framework is particularly appropriate for investigating the lived experiences of community members involved in thematic village development, as it allows for the exploration of how meaning is co-produced through dialogue and practice.

The study involved various stakeholders, including academics engaged in development initiatives, village administrators, and residents of thematic villages. Participants were selected based on their direct involvement in the thematic village development process and the specific roles they played, thereby ensuring a diverse and rich set of perspectives. The research aims to explore the dynamics of thematic village development, including the challenges encountered and the successes achieved throughout the process.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as the primary data collection method. This technique was chosen to allow participants to express their experiences in a detailed and open manner. Semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in eliciting in-depth and contextualised information, enabling researchers to probe meaningful aspects of stakeholders' narratives without being constrained by a rigid question structure.

Following data collection, the interviews were transcribed and subjected to narrative thematic analysis. The first step in the analytical process involved identifying key themes that emerged from participants' stories. These themes were shaped by personal experiences, significant events, and challenges faced during the development of thematic villages. These insights were then categorised into broader thematic groupings.

The researchers examined the narrative patterns that emerged from the data. These patterns reflect critical moments, collective experiences, or significant events that were highly valued by stakeholders (Brown & Thompson, 2013; Picavet et al., 2023). By situating each narrative within the informant's social and cultural context, the analysis yielded a comprehensive understanding of how thematic villages have evolved from multiple perspectives.

To ensure data validity, source triangulation was employed. This involved comparing the narratives from a variety of stakeholders to identify similarities and differences in their accounts. In addition, the researchers confirmed their interpretations by revisiting interview findings with the informants, ensuring that the intended meanings were accurately represented.

The findings of this study are presented as key themes and narrative patterns drawn from stakeholder accounts, with a particular emphasis on their lived experiences and collaborative efforts in developing thematic villages in Malang City.

Results and Discussion

Inter-Village Collaboration in Thematic Village Development

The effective implementation of thematic village activities depends on inter-village collaboration. Such cooperation is vital for the success of thematic village initiatives (Kasumaningrum et al., 2024). Cross-sector collaboration among state-owned enterprises, regionally owned enterprises, and community self-help groups can significantly enhance the capacity of village-owned enterprises to address local economic challenges and foster innovation (Kasumaningrum et al., 2024). This collaborative framework is essential for ensuring the effective participation of both government and community actors, as it promotes a culture of mutual respect and trust while facilitating resource sharing (Bisri et al., 2023; Dhewanto et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the concept of collaborative governance plays a central role in rural development. Establishing mutual respect and clear communication among individuals and organisations is a prerequisite for effective collaboration, requiring the commitment of all involved parties (Bisri et al., 2023). Incorporating all stakeholders in governance processes enhances the overall efficacy of collaborative efforts, ensuring that every perspective is acknowledged and potential conflicts are mitigated (Akbar et al., 2020). This inclusive approach is crucial to the sustainability of thematic village initiatives, as it cultivates a sense of accountability and ownership among community members.

Collaboration between villages in Malang City has had a substantial impact on the development of thematic villages. Interviews confirmed that Kampung Sanan, Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, and Kampung Biru Jodipan exemplify how inter-village collaboration can generate strong synergy, despite differences in thematic focus and challenges encountered. In-depth interviews revealed that Kampung Sanan, well known for its tempeh production, has garnered public attention—including visits by notable figures such as Sandiaga Uno—demonstrating the positive outcomes of effective collaboration.

An interview with Mr Joko, an administrator of Kampung Sanan, revealed that the village's visibility has significantly improved due to government support and collaboration with neighbouring villages. Mr Joko stated, "We derive genuine advantages from this collaboration, particularly when we receive assistance in the form of significant events that involve other villages. It is not merely a matter of promoting our tempeh; it is also about cultivating a mutually supportive ecosystem." This testimony illustrates the tangible benefits of sustained inter-village collaboration.

However, collaboration is not always a smooth process. A major challenge lies in the differing mindsets and priorities among villages. Kampung Biru Jodipan, for instance, is more commercially oriented, while Kampung Sanan is focused on tempeh production. These differences sometimes hinder joint decision-making. Nevertheless, collaborative initiatives—such as thematic village competitions, joint promotions, and the organisation of major events—have proven instrumental in generating positive synergy. For example, the annual thematic village competition initiated by the local government motivates

villages to showcase their unique strengths, including cultural heritage, artistic expression, and environmental cleanliness.

Collaboration between villages also involves coordination among local leaders and administrators, who facilitate the exchange of ideas, resources, and strategies to enhance the appeal of each village. This fosters a sense of solidarity and strengthens social bonds. The spirit of “Together We Can” encapsulates this ethos, wherein each village supports the others to achieve shared progress. A clear outcome of such collaboration is the increase in tourism visits following the COVID-19 pandemic—especially to Kampung Sanan, which now attracts visitors from both within and outside the country.

Nonetheless, interviews revealed structural obstacles to collaboration, particularly regarding written documentation and planning. Ms Sari, from Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, noted: “We often have difficulties in documentation and planning. This makes us feel like we do not have a strong foundation for greater collaboration.” Her remarks underscore the importance of institutional support in facilitating sustainable cooperation. They also highlight that collaboration must be supported by robust administrative structures, not merely technical coordination. Academics play a key role in assisting these villages, not through direct funding but through knowledge transfer, strategic planning, and capacity-building—contributions that are vital to the long-term sustainability of thematic villages.

In addition, collaboration with external actors, particularly private institutions through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has not been fully optimised. One significant barrier is the lack of legal status in several villages, which hinders their ability to secure substantial financial support from external sources. For example, Kampung Kayutangan still relies on community self-help and visitor contributions to maintain its operations, posing a long-term sustainability challenge. This case further illustrates the importance of academic collaboration in building a stronger institutional foundation through data-driven planning and management.

The development of thematic villages in Malang City involves not only the Tourism Agency but also other governmental bodies such as the Environmental Agency and the Regional Development Planning Agency, which are responsible for sanitation and long-term planning. The involvement of these agencies highlights the necessity of a cross-sectoral approach to thematic village development, encouraging villages to raise their managerial standards and learn from each other.

However, several interviews also revealed tensions between local initiatives and municipal government policies. Key actors involved in thematic village development expressed frustration over the lack of formal recognition from the city government, despite their achievements and ongoing collaboration with universities and international partners. This experience demonstrates that effective collaboration is not confined to the local level; rather, it should involve external stakeholders who can offer technical knowledge, innovation, and institutional support.

Collaborative efforts involving universities, provincial governments, ministries, and the private sector have shown promising results in other regions, such as Tangerang, Lumajang, and Madiun. Villages that have adopted this multi-actor approach have

achieved notable transformation, positioning themselves as models for sustainable thematic village development. Overall, the experience of Malang City demonstrates that, despite differences in thematic focus, effective collaboration can significantly enhance local potential and produce meaningful social and economic impacts for the wider community.

Community and Government Roles in Thematic Village Development

Community-driven initiatives are vital to the successful development of thematic villages. Grassroots movements empower local residents by enabling them to take responsibility for environmental conservation efforts (Weber, 2000). These initiatives often lead to sustainable practices and enhanced environmental justice, shaped and sustained by the active participation of community members (Agyeman et al., 2016). Residents' engagement in designing solutions tailored to their local context fosters a strong sense of ownership and long-term commitment.

Moreover, incorporating media into community empowerment efforts has shown how information dissemination can strengthen stakeholder collaboration and raise environmental awareness (Pujihartati, 2023). Media platforms help bridge the gap between communities and government programmes, increasing the community's capacity to articulate and advocate for their needs and interests.

Thematic villages in Malang City have emerged through dynamic interactions between community initiatives and government support. Interviews with various stakeholders reveal the distinct yet interconnected roles of each party. Kampung Sanan offers a compelling example of progress driven by community initiative. In an interview, Ms Rini, a resident of Kampung Sanan who is actively involved, stated, "We started from the ground up. We submitted a grant proposal and raised funds to procure tempeh production equipment. We did not rely exclusively on the government; we made a concerted effort to improve our circumstances." This account reflects a grassroots-led transformation, rooted in internal collaboration and independence.

In contrast, government assistance arrived later in the case of Kampung Kayutangan. Mr Agus, a community leader, explained, "Government support was only perceived after we had successfully demonstrated our tourism potential." Infrastructure improvements, such as toilet and hydrant installations, proved valuable during periods of increased visitor traffic. This highlights the government's essential role in supporting infrastructure that facilitates tourism growth. Together, these cases demonstrate the dual impact of community initiative and governmental support on thematic village development in Malang City.

The main driver of success remains the active participation of the community, as consistently shown in both the findings and interviews. While government support though occasionally delayed, contributes to sustainability and tourism appeal, the synergy between the two is not always seamless. In some cases, such as Kampung Kayutangan, residents expressed concern over their limited autonomy in managing village affairs. Responsibilities related to public facilities, including parking areas and trading zones, remain under the authority of various government agencies, often without

coordination with the local community. This lack of clarity hinders effective village management. Ms Siti, the administrator of Kampung Kayutangan, noted, “The absence of government coordination presents us with challenges in the management of public facilities. This occasionally leads us to believe that we are being impeded by complex bureaucracy.” Her statement underscores how disjointed relations between community and government actors may obstruct independent local governance.

On the other hand, Mr Andi from the Tourism Office acknowledged, “We realise that community initiatives often precede government support. We are trying to be more responsive and support them in promotional programmes.” This statement suggests that, despite challenges, constructive synergy remains possible, with government bodies gradually aligning themselves to better support local efforts.

One example of such synergy can be seen in the inclusion of artisans from Kampung Sanan in international events organised by the government, giving them an opportunity to promote local products to a global audience. This instance reflects how collaborative efforts between community and government can still produce mutually beneficial outcomes, even when tensions exist.

In many cases, community efforts precede governmental action. For instance, the initial development of Kampung Kayutangan was driven by local residents, with government attention and support arriving only after a rise in visitor numbers. These examples confirm that, while government involvement is valuable, the foundation of thematic village development often lies in grassroots efforts. As Ms Rini from Kampung Sanan concluded, “Our initiative demonstrates that, despite the significance of government support, our initial success is the outcome of our efforts.” Her words reinforce the critical role of community agency in initiating and sustaining development.

The findings of this study confirm that community initiatives are central to the development of thematic villages, while government support can enhance and expand these efforts. However, for long-term success, improved coordination between the two is essential. A clearer recognition of the community’s contribution, along with stronger institutional support, would enable Malang City’s thematic village model to serve as an example of inclusive tourism development and sustainable community empowerment.

Socioeconomic Impact of Thematic Villages

Thematic village development has become a crucial strategy for driving social and economic transformation in rural areas. This approach highlights the importance of active community engagement in utilising local capacities to address pressing issues such as poverty and underdevelopment. Thematic villages—defined by their focus on specific themes or local resources—have shown the potential to empower communities both socially and economically, contributing to sustainable development outcomes.

Community engagement plays a pivotal role in the success of thematic village development. Ngabiyanto et al. (2019) show that the thematic village model in Semarang has effectively involved residents in development processes, alleviating poverty and improving infrastructure. Similarly, Lukesch et al. (2020) demonstrate how the Village Law has encouraged visionary leadership and social transformation through

institutionalised governance, aligning with this participatory approach. Integrating community voices into decision-making processes not only strengthens the developmental agenda but also fosters greater social cohesion within villages.

Transformational leadership is also indispensable for achieving the goals of thematic village initiatives. Safaruddin et al. (2023) assert that the Village-Level Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be realised through strong leadership that motivates community participation in development. Effendi et al. (2023) further stress the importance of managing village assets by integrating economic, social, and ecological resources, supported by collective community efforts.

In Malang City, thematic village development has generated significant impacts on both the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. As demonstrated by the experiences of Kampung Heritage Kayutangan and Kampung Sanan, strong partnerships between the community and government have enabled meaningful transformation in both spheres.

The rapid growth of the tempeh industry in Kampung Sanan exemplifies economic transformation. The village has become a central hub for tempeh production in Malang, with over 536 artisans processing 30–40 tonnes of soybeans daily. Ms Rini, a tempeh producer in Sanan, shared: “Previously, we produced tempeh only for personal consumption; now we produce large quantities for both domestic and international markets. Our income has increased, especially with the rise in visitors during the tempeh culinary festival.” This initiative, which gained recognition from the Indonesian World Record Museum, not only strengthened local identity but also expanded the village’s economic reach through tourism.

Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, despite initial limitations, has evolved into a vibrant cultural centre. Events such as the Padang Bulan Festival and thematic village competitions have drawn thousands of visitors monthly. Mr Agus, a community leader, explained, “Our village gained recognition despite having limited facilities at the start. Our creative cultural events have had a significant positive impact.” These experiences illustrate how cultural innovation can drive tourism-based economic growth.

Thematic village development has also prompted social transformation, particularly in environmental behaviour. In both Kampung Sanan and Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, residents have become more attentive to sanitation and environmental aesthetics. Ms Siti from Kayutangan remarked, “Previously, we did not prioritise cleanliness, but now we collaborate to maintain our surroundings. Planting decorative plants and maintaining sanitation have become part of our daily routine.” These changes reflect increased environmental awareness as a direct outcome of thematic village initiatives.

Economic transformation is further evident in the growth of tourism-related income and the creative economy. In Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, a visitor contribution system of IDR 5,000 per person was introduced in the first year. These funds are managed by the community to improve tourism facilities, demonstrating an effective community-based financial system. In Kampung Sanan, tempeh products have reached

international markets, including Singapore. Government support in the form of production facilities and skills training has further expanded economic opportunities.

Nonetheless, challenges remain—particularly in managing internal conflicts and ensuring equitable benefit distribution. In Kayutangan, tensions have emerged between local business actors located within the village and those situated at its entrance, due to disparities in economic gains. Additionally, while government assistance in tourism infrastructure is welcomed, it is still perceived as limited in terms of direct financial support (Achmad et al., 2023; Geoffrey Deladem et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2021). Programmes such as Kotaku, initially intended for slum improvement, have been repurposed to support tourism infrastructure, though further efforts are needed to enhance strategic collaboration between communities and government agencies.

The development of thematic villages in Malang City has substantially improved community wellbeing—socially and economically. The rise in tourist arrivals and the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have driven economic change, while social transformation has occurred through improved environmental practices and community involvement in tourism. The success of thematic villages depends on the collaborative efforts of local communities, academic institutions, the private sector, and government agencies. These transformations demonstrate that thematic villages are not merely about tourism, but also about elevating the quality of life and fostering inclusive community development.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the development of thematic villages in Malang City has had a significant impact on both social and economic aspects of community life. The success of these initiatives can be attributed to the collaborative efforts between government bodies, local communities, and individual villages. Collaboration among villages such as Kampung Sanan, Kampung Heritage Kayutangan, and Kampung Biru Jodipan has produced strong synergy, despite differences in thematic focus and the challenges encountered. This synergy—manifested through joint promotions and collaborative events—has enhanced the identity and attractiveness of each village.

However, structural barriers remain, including differences in mindset and limitations in documentation and planning. These issues must be addressed to fully realise the potential of collaborative governance. Community initiatives have proven to be the primary driving force behind thematic village development, as illustrated by the case of Kampung Sanan. Although occasionally delayed, government support continues to play a critical role, particularly in providing infrastructure and promotional backing. Achieving sustainable outcomes requires the strengthening of synergy between community-led initiatives and government support, alongside improved coordination.

Thematic village development has led to notable social and economic transformation. The experiences of Kampung Sanan and Kampung Heritage Kayutangan highlight the potential of local industries and cultural innovation to enhance quality of

life and foster economic growth. Positive outcomes include increased income from tourism and creative industries, as well as behavioural shifts towards improved environmental cleanliness and aesthetic awareness. Nonetheless, challenges remain, especially regarding internal conflict management and the need for more strategic and integrated planning. These findings suggest that, while significant progress has been made, further efforts are needed to strengthen collaboration and ensure the long-term sustainability of thematic village development in Malang City.

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