



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF A SUBURBAN HOMESTAY: INSIGHT OF DESA CINTA KOBUNI HOMESTAY IN INANAM, SABAH, MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

Several homestays in Malaysia are located in rural regions with the goal of providing guests with a genuine rural living experience and enhancing the economic well-being of local residents. While research on homestays in rural regions is increasing, there is a lack of studies on homestays in suburban settings. Founded in 2017, Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay, situated in a suburban region in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, has achieved many significant successes. This research intends to examine the practices and success factors identified by stakeholders of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in a suburban area, with a specific emphasis on DCK Homestay. This research used a qualitative technique to connect with ten key stakeholders of DCK Homestay, interviewing them to acquire insights into their views and experiences. The data was analysed using theme analysis, identifying four crucial characteristics - people, process, strategy, and enabler - that have significantly influenced the success factors of DCK Homestay. Key factors contributing to the success of CBT were effective collaboration with neighbouring villages, mutual support via frequent meetings, and the development of community culture. Collaborative projects and activities with other communities were seen as crucial factors in improving the overall tourist experience. DCK Homestay's success was attributed to creative relationships, community participation, sustainable methods, and cultural promotion. These factors have enhanced the favourable view of CBT in a suburban environment and promoted mutual support and cultural interaction among community members. This research illuminates the distinctive characteristics of suburban cognitive-behavioural therapy, with a focus on DCK Homestay. The results highlight how community engagement, sustainable methods, and smart collaborations are crucial for the success of suburban CBT projects. Stakeholders can improve the tourist experience, help the local community, and promote the cultural diversity of the area by comprehending and using these important variables.

Keywords:

Homestay, Community-Based Tourism, Suburban Setting, Stakeholders, Collaboration, Sustainable Practices, Cultural Promotion

Introduction

CBT is a sustainable strategy to tourist development that highlights the involvement of local communities (Kayat et al, 2016). Homestays in CBT provide a compelling chance for genuine cultural immersion and meaningful relationships between guests and local residents. Homestays provide visitors with the opportunity to live with local families, immerse themselves in their lifestyle, and engage in everyday routines, unlike conventional lodging options. This immersive experience enables visitors to acquire knowledge about local cultures, traditions, and practices, promoting cross-cultural understanding and respect. Staying at a homestay allows tourists to immerse themselves in the community, building personal relationships with their hosts and directly experiencing the warmth and hospitality of the local culture. Homestays in CBT directly support the economic empowerment and social development of local communities. Local hosts increase their income and create job possibilities by welcoming tourists into their homes, leading to an improvement in their quality of life. Revenue from homestay operations often stays within the neighborhood, aiding local companies and funding community development and infrastructure projects. Homestays also support sustainable tourism by reducing the environmental effects of extensive tourist projects and promoting the conservation of local cultural heritage and natural resources. Homestays provide a compelling alternative within the CBT paradigm due to their mix of genuine cultural experiences, economic advantages for local communities, and sustainable tourism practices, making them attractive for both tourists and host communities.

Homestays in CBT remain popular among travelers due to several compelling reasons, despite the presence of many hotels. Homestays provide a distinctive and genuine cultural experience that hotels usually cannot imitate. Staying with local families allows travelers to fully engage in the cultures, traditions, and lifestyle of the host community. This immersive experience encourages authentic engagement with residents, offering a glimpse into their everyday lives, culinary customs, and cultural rituals. Visitors often appreciate genuine experiences, want to engage with local culture and enhance their comprehension of the location they are exploring. Homestays in CBT provide a more personalized and intimate experience than hotels, which may seem impersonal and aloof. Hosts at homestays often exceed expectations by offering personalized care, cooked meals, and local insights to ensure visitors feel welcome and at ease. This customized method fosters a feeling of inclusion and teamwork, improving the overall visitor satisfaction. Homestays sometimes provide distinctive services and activities not typically seen in hotels, such as cooking courses, cultural performances, and guided tours conducted by local people. These unique amenities enhance the visitor experience, making homestays a top option for travelers looking for genuine and unforgettable encounters throughout their journeys.

Although homestays are globally recognized (Aziz et al., 2021), there is a need for more thorough research exploring the details of CBT practice in suburban areas. This study fills this need by examining the homestay offered by DCK in a suburban setting. Suburban locations

have distinctive features that provide specific obstacles and possibilities for CBT projects, requiring a detailed examination of the strategies used in these environments. Homestays are essential in CBT projects, providing tourists with a genuine and immersive encounter while also supporting local people directly. Homestays encounter many problems that might affect their effectiveness and longevity in the context of CBT. One major difficulty is the need for sufficient infrastructure and facilities to host visitors while guaranteeing their comfort and safety. Some homestays, especially in rural or distant locations, do not have essential amenities like clean water, power, sanitation, and dependable internet connectivity. To address these infrastructure gaps, investment in infrastructure development is necessary, which includes improving roads, utilities, and housing facilities to suit the requirements and expectations of contemporary travelers.

One of the main difficulties for CBT in suburban locations such as DCK Homestay is maintaining the cultural and environmental authenticity of the region while also catering to the needs of tourist growth (Hamzah et al., 2009). Suburban regions often undergo rapid transformations as a result of urbanization, with tourism exerting a notably substantial influence. It is essential to comprehend how the local population handles these dynamics and incorporates tourism into their lifestyle to promote sustainable tourism practices (Vana et al., 2015). The suburban setting may impact tourist experiences, the activities available, and community involvement. Studying the particular methods of CBT at DCK Homestay has revealed the flexibility and strength of community-based projects in suburban areas.

A thorough examination of CBT practices at DCK Homestay is crucial for creating policy recommendations and policies that promote sustainable tourism development (Van Veen-Dirks & Wijn, 2002). Successful CBT depends on engaging the local community and gaining insights from their experiences, difficulties, and achievements, which may be beneficial for policymakers and stakeholders (Roddin, Yusof, & Sidi, 2015). This study aims to identify best practices and areas for improvement in order to provide practical suggestions to improve the overall sustainability of CBT in suburban settings. The research aims to contribute to both the academic discussion on community-based tourism and the actual application of sustainable tourism projects in suburban areas such as DCK Homestay.

Objectives Of Study

- a) Investigate the Community-Based Tourism practices in a suburban area at Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay.
- b) Investigate the perceived success elements by stakeholders in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay.

Literature Review

Concept of Homestay in Community-Based Tourism

A homestay is a kind of housing where travelers dwell with local inhabitants or families, usually in private homes or guesthouses. Homestays provide a chance for guests to immerse themselves in true local culture and hospitality, unlike conventional hotels or resorts (Inversini et al., 2022; Dash, 2022). Guests often engage directly with their hosts, join in everyday activities, and try handmade meals, gaining a more profound insight into the host community's way of life, traditions, and customs (Lama, 2013; Walter et al., 2018). Travelers often choose

homestays for authentic cultural experiences, tailored service, and a deeper connection with their location. Homestays may support community-based tourism efforts by providing revenue for local communities, conserving cultural heritage, and encouraging sustainable tourist growth (Kayat & Zainuddin, 2016).

Homestays are crucial in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) programs by connecting visitors with local residents, enabling genuine cultural experiences and promoting significant relationships. CBT homestays include local inhabitants hosting tourists in their homes, offering housing, food, and chances to participate in everyday activities. Tourists may enhance cultural immersion and intercultural interaction by living with local families or residents, allowing them to get insight into the host community's way of life, traditions, and customs (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). Homestays provide a more personal and intimate housing choice, enabling travelers to establish stronger connections with their hosts and cultivate authentic relationships (Giampiccoli & Saayman, 2018). This immediate engagement between hosts and visitors promotes mutual comprehension, esteem, and gratitude, which aids in cultural preservation and historical protection (Mishra & Mishra, 2023). Homestays empower local communities by allowing them to display their cultural heritage, earn cash, and engage in the tourist industry.

Homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) programs support sustainable tourism by focusing on environmental protection, social fairness, and economic sustainability. Homestays have less environmental effect compared to large-scale resorts or hotels since they make use of the existing infrastructure and resources in the host community (Budhathoki, 2014). Homestays contribute to the economic development of host communities and help share tourist advantages more evenly by providing locally produced meals, hiring local guides and craftspeople, and supporting community-based companies. Homestays often use sustainable practices including waste management, energy conservation, and water efficiency to reduce environmental harm and encourage environmental responsibility among hosts and guests (Agyeiwaah, 2019). Homestays are a fundamental aspect of Community-Based tourist (CBT) programs, encouraging cultural authenticity, community empowerment, and sustainable tourist growth. Homestay in Community-Based tourist (CBT) is important for both local communities and the tourist industry. CBT involves local people in the tourist development process, empowering them to take ownership of their cultural and natural resources. Communities may use their distinctive resources, such traditional practices, artisanal products, and natural scenery, to enhance their income and quality of life by engagement in tourist activities. This helps reduce poverty and also enhances a feeling of pride and self-reliance among community residents, who become involved participants in the tourist economy.

Factors Contribute to The Success of Homestays in Community-Based Tourism

Various elements contribute to the effectiveness of homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) projects, each playing a vital part in generating memorable and significant experiences for hosts and visitors. Community involvement and participation are crucial for the success of homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) according to many studies (Hussin & Kunjuran, 2014; Strydom et al., 2018; Phunnarong, 2021). When community members are actively involved in developing, managing, and promoting homestay programs, they experience a feeling of ownership and pleasure in presenting their cultural history and customs to guests. Community engagement guarantees that homestay encounters are real, immersive, and representative of local traditions, making them more attractive to travelers looking for authentic cultural experiences. Communities that actively participate in tourist development are

more likely to experience economic and social benefits from tourism, leading to sustainable livelihoods and well-being (Pasanchay & Schott, 2021).

Furthermore, successful homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) rely on impactful marketing and promotion strategies (Phunnarong, 2021). Homestays provide distinctive and genuine experiences but may face challenges in attracting tourists due to insufficient marketing techniques and visibility. Effective advertising activities, both online and offline, are essential for increasing awareness of homestay options, emphasizing their cultural distinctiveness and attractiveness, and reaching the desired audience (Zulkefli et al., 2021).

Cooperative marketing efforts among local tourist boards, travel agents, and internet booking platforms may enhance exposure and expand audience reach. Furthermore, recommendations via word-of-mouth, good reviews, and testimonials from content guests are crucial in establishing confidence and reliability, which in turn attract additional travelers to choose for homestays for their lodging requirements.

Quality hospitality and visitor satisfaction are crucial elements that influence the success of homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) according to Sawatsuk et al. (2018). Delivering outstanding customer service, genuine hospitality, and tailored experiences are crucial for making stays memorable and fostering recurrent visits (Taimenas et al., 2019). Hosts should aim to surpass visitor expectations by providing comfortable lodging, great meals highlighting local cuisine, and interactive activities that display the community's history and traditions. Furthermore, cultivating authentic relationships and significant exchanges between hosts and visitors enhances the overall pleasure and enjoyment of the homestay experience. Hosts can ensure the long-term success and sustainability of homestays in CBT by focusing on guest comfort, safety, and well-being to gain great evaluations, create a solid reputation, and attract more tourists.

Sustainable management techniques and responsible tourism concepts are essential for the success of homestays in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) according to Phunnarong (2021) and Pakshir & Nair (2011). Adopting eco-friendly techniques, reducing resource use, and supporting cultural preservation are crucial for the sustainability and authenticity of homestay programs. Host communities should aim to reduce their environmental impact by implementing sustainable technology, preserving natural resources, and promoting waste reduction and recycling. Respecting local customs, traditions, and cultural sensitivities, and guaranteeing fair and equal benefits distribution among community members are crucial for creating strong connections between hosts and visitors and encouraging social peace and inclusion. Homestays may help preserve natural and cultural heritage, promote community development, and provide genuine tourism experiences by prioritizing sustainability.

Result

The findings of the study are divided into two:

The Practices Of Community-Based Tourism In A Suburban Setting In Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay

The findings for the practices of Community-Based Tourism in a suburban setting in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay are shown in Table 1. The interview results with informant are in

Malay, and the informant's responses are also in Malay. However, the informant's feedback was translated into English for the presentation in this writing.

The CBT practices at DCK Homestay provide a cooperative and all-encompassing method, highlighting the interdependence of tourist operations in the suburban environment. Feedback from informants highlights the participation of several communities in cooperative tourism endeavors, especially in adventure tourism like camping. Informant 1 and Informant 4's collaboration demonstrates a joint dedication to improving the travel experience via combining resources and expanding options. The partnership with Mari Mari demonstrates the interconnectedness of CBT, as many towns unite to provide a comprehensive and enhanced experience for visitors. This method expands tourist activities and enhances the economic and social growth of the whole area.

Table 1: The Practices Of Community-Based Tourism In A Suburban Setting in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay

Practising items	Informant Feedback
Tourism activity	<i>"We also have other villages collaborating for activity tourism—for example, camping sites." - Informant 1</i>
	<i>"That is, we collaborate with Mari Mari". - Informant 4</i>
Hiking trail	<i>"If there is a hiking trail, it is not only in Kobuni but nearby villages. And this village of Kobuni is the centre, so we help many of the villages around this village of Kobuni." - Informant 2</i>
Visit the nearby area	<i>"In addition, we also take tourists to Mari Mari, which is Mari Mari Cultural Village" - Informant 3</i>
Food	<i>"Then we will take tourists to explore what is practiced in this village like traditional food, traditional clothes." - Informant 3</i>

DCK Homestay's CBT techniques prioritize hiking trails and excursions to adjacent locations. Hiking routes are developed and promoted not just inside Kobuni village but also in neighboring communities. Informant 2 highlights Kobuni's essential position as the nexus for these paths, demonstrating a collective effort to assist other settlements. Moreover, the act of bringing visitors to adjacent sites like Mari Mari Cultural Village, as shown by Informant 3, displays a more comprehensive regional strategy in tourism. This demonstrates the cultural diversity of the area and promotes partnerships between different communities, establishing a network that benefits many villages. DCK Homestay's tourism practices combine hiking trails and excursions to adjacent places in a synergistic and inclusive form of community-based tourism. This approach benefits not just particular villages but also the overall welfare of the suburban region.

Table 1 displays informants' input on incorporating traditional meals into community-based tourism activities at Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay. Informant 1's comment indicates that introducing traditional meals is seen as a crucial element of the tourist experience at DCK Homestay. The response suggests that include traditional meals in the tourism activities is essential for the community. This indicates that the local population highly regards its culinary history and considers it a crucial aspect of presenting their culture to tourists. Introducing visitors to traditional cuisine allows the community to give a distinctive gourmet experience

while also providing insights into local customs, traditions, and way of life. The response emphasizes the significance of cultural immersion and experience tourism in community-based tourism projects. This allows visitors to directly interact with local customs and practices, promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. The text emphasizes the importance of traditional cuisine in enhancing the tourist experience and fostering sustainable tourism growth in suburban areas such as DCK Homestay.

The Success Factors As Perceived By Stakeholders In Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay.

The stakeholders in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay believe that the success elements are crucial for the sustainability and good effect of their community-based tourism (CBT) projects. Informant input consistently highlights the need of fostering strong collaboration with neighboring communities. The stakeholders acknowledge the importance of working together, especially in activities such as trekking and participating in homestays in various regions. Informant 5 highlights the reciprocal benefits of collaborations, where collaborating with different communities adds to the overall success of DCK Homestay. This collaborative method improves the tourist experience for guests and promotes a feeling of cohesion and mutual prosperity among the towns participating.

Table 1: The Success Factors As Perceived By Stakeholders In Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay.

Practicing items	Informant Feedback
Good cooperation with other villages	<i>"We work with hiking in other places, homestays in different places, and work together with Mari Mari Cultural Village. How can we give tourists who come there that can also benefit us? Tourists who come here can also help he's the same person. It's like a win-win situation. - Informant 5</i>
Meeting and help each other	<i>"It's like Mari Mari Cultural Village. We have something we've already discussed; we've already had a meeting. We went there; if he was there, we could keep our pamphlets and brochures". - Informant 6</i>
Promote community culture	<i>"Collaboration between Mari Mari and Desa Cinta Kobuni, more than in terms of tourism, we promote our own culture". - Informant 7</i>

Informant feedback highlights that frequent meetings and mutual help among stakeholders are essential success factors. The joint effort is compared to the Mari Mari Cultural Village, highlighting the significance of prearranged meetings and shared materials like pamphlets and brochures. This approach enhances communication and coordination and ensures the community is well-prepared and organized in advertising its services. Engaging in meaningful conversations and exchanging ideas throughout meetings enhance the overall effectiveness of the CBT endeavors in DCK Homestay by fostering a coherent approach. Furthermore, the focus on community engagement extends beyond tourism to demonstrate a wider dedication to conserving and advocating for their cultural legacy. The stakeholders acknowledge that the success of community-based tourism is closely connected to the promotion and celebration of

their distinct local culture, as emphasized by Informant 7. The emphasis on cooperation and cultural promotion highlights the comprehensive and enduring strategy used by stakeholders in Desa Cinta Kobuni.

Discussion And Policy Implications

The study's results focus on two main areas: the Community-Based Tourism practices in a suburban context at Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay, and the success factors identified by stakeholders at Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) homestay. Enhancing Community-Based Tourism (CBT) activities in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK). This discovery clarifies that homestay utilizes a multidimensional strategy to enhance the tourist experience for guests and also support the local community. Firstly, there is a need to expand tourist products beyond conventional sightseeing activities. Expanding the variety of activities offered, including cultural seminars, eco-tours, or volunteer opportunities, may accommodate the varied interests and preferences of tourists. Engaging with local craftsmen to give interactive opportunities in traditional crafts such as weaving, ceramics, or batik-making fosters cultural interaction and generates extra revenue for the community. Improving the hiking routes at DCK Homestay may greatly enhance the outdoor recreational experience for tourists. Enhancements in trail infrastructure, including as signs, markers, and rest spots, are crucial for guaranteeing the safety and pleasure of hikers. Creating new trails or improving existing ones to provide diverse hiking opportunities for various skill levels and interests might appeal to a wider audience of tourists. Moreover, placing interpretive signs along hiking paths to teach tourists about the local plant and animal life, as well as the cultural importance of the region, promotes environmental consciousness and admiration.

Creating themed tours may provide organized and engaging experiences for tourists exploring neighboring regions. Specialized tours, like history walks, culinary tours, or environmental excursions, may emphasize certain features of the surrounding region, offering tourists a more profound understanding of the local culture and environment. Utilizing local guides for tours enhances the tourist experience through informative commentary and authentic local viewpoints. Additionally, it generates job possibilities for local residents, thereby aiding in the economic growth of the region. Improving the culinary experiences at DCK Homestay may enhance the tourist offerings. Providing culinary experiences like cooking courses, farm-to-table dinners, or traditional food tastings allows guests to fully engage with the local cuisine. Highlighting the use of locally obtained products and traditional cooking methods demonstrates the genuineness of the dish and bolsters local farmers and producers. Facilitating trips to nearby farms for tourists to engage in traditional farming methods, participate in harvesting tasks, and taste freshly harvested crops encourages agritourism and fosters a connection between visitors and the rural way of life in the region. Implementing these techniques may strengthen the practices of Community-Based tourist in Desa Cinta Kobuni Homestay to provide a more varied, immersive, and sustainable tourist experience, benefitting both guests and the local community.

To further discuss the policy implications of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay, it is crucial to emphasize the significance of sustainable resource management and environmental protection. The increase in visitors due to CBT programs poses a greater danger of environmental deterioration and depletion of natural resources. Policymakers should focus on implementing sustainable tourism policies to reduce adverse environmental effects and support the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems. This may

include creating ecotourism rules, setting up protected areas or natural reserves, and executing waste management and recycling programs. Policymakers can secure the long-term sustainability of community-based tourism projects and protect the ecological health of the area by including environmental sustainability into tourist planning and management.

CBT's effectiveness in DCK Homestay depends on empowering and increasing the ability of local communities. Policymakers should provide resources to education and training programs that provide citizens with the necessary information, skills, and resources to engage in tourist activities and decision-making. This may include delivering vocational training in hospitality, tour guiding, and sustainable agriculture, as well as providing assistance for small company growth and entrepreneurship. Policymakers may promote social participation, economic resilience, and community well-being by enabling citizens to assume responsibility for tourist projects and economic prospects. Policymakers should prioritize ensuring that tourist gains are distributed equitably to marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and indigenous communities, to provide them with equal access to opportunities and resources. This may include enacting inclusive tourist policies, developing community-based firms, and forming connections with local grassroots organizations and cooperatives.

Policymakers need to evaluate the social and cultural aspects of CBT in DCK Homestay, along with economic and environmental factors. Preserving and promoting cultural heritage and traditional knowledge are crucial for preserving the authenticity and integrity of tourist experiences. Policymakers should endorse efforts that honor local traditions, ceremonies, and celebrations, as well as efforts that encourage cultural interaction and cross-cultural communication between inhabitants and tourists. This involves coordinating cultural activities, historical interpretation programs, and community-based tourist festivals to highlight the distinct culture and variety of DCK Homestay. Policymakers must acknowledge and recognize indigenous rights and land tenure systems, ensuring that tourist development upholds and safeguards the cultural and territorial rights of indigenous populations.

Policymakers should prioritize community health and safety in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) programs, particularly in light of global health issues like the COVID-19 pandemic. Enforcing health and safety rules, hygiene standards, and emergency preparation strategies is crucial for protecting the well-being of residents and visitors. Policymakers should collaborate with local health authorities, tourism stakeholders, and community leaders to create and implement recommendations that focus on public health and reduce interruptions to tourism. Investing in healthcare infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and public hygiene education may improve communities' ability to react to health crises and catastrophes. The success of Community-Based Tourism in Desa Cinta Kobuni Homestay relies on deliberate policy interventions that prioritize sustainability, community empowerment, cultural preservation, and public health. Policymakers need to implement a comprehensive and unified strategy for tourist planning and management that considers economic growth with environmental preservation, social inclusivity, and cultural integrity. Policymakers may provide a supportive atmosphere for CBT projects by including stakeholders, promoting cooperation, and implementing specific interventions. This will lead to long-term advantages for host communities, tourists, and the environment. By implementing forward-thinking policies, Desa Cinta Kobuni Homestay may become a benchmark for sustainable and inclusive tourist growth, serving as an example for other places to emulate.

Conclusion

The investigation of Community-Based tourist (CBT) activities in Desa Cinta Kobuni (DCK) Homestay demonstrates a strong and cooperative approach to tourist growth in a suburban area. The stakeholders of DCK Homestay acknowledge the need of collaborating with neighboring communities to enhance activities like hiking, camping, and cultural promotions. The collaborative nature is highlighted by the stakeholder comments, especially the recognition of advantageous outcomes resulting from relationships with adjacent communities. The identified success characteristics, such as strong collaboration, mutual aid, and the development of community culture, emphasize a community-driven dedication to sustainable and inclusive tourism practices. The stakeholders at DCK Homestay focus on improving the visitor experience while also emphasizing the conservation and promotion of their cultural heritage.

The tourist operations at DCK Homestay demonstrate a holistic and linked concept that goes beyond particular settlements. Collaborative efforts, such as tourist events, hiking routes, and excursions to adjacent locations, show that many communities are dedicated to creating a varied and enhanced tourism experience. By including neighboring communities into adventure tourism activities, there is a joint effort to maximize the potential of the suburban area. This regional strategy promotes economic growth and encourages a feeling of solidarity and cooperation among communities. The effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in suburban settings such as Desa Cinta Kobuni is dependent on fostering collaborative connections, promoting cultural diversity, and implementing inclusive practices that have a positive impact on the whole area.

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