

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING A CREATIVE CITY

A Study of Jember Fashion Carnival (JFC)

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Introduction

Developing a city to become a creative city is not an easy thing; it does not only require cooperative participation of all related sectors, but also good qualification of all aspects of the city development. The creative city is a concept which was initiated by Charles Landry in the late 1980's and since then this concept has become a globally accepted paradigm in city development planning. As it has been defined by Landry (2000), the creative city may inspire the regional government, scholars, business workers, and people in general because this concept tries to explore the creative potentials which are possessed by each city.

In addition, this concept can be implemented in all different city scales: small, medium, and large scale cities, respectively. Thus, it can be assumed that all individuals will be able to be creative individuals when they are exposed to potential opportunities because creativity is the product of imagination. All individuals, no doubt, retain imagination in their minds.

Jember Fashion Carnival was initially created under the similar concept. In the beginning, JFC made people wonder of its unusual exhibition where people were parading in unique dresses or what people labeled as uncommon style. They also reckoned this event as the usual carnival that will last temporarily and soon be forgotten. At that very time, they did not realize that there was bigger agenda that JFC tried to accomplish.

JFC tried to create an identity for its city to become a world-scale carnival city of which economy will be based on creative industry. After several annual appearances, the people of Jember started to realize how unquestionably serious the initiator of JFC was after all the publications that they watched from the media.



Source: <http://citizenimages.kompas.com/>

Jember is defined as a small regency of a semi-metropolitan class because of its function to provide the regional governmental service for Besuki Residences that is supported by modern facilities. This city also gain its fame as the city of tobacco as Jember is the biggest tobacco producer in Indonesia. There are many local companies which do their investments mainly in tobacco packing and storing before the tobacco is distributed to cigarette companies in East Java and Central Java.

In general description, Jember has fertile land spreads all over its area which is a reason for its well-developed agricultural sector. This condition has made Jember as one of the biggest contributor of rice in Indonesia. Jember is



Source: www.eastjava.com/tourism/jember/map

populated by 2,146,571 people of Madurese and Javanese in majority, and some others are Arabs and Chinese. As the center of the surrounding regencies, Jember also has some well-known state and private universities in East Java.

As it is located in the west corner of Java, it is not very easy to reach Jember from Surabaya (the capital city of East Java). It may take 4-5 hours by bus (198 km from Surabaya). Eventhough Jember already owns an airport, it only operates in a small scale and it does not have regular flight hour. These transportation constraints affect negatively to the development of tourism sector in Jember.

Unlike Malang and Surabaya which show significant progress in their tourism resort, Jember shows slower progress because of this spatial problem. This situation, however, does not stop the regional government of Jember from developing its tourism sector. The regional government has initiated a program to promote its tourism to attract more people to come to Jember. BBJ is a month in which the regional government has prepared series of exhibitions to show its ultimate tourism attractions.

The most important factor in developing the creative city is the creative participation by all elements of city stakeholders (Florida, 2002). Developing the city economy sector by solely depending on its agricultural and agrobusiness foundation cannot guarantee people's welfare in the future. One of the obvious case is the anti-smoke movement that cause serious threat to tobacco production in Jember. JFC debut, thus, signs the strong willingnes and initiation to develop Jember to become a creative city. As it is mentioned before that by encouraging and legitimizing the use of imagination within the public, private and community spheres the ideas bank of possibilities and potential solutions to any urban problem will be broadened (Franke, 2005).

In developing the creative city, a city should be supported by good infrastructure and suprastructure. Therefore, it can be said that creative infrastructure is the combination of the hard and the soft. The latter includes a city's mindset, how it approaches opportunities and problems; its atmosphere and incentives and regulatory regime. To be a creative city the soft infrastructure includes: a highly skilled and flexible labor force, dynamic thinkers, creators and implementers. Creativity is not only about having ideas, but also the capacity to implement them (Landry, 2000).



Source: www.iddaily.net

The intention to develop Jember as a creative city is not explicitly declared by the regional government, however, one can clearly see this considering the significant support that has been regularly addressed to JFC and BBJ. In addition, there has been a dialog which was conducted in Tanggul, Jember which discussed the probability that BBJ can be conducted for several months within a year. However, this will remain only as an idea if the stakeholders refuse to participate to make the idea happen.

That idea, in addition, needs serious attention from the society because the idea of a creative concept is more than the monthly exhibitions. The bigger challenge will appear when the people do not pay much attention to the program. In the following descriptions, the writer will explain some of the strategies that have been taken by JFC to accomplish the goal to make JFC as the world class carnival that lays its foundation on the development of creative economy sector.

Jember Fashion Carnival and Its Challenges to Develop the Creative City

Jember Fashion Carnival is the longest fashion parade in the world (3.6 km long). The members of the carnival wear the dress they create themselves and they parade along the road in rythmical music. This concept evolves through a very long process as follows:

- 1998 Dynand Fariz established 'Dynand Fariz' to fulfill his dream as a fashion expertist who mastered both fashion knowledge and fashion in practical level.

- 2001 Dynand Fariz initiated Dynand Fariz's fashion week where all of the employees in that fashion house were required to dress in the most updated international fashion style.
- 2002 Dynand Fariz's fashion week was open for people in general by parading through the main road and the town square. This was also the time where JFC was firstly initiated.
- 2003 On January the first, JFC was firstly conducted along with the celebration of Jember anniversary. The theme of the parade was Cowboy, Punk, and Gypsy fashion. On August 30th, JFC 2 was conducted along with TAJEMTRA event in the Arabian, Maroco, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese style.
- 2004 On August 8th, 2004, JFC 3 was conducted in 6 defiles. Starting from this point, the promotor of JFC was JFCC (Jember Fashion Carnival Council) which was non profit organization which consisted of some people who are seriously concerned with this event. They proposed a professional management and good auditing by the authorized beareau to ensure the qualified development of JFC in the future.
- 2005-2009 JFC was developing progressively and was participated by 500 participants each year.
- JFC Vision JFC tries to make Jember as the first fashion tourism center in Indonesia and in the world level. This concept is generated by the implementation regional autonomy that allows every region to explore the potentials they possess in order to improve the regional welfare. To win the competition from the other cities, JFC should come with an utterly different idea which can uniquely prevail over the others. JFC is absolutely different for it tries to bring up the world fashion trend that can create multiplayer effect to other possible potentials.
- JFC Mission JFC is expected to contribute positively in the development of academic sector, art, culture, and creative economy sector in Jember.

The Challenges Faced by JFC

Reflecting to the progress that has been made by JFC in the present day, it is hard to believe that JFC also experienced bitter rejection from few elements of Jember society. This happened in JFC 3 where most of the people in the parade were wearing dress which shows their bellies. People who were watching saw this as a parade of mini clothes. The local government also found it hard to permit JFC 4 to be conducted in the following year (Kompas, January 6, 2008. This situation was caused by cultural and religious value which was hold by the people.

Most of Jember residences are muslims, and exposing certaiip parts of the body is considered as a sin in their religion. In addition, some members of the local house of representatives also stated their rejection on this event. This condition, eventually, led them to meet in a hearing where the promotor tried to explain that the situation was unavoidable because the theme of the parade was indian style. The people could accept this argument.

Later, in the development, people who are in parade used creative costumes that covers their bodies in unique designs. In addition, there were more media publications that started to spotlight this event. This made the people aware taht this event was something worth watching and it soon became their pride.



(Welcome to Jember JFC world fashion carnival, 2009); (photografers)

Source: www.Jemberfashioncarnaval.com

However the rejection was also claimed by HTI during the long march that they did in the beginning of Ramadhan month (<http://hizbut-tahrir.or.id/category/muslimah/page/30/>). They mentioned that the people should save the youths

from liberal culture that threatened them. JFC was claimed to open the channel of this liberal culture. One of them clearly stated “ BBJ and JFC do not have any positive contribution toward Jember”. This, again, is a natural phenomena where the cultural and religion value are the major roles considering that people in Jember are mostly muslims.

Besides the challenges that come from the local government and HTI Jember, there are still some other challenges to get through to be able to be bale to bring Jember into the world class fashion city. There are at least four major challenges that we can see:

First, the objective challenge that includes basic problems faced bay Jember local governmnt such as the low quality of the human resources. In some areas, there are still many children wo do not have the chance to go to school and get proper education. In addition, the rate of unemployment is very hihg in those areas. There are also many people with very low income because they mostly work as farmers who cannot make much profit from their works.

Second, the concept of developing Jember to become the creative city is not supported by good infrastructure and suprastructure. On one hand, there are many problems which are faced by the local government in infrastructure. The spatial distance is an unavoidable problem, in addition, the condition of the roads that lead people to the tourism resort is not satisfying. The transportation also has another problematic trouble with the airport because the air transportation is not a regular transportation means. It cannot provide reular flight for the potential tourists. There are also some tourism facilities that needs developing such as the comfortable transportation facilities, adequate hotels, and good culinary. On the other hand, there are also problems dealing with the suprastructure. In this setor, there is an urgent need for developing creative mentality of the bereaucrates, the people in general, the enterpreneurs, scholars, and stakeholders in Jember in order to take Jember to a better standard. The biggest challenge to develop Jember to become a cretive city can be best explained in a simple analogy. The term”Sleeping giant” will be perfect to describe the condition of the people because they are very used to a stagnant life standard. It is not easy to et them involved in the visionary idea of how to make Jember to become a more prosperous region through the creative economy activity.

Third, there are elements of society who tend to reject JFC, especially those who come from religion-based community, traditional art workers, and some people who experience decline in their business because of this program.

Fourth, the limited amount of operational fund which is possessed by JFC.

Based on this problem identification, the strategies which are created are: (1) JFC tries hard to get the support of the local government, the people, and the stakeholders. JFC should be also open for every possible criticism and suggestions which come from all elements of the society; (2) JFC tries to improve good cooperation with media both electronic and printed kind media. This cooperation gives tangible benefit for JFC. The media has helped to promote JFC to a broader level. Moreover, in the present day, there are more number of media producers that cooperate with JFC to promote the event. This good cooperation can be seen during JFC 8. In this event, the media still did the publication of JFC a month after the event took place. The media also helped JFC on the publication during the road shows in several cities; (JFC tries to spread the spirit of the world carnival by conducting monthly mini fashion carnival which can be conducted in Jember town square. This can accelerate the creativity and help to develop the concept of developing Jember to become the city of the carnival; (3) JFC perpetually arranges several road shows in some cities. This can be an effective way to promote the program because these road shows are financially supported by the institution or cities that invite them; (4) JFC develops the creative economy by doing producing the merchandises or prototypes of JFC style. This business is open for the people; this can strengthen their sense of belonging to this program; (5) to help to minimize the operational fund, JFC will strengthen the good cooperation with the media. This will help JFC to get free promotion. The uniqueness that JFC has exposed is the attracting factor for the media. Besides, there should be continuous effort to regenerate the fashion tutors of JFC. This regeneration can make sure that JFC will permanently last. The senior trainers can give proper training to junior tutors. Thus, JFC will not have to spend additional fund for trainers; (6) JFC tries to initiate business cooperation with some producers which share the same vision with them. JFC can cooperate with Sari Ayu which also tries to lift up the national potential through its cosmetic products.



JFC road show to Surabaya, East Java; (2) JFC On Shanghai

Source: www.jemberfashioncarnaval.com

Conclusion

There are some major points that we can conclude based on the above descriptions. The main point is that developing a city to become a creative city needs a long continuous process because it needs good cooperation of all stakeholders in that city. What should be realized is that this can be done through perpetual creative process, thus, the city should start from this point and cannot quit the process. The main challenge of JFC as the initiator of creative city in Jember is how to change the mindset of the people. The fact that the creative idea is a concept that is different from their usual living value is a real challenge. People of Jember who mostly rely their economy on agriculture will soon face the condition where they have to shift to the concept of economy which is based on creative industry. This concept will bring Jember to become the city of world-class carnival.



Source: www.jemberfashioncarnaval.com



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