

# Anak Indak Basuku As an Idea for Designing Information Media

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**Abstract:** This design proposal explores the phenomenon of Anak Indak Basuku children without a recognized clan identity within the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system arising from interethnic marriages between Minangkabau men and non-Minangkabau women. The absence of a recognized lineage poses serious social and cultural challenges, including exclusion from traditional rights and communal identity. This project aims to raise awareness and provide solutions through the creation of a visual communication design in the form of an illustrated book and motion graphic. These media target Minangkabau youth, particularly males aged 17–23, as a strategic group likely to face such identity issues when considering marriage. The design process applies qualitative methods, including literature review, observation, interviews, and surveys, with data presented descriptively. The creative output integrates cultural values, local wisdom, and modern aesthetics to foster cultural continuity and increase public understanding of the Malakok tradition an indigenous solution that allows children to be integrated into Minangkabau clans. The result is a culturally grounded and visually engaging educational medium that contributes to the preservation of Minangkabau identity in the modern era.

**Keywords:** Anak Indak Basuku, Minangkabau, Matrilineal Kinship, Visual Communication Design, Malakok, Cultural Identity

## Introduction

The Minangkabau ethnic group, native to West Sumatra, Indonesia, is one of the few societies in the world that practices a matrilineal kinship system, where lineage, inheritance, and customary authority are passed through the maternal line (Asminar, 2018: 132). In this system, women hold a central role in domestic and clan leadership, most notably represented by the figure of *Bundo Kanduang*, a title signifying maternal authority within the clan (Nurman, 2019: 94). Minangkabau is unique in Indonesia for maintaining this structure, in contrast with other ethnic groups that follow patrilineal or bilateral kinship systems.

This contrast in kinship norms often leads to conflict when interethnic marriages occur, especially between Minangkabau men and non-Minangkabau women. Children born from such unions face a unique identity crisis: they do not inherit a clan from either side. In Minangkabau custom, such individuals are referred to as *Anak Indak Basuku* a term that signifies the absence of clan identity and social recognition. As expressed in the Minangkabau proverb, “*tarapuang-rapuang indak anyuik, tarandam-randam indak basah*”, they

are likened to “floating but not drifting, submerged but not wet,” describing an ambiguous and excluded position in society (Interview: Gusnaldi, Kampung Manggis, 22 October 2024).

The consequences of being *Anak Indak Basuku* are severe. Such individuals may face exclusion from community decision-making, loss of inheritance rights, lack of a clan leader (*datuak*), and social alienation (Interview: Suhaita, Museum Bustanul Arifin, 28 September 2024; Interview: Husein, Silaing Bawah, 10 December 2024). These issues are compounded by a growing disinterest among youth toward traditional values, as modern influences and digital culture overshadow local wisdom.

Nevertheless, Minangkabau custom provides a mechanism for resolving this issue through the *Malakok* ceremony, a traditional process in which a person may be ritually accepted into a clan. This practice symbolizes inclusion, recognition, and the restoration of social identity. As stated by a local elder “*inggok mancangkam, tabang manumpu*”, meaning one must be grounded in identity wherever they live (Interview: Suhardi, Gunuang, 8 October 2024).

In response to this cultural challenge, this design project aims to develop a visual communication medium specifically, an illustrated book and motion graphic that disseminates information about *Anak Indak Basuku* and the *Malakok* tradition. Targeted at Minangkabau youth aged 17–23, this design integrates modern aesthetics with traditional narratives to promote awareness, preserve cultural identity, and support the transmission of customary knowledge in the digital age.

## Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to investigate the sociocultural issue of *Anak Indak Basuku* in Minangkabau society and to develop a visual communication design as a strategic medium for cultural education. The qualitative approach allows for an in depth exploration of both the cultural context and the lived experiences of individuals affected by the absence of recognized clan identity within the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system.

Data collection was carried out through several integrated techniques. First, a literature review was conducted to provide a conceptual foundation related to kinship systems, cultural identity, and the role of visual media in communication. Sources included academic texts, journal articles, and documentation of similar cultural design projects. This theoretical base was essential in framing the *Anak Indak Basuku* phenomenon as both a cultural and communicative issue.

Field data were collected through direct observation in Minangkabau communities, focusing on local customs, ceremonies, and community structures where the matrilineal system operates. Observations were complemented by in depth interviews with key informants, including traditional leaders (*datuak*), cultural practitioners, local elders, and individuals who identified as *Anak Indak Basuku*. These interviews provided insight into the social implications of lacking clan affiliation and the customary mechanisms available for integration, particularly through the *Malakok* ritual.

To supplement qualitative insights, an online questionnaire was distributed to Minangkabau youth aged 17 to 23 identified as the primary target audience for the visual design product. The questionnaire explored participants' knowledge of cultural identity, awareness of the *Anak Indak Basuku* issue, and preferences regarding visual communication media. Responses helped inform both the content and visual direction of the proposed design solution.

Data were analyzed using a 5W+1H framework (What, Who, When, Where, Why, and How), which facilitated a structured understanding of the communication problem and its context. The results of this analysis guided the design process, ensuring alignment with the cultural, social, and psychological characteristics of the target audience.

The design process followed an iterative model that included conceptual development, visual brainstorming, sketching, digital illustration, and refinement into multimedia outputs. The final design consists of an illustrated book and motion graphic, supported by print and merchandise materials. This design seeks to function not only as a medium of information but also as a tool for cultural preservation and intergenerational education.

## Result and Discussion

This study produced a comprehensive visual communication design addressing the socio-cultural issue of *Anak Indak Basuku* in Minangkabau society. Through a mixed qualitative approach involving literature review, field observation, in-depth interviews, and online questionnaires, the project gathered both narrative and statistical data to support the design process.

Based on the questionnaire results distributed to 100 Minangkabau youths aged 17 to 23 (collected via Google Forms on April 20, 2025), the following key findings emerged:

1. 68% of respondents were unfamiliar with the term *Anak Indak Basuku* prior to the survey.
2. 73% stated that they had never heard of the *Malakok* ceremony.
3. 81% expressed that they had never received information about Minangkabau kinship systems through formal education.
4. 92% agreed that visual and digital media would help them better understand local customs and identity-related issues.

These results indicate a significant knowledge gap among the youth, not due to resistance to tradition but due to the absence of effective educational platforms. These insights validated the decision to use motion graphic and illustrated books as primary communication tools.

In addition to the survey, five key informant interviews were conducted with cultural actors and stakeholders in West Sumatra. *Edi Datuak Tungga Nan Sati* emphasized the cultural exclusion faced by *Anak Indak Basuku*, stating, "They cannot inherit property, participate in adat meetings, or even claim a *datuak* as their protector". Similarly, *Suhaita* noted, "These children live in silence, excluded from the very system they were born into."

Perhaps most emotionally impactful was the testimony of *Muhammad Sayib Agil Husein*, an *Anak Indak Basuku*, who explained:

“We are Minang. We love our culture. But why doesn’t culture love us back? We are like strangers in our own land.” (Interview, Silaing Bawah, December 10, 2024).

These qualitative findings shaped the conceptual development of two main outputs:

1. A motion graphic consisting of 17 narrative scenes, visualized using symbolic color palettes (*Marawa*), and supported by character illustrations representing key social roles (e.g., *Bundo Kanduang*, *Datuak*, and *Anak Indak Basuku*).
2. An illustrated book, providing deeper narrative explanations in print format, using accessible language and culturally resonant design choices, aimed at both youth and general readers.

Supporting media were also developed to extend the reach of the message. These included:

1. Posters and banners displayed during a cultural exhibition.
2. Merchandise (calendars, T-shirts, stickers) as take home materials to enhance memorability and social diffusion.
3. Social media content, particularly Instagram, for digital outreach targeting mobile-first users.

The design was exhibited publicly, and informal feedback gathered from attendees showed strong emotional resonance. Youth participants stated that they were able to understand for the first time the significance of *suku* (clan) and the meaning of *Malakok* as a way to reclaim their place in society.

Overall, the results confirm that visual storytelling and culturally grounded design can effectively communicate complex traditional knowledge to a modern audience. This project not only created awareness about *Anak Indak Basuku*, but also provided a medium for cultural healing, reconnection, and dialogue.

## Discussion

The issue of *Anak Indak Basuku* in Minangkabau culture illustrates the complexity of cultural identity, particularly within societies that maintain rigid kinship systems. The Minangkabau’s matrilineal system, while unique and empowering for women, poses distinct challenges when interethnic marriage occurs. In such cases, children may fall outside recognized lineage structures, resulting in a loss of legal identity and social inclusion within adat (customary law). As supported by Syafyaha (2008), these individuals exist in a liminal space where neither the father’s nor the mother’s cultural lineage can claim them, leading to exclusion from community functions, inheritance rights, and social participation.

This phenomenon can be analyzed through the lens of identity theory. According to Hall (1996), identity is not fixed, but constructed through social interaction and cultural positioning. *Anak Indak Basuku* individuals represent contested identities socially present but culturally unanchored. Their lack of recognition within Minangkabau adat mirrors what Goffman (1963) described as “spoiled identities,” where individuals are marked by a form of cultural stigma. This exclusion reinforces structural inequality and poses psychological challenges related to belonging and self-worth.

However, the Minangkabau cultural system demonstrates adaptability through the *Malakok* ritual. *Malakok* functions not only as a mechanism for reintegration but also as a symbolic affirmation of communal acceptance. This aligns with Barth's (1969) theory of ethnic boundaries, which emphasizes that cultural membership is not determined solely by birth, but by socially sanctioned rituals of inclusion. The proverb "*inggok mancangkam, tabang manumpu*" (to perch is to grasp, to fly is to launch) symbolizes this flexible, yet structured process of gaining identity through collective recognition (Interview: Suhardi, 2024).

Furthermore, this study shows how visual communication can play a significant role in mediating and recontextualizing traditional values for younger generations. As noted in contemporary design theory, visual media serve as powerful vehicles for meaning-making (Lupton & Phillips, 2015). By employing an illustrated book and motion graphic rooted in Minangkabau aesthetics such as the *Marawa* color scheme and narrative storytelling the design becomes an effective medium for transmitting cultural knowledge in a way that resonates with youth who are increasingly detached from oral tradition and ritual experience.

The data gathered in this study also suggest that the decline in cultural knowledge among youth is not due to rejection of values, but rather to a lack of accessible, engaging platforms. As expressed by one respondent, "We are Minang, we love our adat, but why doesn't adat love us back?" (Interview: Husein, 2024), it is clear that the emotional desire for belonging remains strong. Visual media thus offers an opportunity to bridge this gap and restore a sense of pride and connection to one's roots.

In broader terms, the project underscores the relevance of culturally responsive design as a tool for both education and social integration. It demonstrates that traditions like *Malakok* are not obsolete, but can be revitalized through media that speaks the language of modernity without losing cultural integrity. This strategy may be adapted to other indigenous or marginalized communities facing similar issues of fragmented identity in the face of globalization and cultural hybridity.

## Conclusion

This study addressed the cultural identity crisis experienced by Anak Indak Basuku individuals without clan affiliation in Minangkabau society by employing visual communication design as both an educational and restorative tool. The research revealed a significant gap in youth awareness regarding the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system and the traditional solution of *Malakok*. Field interviews confirmed that this lack of clan identity results in cultural exclusion, emotional dislocation, and legal limitations within customary law.

In response, the design outcomes an illustrated book and a motion graphic were developed to communicate these complex cultural issues in a clear, engaging, and contextually grounded manner. Supporting media such as posters, merchandise, and social media content further extended the reach of the message. The project demonstrated that culturally embedded design can foster intergenerational dialogue and cultural literacy, especially when adapted to the communication styles of a digitally native audience. The

results affirm that visual storytelling can serve as an effective means for revitalizing indigenous traditions and addressing sociocultural challenges in contemporary contexts. Moreover, this project contributes to the discourse on culturally responsive design and the role of visual media in identity formation.

For future research, further exploration could focus on how similar identity issues manifest in other matrilineal or indigenous communities across Indonesia or Southeast Asia. Practically, collaboration with local governments, educational institutions, and cultural organizations could enhance the dissemination and integration of such media into formal and informal learning environments. Ultimately, preserving tradition in the modern age requires not only remembering the past but reimagining how it is communicated in the present.

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